

## ABSTRACT

### Engaging Visitors in Historic Buildings: Dallas Heritage Village's Revitalization Project in the Citizen's Bank Building

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Although most museums have transformed from dim, dusty, quiet places of private intellectual pursuits into vibrant, educational institutions, many historic homes and buildings have struggled to make the leap into the hands-on learning models so many museums today put into practice. This project concentrates on the revitalization project being conducted at Dallas Heritage Village in Dallas, Texas, and how the staff is endeavoring to bring learning in historic homes and buildings to life through hands-on and more engaging educational approaches. A brief literature review examines the history of education in museums with an emphasis on newer approaches to learning, especially in historic homes and buildings.

The goal of the project was to determine what types of educational activities would be successful in the Citizen's Bank building as a part of Dallas Heritage Village's revitalization project. This Master's project utilized Dallas Heritage Village staff interviews, on-site observations and surveys, and visitor feedback in order to determine the engagement level, likeability, and learning potential of the proposed hands-on activities. Visitor groups examined for this project consisted of drop-in family groups and scheduled school groups, in both directed and free-choice learning situations. Feedback and data was gathered and used for activity modifications before a second round of surveys and observations was conducted.

The results of the project indicate an increase in engaging visitors with the use of simple educational activities that can be used by Dallas Heritage Village as they continue their revitalization project. The process and outcomes may also be useful for other organizations with similar needs or buildings, as it demonstrates useful methods of data gathering and provides insight into interpretation options available for historic homes and buildings.

Engaging Visitors in Historic Buildings:  
Dallas Heritage Village's Revitalization Project in the Citizen's Bank Building  
by  
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A Project  
approved by the Department of Museum Studies:

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
Baylor University in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the degree  
of  
Master of Arts  
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This project is dedicated to those who have helped me  
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## **Introduction**

Although most museums have transformed from dim, quiet places of private intellectual pursuits into vibrant, educational institutions, many historic homes and buildings have not yet made the leap into the hands-on and free-choice learning models so many museums today put into practice. Education within museums has been evolving for as long as museums have existed. The earliest museums kept visitors guessing with cabinets of curiosity, and these eventually gave way to a concentration on academic betterment through extensive research and text panels. As time progressed, the notion of considering a museum's community began to emerge and the idea of education, as it is considered within museums today, was set in motion.

Innovators in the field began the education revolution in the 1970s, but a surge for education reform picked up speed in the 1990s and has carried museums through to today. No longer is it common to find strictly directed education (guided tours, labels, etc.) within the walls of museums; more common is the ability of visitors to explore and discover in a way of their choosing, utilizing a free-choice model of learning most commonly found in science centers, discovery centers, and children's museums. However, both directed and free-choice approaches are seen in museums, since a combination of the two is often the most productive approach.

## *Rationale*

The spark for this Master's Project developed out of the continuing reinterpretation and revitalization project occurring at Dallas Heritage Village (DHV) in Dallas, Texas.<sup>1</sup> In the past, DHV succeeded in this effort, as most historic homes and buildings did, through directed education. This type of instruction involves such approaches as guided tours and informative labels. Although effective, directed education tends to focus on only certain learning styles and requires museum staff or volunteer docents to serve as instructor. This approach is called for in many situations, such as programs involving school groups. However, more and more visitors have begun looking for and expecting more engaging, personalized, and interesting ways to explore the past on their own through a free-choice model, free from the traditional guided tour. This is especially true for drop-in visitors, many of who are families of various ages and sizes.

Throughout the years, Dallas Heritage Village implemented directed education in various ways, including: docents, first-person interpretation, and labels. However, Dallas Heritage Village is endeavoring to expand and invigorate their educational approaches by embarking on a revitalization project that will carry out reinterpretation components in some of their most popular buildings.

To date, several buildings have gone through the revitalization process. The Citizen's Bank building is one of the next to be considered. Staff members at Dallas Heritage Village have become aware that, as the bank currently stands, components within the building have not been engaging visitors at a satisfactory level; meaning less learning is taking place in the bank than would be preferred. This conclusion has been

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<sup>1</sup> In essence, interpretation is "a planned effort, to create for the visitor an understanding of the history and significance of events, people and objects with which the site is associated" (AAM 1982, 1).

reached by staff members who have noticed that a tendency developed for guests to walk into the bank, look around for a moment, and walk out.<sup>2</sup> With little to no directed educational aspects, visitors were not inclined to examine the bank on their own. This also meant free-choice learning was also not occurring.

The project was born out of the need to design modifications that would more successfully engage the visitor and enhance the visitor experience within the bank. Possible modifications were explored with Dallas Heritage Village staff through interviews. Several educational activities were created for use in the bank building by both school groups and drop-in visitors (typically families). The effectiveness of these activities were studied through observations and information gathered from surveys. The results of the data collection will provide staff at Dallas Heritage Village with recommendations for the continued revitalization process within the Citizen's Bank building.

### *Interpretation and Revitalization of Dallas Heritage Village*

Dallas Heritage Village, originally known as Old City Park, was founded in 1969 with the vision of interpreting the history of Dallas and north-central Texas during the period of 1840 – 1910. The organization began with the opening of the Millermore plantation house. Old City Park was an entirely volunteer-run organization and functioned as a place where citizens could simply come to take in the historic and grand nature of Millermore. Eventually, in the 1970s, the complex expanded to include several

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to staff members commenting on the behavior of visitors in the bank, this behavior was further corroborated by observations of the examiner while gathering building measurements. Few visitors paused to investigate the banking instruments or other components within the building and subsequently left the bank.

more historic structures and began to resemble a realistic nineteenth-century town. Old City Park also hired its first director, curator of collections, and curator of education (Baldwin 1991, 2).

These advancements were due to the increasing number of visitors, and carried the organization into the 1980s where it received accreditation by the American Association of Museums, added more historic structures, and began its first steps toward implementing interpretation. In order to cater to the needs of increased visitors, techniques such as “mini tours” and demonstrations such as printing, pottery making, and cooking, all staffed by volunteers, were offered during this decade. Special events were also established to supplement the interpretation, such as: Candlelight, Old-Fashioned Fourth, Dairy Day, and the Grand Heritage Ball. All of these drew thousands of patrons and brought in significant funds for the institution (Baldwin 1991, 3).

During the 1990s, Old City Park made its most significant leap forward in terms of interpretation. Curator Hal Simon and Executive Director Gary Smith began to notice a progressive lack of interest by visitors in architectural and decorative arts history. To counteract this, a change was made to focus instead on the newly-popular living history approach. Because of this newly-sparked and growing interest of the public in living history and first-person interpretation, the Village’s Gano House was transformed into a fully hands-on farm with three costumed first-person interpreters. This change allowed interpreters to visit with museum-goers and bring history to life in addition to the tours and programs that were already occurring. Adding first-person interpreters acted as the introduction to what would grow into a multi-building reinterpretation (Baldwin 1991, 3).

In 2005, Old City Park underwent extensive rebranding efforts that resulted in a name change to Dallas Heritage Village (DHV), which better reflects the village it had become (Dallas Heritage Village 2008, 5). A year earlier, DHV undertook an opportunity to begin a revitalization process with several of its buildings. To date, Blum Brothers General Store, the Alamo Saloon, and the MKT Railroad Depot have been components of this project (designated as the “Main Street Revitalization,” in relation to the buildings’ position within DHV), with the Citizen’s Bank building next in line. The goal of the revitalization project is to place guided tours and programs in conjunction with living history and interactive components in order for Main Street to “become the activity center of the museum” (Dallas Heritage Village 2010, 4).

Ultimately, DHV would like to provide an environment within the buildings on “Main Street” of the Village where history comes to life. Institutional goals plan to (or already have) implemented several methods of interpretation: oral first- and third- person interpreters, MP3 oral interpretation downloads through podcasts, music where appropriate, re-examining the brochure, signs within buildings, hands-on activities, and olfactory cues of fire and cooking where appropriate (Dallas Heritage Village 2008, 3).

This reinterpretation will change the way visitors interact with history. No longer will they only view and interact with first-person interpreters, but they will also be able to place themselves within the pages of history by interacting directly through activities in the buildings. For example, in the general store, visitors are able to mail a post card, act as a store employee, or go shopping (Dallas Heritage Village 2010, 8-9). Although this approach has proven effective in today’s educational climate, it is still unusual in historic structures. Many still rely on architectural and decorative arts subject matter and directed

programming, or tours. DHV is arching over into the next decade by staying on track with museum trends through their current interpretation goals. This will allow DHV to better educate and engage their visitors since “direct interaction or proactive behavior on the part of visitors [is] a significant factor in their learning” (Sheppard 2009, 18).

### *Methodology*

The first step for this project was to assess an institution that was looking to reinterpret or update the educational approaches within a structure. In this particular case, Dallas Heritage Village (DHV) proved to be a good candidate since it was in the process of revitalizing and re-envisioning several of their buildings. One of these was the Citizen’s Bank building occupying part of the Main Street area within DHV. This structure was next in line for DHV’s revitalization project, and staff agreed to make this building available for the project.

Once the institution and structure had been chosen, the next phase was to construct a logistical plan which would suit the needs of the project as well as DHV’s needs for their planned revitalization. DHV offers guided and self-guided school programs through a more directed approach as well as first-person interpretation in some of the buildings, and there are also significant numbers of drop-in visitors who are on their own to choose what they see and do. Therefore, it was decided to test the new activities with these two populations: free-choice visits for walk-in guests of all ages (including families) and scheduled, self-guided semi-directed school groups. The rationale behind specifically targeting groups containing children is twofold. First, children make up a large demographic with DHV (Dallas Heritage Village 2008, 1).

Second, children “instinctively investigate things with their hands, but adults may need to be invited to touch and participate” (Serrell 1996, 39). As a result of the latter reason, child-based populations provide a beneficial stepping stone to visitor-wide free-choice learning design. If activities fail to engage children, they will most likely fail to engage adults as well. In addition, engaged children help increase the happiness of parents, and ultimately create a better experience for the entire family. DHV recognizes this, and sees it as motivation for creating a more enriching and active experience throughout their buildings (Dallas Heritage Village 2010, 7).

After the populations to be tested were established, preparations for the project’s design and implementation were begun. Conversations with staff were held to determine the major ideas and concerns for the bank building and what DHV’s goals were. These discussions were in line with the proposal in their current strategic plan: provide access to the building as a whole and allow visitors to be hands-on while exploring period-specific banking supplies, such as adding machines, reproduction checks/currency, etc. (Dallas Heritage Village 2010, 10). Later, a visit to DHV was conducted in order to take measurements and photographs of the bank building to act as a compass for activity planning. During this visit, casual observations reinforced the staff’s concern that visitors walk a few steps into the building, look around for a few seconds (or a few minutes), and then exit. This is presumably due to the current low level of engagement within the building, as there is no first-person interpreter or other immediately-enticing elements in the building. This need for further engagement is one of the main issues to be addressed in this project.

Following the preparations, a practical format for gathering data was planned. Each chosen population (families and school groups) was tested twice. For the testing itself, the first round consisted of the newly introduced activities for the project being presented to both populations. Based on the data gathered during the original test with both populations, modifications were made and then a second round of testing was conducted with both populations.

To gather visitor input, survey forms were given to parents and teachers during both rounds of testing in order to collect data that could be assembled and analyzed. The survey forms contained questions that regarded the likability, interest level, and engagement of each activity. Survey forms were completed on a voluntary basis. To ensure the protection of any children to be observed, parents provided permission before observations of their children were conducted. If no parents were present and permission could not be obtained (such as with school groups), data was not collected directly from children. All input from visitors was done anonymously and no comments are attributed by name to any person.

Based on each participant group's reaction and input to the new activities during the first round of testing, it became clear what types of modifications would be beneficial to further increase engagement. After called-for modifications were made, the activities were tested again to see if these changes resulted in activities worthy for DHV to use in the future. Observations by the examiner were also critical to the activity analysis process.

The examiner was on-site to conduct all surveys and observations. The surveys and observations were conducted concurrently during each round, and were all

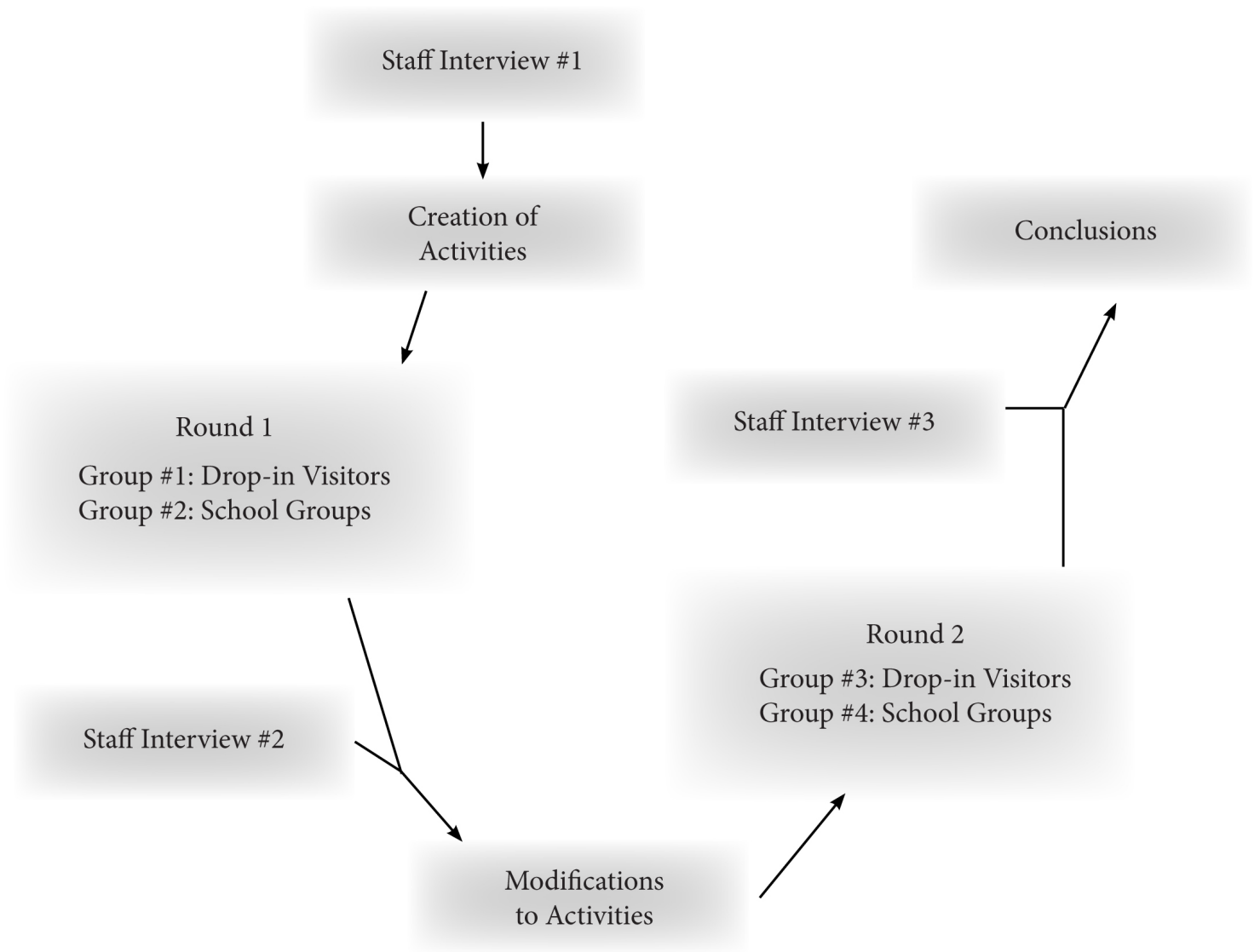


implemented in November and December of 2011. The examiner worked with DHV's staff to determine appropriate opportunities for data gathering. The time of the surveys and observations was typically from opening (10:00 a.m.) until early afternoon when either general public numbers begin to taper off, or when school groups typically finish their tours.

To complement the surveys and observations, staff interviews were conducted at three times:

- 1) Before any testing, to establish which challenges and opportunities needed to be addressed
- 2) Once activities were designed and tested (after the first round of surveys and observations), to ensure the activities were on track with DHV's needs and determine if any modifications would be needed
- 3) After both rounds of surveys and observations, to establish how well the activities did and how well they fit into the revitalization plans for DHV

The chart on the next page offers a pictorial representation of the testing schematic:



## **Review of Literature**

### *Museum Education in America: Commencement to Contemporary*

Since their establishment, museums have been centers of learning and advocates for the advancement of knowledge. Early museums in the United States can trace their heritage back to the late 1700s with institutions such as the Charleston Museum in South Carolina, the first public American museum (AAM 1968, 2). However, these institutions were not like museums that today's public is familiar with; their focus was on natural and scientific oddities displayed in cabinets of curiosities within private buildings for the elite. Eventually, innovators came along like Charles Wilson Peale who opened the doors of his museum to the public in 1786. Others would follow Peale within the museum field, and eventually the idea of a public museum became the norm (Schwarzer 2006, 3-8). From this new notion of a public museum, emerged the idea of museums as liaisons of education. This formation evolved into the institutions known today for hands-on learning and inventive educational programs of all types, and for much more diverse audiences.

However, the transition from private parlors to public instruction took decades to occur, and several dynamic leaders to initiate. Some of the most important innovators were George Brown Goode (1851 – 1896), John Cotton Dana (1856 – 1929), and Anna Billings Gallup (1872 – 1956). Goode was able to take Peale's notion of a public museum and transform it from a cabinet of curiosity to an important facet of society. During Goode's time, education for the common man was not the focus of museums, but was merely a byproduct of the museum's main functions of collecting, preserving, and exhibiting artifacts and specimens. Public education was not in the forefront of a

museum's undertakings during the late 1800s; much more important was the broadening of scholarly minds. Goode challenged this notion when he stated, "A museum is an institution for the preservation of those objects which best illustrate the phenomena of nature and man, and the utilization of these for the increase in knowledge and for the culture and enlightenment of the people" (Burcaw 1983, 9). He further elucidated this comment four years later with, "An efficient educational museum may be described as a collection of instructive labels, each illustrated by a well-selected specimen" (Goode 1901). Goode's vision was to offer not only scholarly research, but visual representations as well that could be viewed by the public for purposes of learning.

When a new century dawned, not only had the country celebrated its Centennial, but it had traversed growing pains through a civil war as well. Many changes occurred, including the broadening of the museum field as institutions multiplied across the country. With the expansion of the number of museums, a new emphasis in museum education followed (White 2008, 2). In the early 1900s, both Gallup and Dana emerged as powerful leaders in the field.

Dana was ahead of his time in his realization that public education was essential to a museum and community's livelihood. He illustrated this by saying. "A good museum attracts, entertains, arouses curiosity, leads to questioning, and thus promotes learning... it may help the members of the community to become happier, wiser, and more effective human beings" (Alexander 1983, 396). Dana transformed the idea of education in museums through his efforts to build a community-centered base, and encourage museums to not simply be a "museum store-house," but to become a "museum work-shop" where instruction and entertainment would take place (NAEA 1989, 34). This

became a fundamental idea for Dana, and he further elaborated that a “museum is good only in so far as it is of use,” and that museums could be more than just “avowedly aesthetic” (NAEA 1989, 35). Dana put his beliefs into practice, not only in several publications, but also through his leadership at the Newark Museum. Here, he was an advocate for collecting contemporary art pieces from previously not sought-after artists, actively loaning objects to schools and civic groups, and disallowing the idea of elitism previously seen in museums (NAEA 1989, 34-36).

Like Dana, Gallup, who was the Brooklyn Children’s Museum director from 1902 to 1937, undertook the task of revolutionizing the turn-of-the-century museum. She particularly endeavored to make the items in museum collections accessible to visitors, especially children. Not only were objects at the Brooklyn Children’s Museum viewable, they were available to touch and handle in order to provide a tactile learning sensation (Alexander & Alexander 2008, 167-8). This practice is still important in many museums across the nation, in particular those geared toward children and families.

Further changing the definition and role of a museum, the American Association of Museums released its first definition of what a museum should be in 1925;

Museums, in the broadest sense, are institutions which hold their possessions in trust for mankind and for the future welfare of the [human] race. Their value is in direct proportion to the service they render the emotional and intellectual life of the people. The life of a museum worker is essentially one of service (AAM 1925, 5).

This definition was influenced by Goode’s mention that “The museums of the future in this democratic land should be adapted to the needs of ... the professional man and the man of leisure... In short, the public museum is, first of all, for the benefit of the public”

(Goode 1891, 432). Although Goode was greatly influenced by the culture of his time, he was able to foresee an accurate future for museums nearly 50 years in advance.

Others in closely related fields called for service to the public through education. One such transformation was released in 1957, and was revolutionary in many ways. *Interpreting Our Heritage* by Freeman Tilden is primarily a narrative on interpretation through the National Park Service, but it also offers essential lessons that also apply to modern museum education. Most noted is the principle that “information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based on information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information” (Tilden 2007, 34). In the past, museums often relied on information alone for the viewer to make sense of or interpret on their own. Goode described this when he notes a museum is “a collection of instructive labels, each illustrated by a well-selected specimen” (Alexander 1983, 290).

Despite Goode’s intentions, modern museum-goers become overwhelmed with such tactics, initiating Tilden’s principle. For example, when a visitor approaches a text-heavy exhibit, they may express such sentiments as “My heart sank when I saw all those labels” (Serrell 1996, 1). Instead, exhibit designers should embrace Tilden’s principles and write interpretive labels that draw the reader into the narrative. These labels “tell stories; they are narratives, not lists of facts. Any label that serves to explain, guide, question, inform, or provoke – in a way that invites participation by the reader – is interpretive” (Serrell 1996, 9). As a result of these early museum education pioneers, education took on a more significant role in museums, and was ushered to the forefront of a museum’s mission. The museum workforce was beginning to realize that basic information could be presented anew and in a fresh light through active interpretation.

As more museums embraced these ideas, it began to revolutionize the field. The importance of education as a key component in museums was being realized, but funding was needed to expand the museum's role in society. In 1968, a special committee of the American Association of Museums (AAM) put together a report to the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, *The Belmont Report*. This report made a case for museums to qualify for federal funding. It further detailed that museums should receive such funding because they provide educational services that cannot be provided elsewhere, make available research and resources that are used by Federal or federally-funded entities, and because the government has an obligation "to assist in preserving, maintaining, and wisely utilizing the ... museums on behalf of all the American people" (AAM 1968, vii).

The Tax Reform Act of 1969 further drove the advancement of financial sustainability within museums by "[qualifying them] for an avalanche of financial support," provided they are active educational institutions (Schwarzer 2006, 192-194). The American Association of Museum gave further institutional backing to education within museums with the creation of the Standing Professional Committee on Education (EdCom) in 1973. EdCom's intention is to "[advance] the purpose of museums as places of lifelong learning, [serve] as an advocate for diverse audiences and educators, and [promote] professional standards and excellence in the practice of museum education" (Hein and Alexander 1998, 5). These three developments gave rise to the validity of education within a museum setting on a professional and organizational level, and were supplemented as additional transformations occurred within museum education.

Following the new institutional validation for museum education, AAM began to notice that, as the field moved toward the twenty-first century, education in museums needed more attention and clarification. Therefore, in 1984, a commission of the Association released a report entitled *Museums for a New Century*. The report stated, “museums have not realized their full potential as educational institutions... [and] there is a troublesome gap between reality and potential that must be addressed” (AAM 1984, 28). In conclusion, the commission recommended that museums should “assure that the educational function is integrated into all museum activities... Collaborative approaches [achieve] the full educational mission of museums” (AAM 1984, 28). A few years after *Museums for a New Century* was released, AAM acknowledged gains in reaching educational potential, but called for further improvement within museum education when *Excellence and Equity* was published in 1992. This publication raised the bar for educational endeavors within museums.

The release of *Excellence and Equity* was one of the first major reports solely on the educational role of museums to be published, and it became a landmark document issued as a result of *Museums for a New Century* (AAM 1992, 4). One of the basic ideas presented in *Excellence and Equity* is that “the commitment to education as central to [museums’] public service must be clearly expressed in every museum’s mission and pivotal to every museum’s activities” (AAM 1992, 5). The reason for this undertaking was simple: to create a “new definition of museums as institutions of public service and education, [one that] includes exploration, study observation, critical thinking, contemplation, and dialogue. Museums provide their most fruitful public service by providing educational [experiences]” (AAM 1992, 7). Through the application of the



principles articulated in *Excellence and Equity*, museums challenged themselves to pursue quality education within their walls.

As the 1990s drew to a close and a new millennium began, those in the museum field became aware that although the internal workings of their institutions were becoming systems to admire, a component was missing. No longer was it sufficient to simply perfect the inner workings of the museum, but museums must look to their constituency to realize their full potential. One of the greatest advocates of this concept was Stephen Weil, an emeritus scholar of the Smithsonian. Weil drew inspiration from a museum pioneer's (George Brown Goode) statement: "The museum of the past must be set aside, reconstructed, transformed from a cemetery of bric-a-brac into a nursery of living thoughts" (Goode 1889), and proposes that a museum is no longer its own reason for being. Over the centuries that museums have existed in the United States, a change has taken place: one that has taken museums from benevolent and omniscient to competent, resourceful, and community-oriented (Weil 2002, 82-83).

In order for a museum to make the leap into being a modern entity that is truly serving its constituency, it must acknowledge when the internal workings are satisfactory, or even excellent, and then turn its focus outward. Weil argues that by turning the spotlight away from the inner workings of the institution, and asking the visitors for their opinion, museums can evaluate a museum's worthiness and determine "positive and intended differences that [visitor evaluation] makes in the lives of the individuals and communities that constitute its target audience" (Weil 2003, 42). In doing so, a museum can determine "not how those differences are measured but that such differences must become and remain an institution's central focus" (Weil 2003, 42). The inspiration

behind this proposal is for museums to become more in tune with their communities wants and needs. If museums are educational institutions, as previous legislature and professional organizations have called for, then it stands to reason that they should strive to determine the effectiveness of the educational offerings. Furthermore, if museums neglect their publics, there will be no public to educate. All these indicators point to one conclusion: Weil is right. Museums must look not only at their operations internally, but their external workings as well with the ultimate goal of ensuring visitors have a pleasurable and meaningful experience.

As museums become more focused on service to their communities, they are becoming more integrated and, ultimately, major outlets for learning outside the classroom. No longer is output (i.e., programs and exhibits) justifiable in of itself. In order to better serve the public in a way that is valuable, museums are looking to produce outcomes (i.e., sparking a desire to learn and making a difference in the lives of visitors). This current trend in museums is proving beneficial to everyone involved. Not only do visitors have the opportunity to take in information, but by ensuring visitors feel welcome and comfortable, more visitors come. Higher attendance numbers result in higher financial gains the museum can invest back into itself. The transition of switching the focus from internal to external has already proven its worth across the country, and will continue to do so (Weil 2003).

### *Museums Embrace Different Approaches to Learning*

As the change to a new millennium drew near, many things were changing, and museum was education among them. The ideas of Dana, Gallup, Tilden, and Weil were working their way into fruition on a wide scale as a new world of outside-the-classroom education was explored. AAM's Code of Ethics for Museum Workers, published in 2000, reflects this as it states museums should:

serve society by advancing an understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural common wealth through exhibitions, research, scholarship, publications and educational activities. These programs further the museum's mission and are responsive to the concerns, interests and needs of society (AAM 2000).

Education was now an established and recognized function of museums and more authors, such as John Falk and Lynn Dierking, became influential in the quest for transforming and modernizing the way museums approach their audiences. These trendsetters and leaders helped the roots of modern museum education to be planted that would eventually sprout into the captivating, hands-on world most visitors enter when they step through a museum's doors today.

Unlike the museum of the past, visitors had to be drawn in through new channels as innate curiosity no longer served as a motivation for museum attendance. With factors such as the Internet and groundbreaking technological advances in electronics, museum visitors were surrounded with fascinating stimuli throughout their day-to-day routine. Due to this, a new approach was called for: a more active learning process that sparks self-initiated discovery rather than relying solely on the previous approach which created a formal teaching environment that is learned passively through knowledgeable museum staff (Falk and Dierking 2002, 4-5). As a result, the needs and desires of the visiting

public now became a fundamental concern of modern museums, and staffs are now tasked with discovering a way to meld the more traditional, directed approach (labels, tours, etc.) with the new trend of free-choice discovery-based learning in order to cater to how each member of their public most effectively experiences learning.

One of the most fundamental advances that aids museums in serving the public has been analysis of who attends the museum and how they learn best. Different learning styles affect every aspect of museum education: exhibit labels, exhibit layout, museum floor plan, what programs are offered, how those programs are taught, and much more. Visitors tend to learn much more when they “experience” a museum by doing things like touching an object or interacting with an exhibit. When given the proper facilitation, visitors might carry out the practice of using self-initiated discovery to construct an idea into an over-arching concept to explain what they are seeing in an exhibit. Each of these are tested and proven psychological learning processes, and can be put to productive and valuable use in a museum (Hein and Alexander 1998). When designing educational programs and exhibits, museum educators can choose directed, free-choice, or a combination of both approaches in order to fulfill the museum’s needs as well as the visitor’s.

Traditionally, museums lean toward a didactic-expository approach, which relies primarily on labels and a controlled method of information usually given by a docent through directed instruction. This method is highly appropriate, and often expected, with school programs. However, museums can also employ the discovery approach. This will allow for scenarios such as role-play to take place, where visitors can place themselves within a situation, circumstance, or setting; and are free to choose which learning method

they prefer. With the discovery approach, there is no outside validation by a test or authority figure, so the outcome is widely unknown (Hein and Alexander 1998). This approach is particularly effective with drop-in visitors and families.

Based on which of these approaches a visitor most identifies with, he or she will likely find the most effective learning modality that suits his or her preferred learning style(s). These modalities are the building block upon which many modern museums are focusing. In order to capture the largest audience, a proper educational approach will endeavor to cater to various modalities, such as auditory, visual, or kinesthetic. This way, most audience members will find a way to be engaged in the museum and are more likely to come away having learned something. Many studies have been done on learning modalities that recognize that people learn through a variety of ways (Christensen 1995).

Another source that has helped museum educators to better serve all types of learners is the work of psychologist Howard Gardner through his idea of “intelligences.” Lynn Dierking explains intelligences by stating:

Gardner’s model has important implications for museum educators. Gardner proposes that we are all born with the potential to develop multiple intelligences and that these intelligences can be added to the conventional logical and linguistic skill constituting IQ (Dierking 1991, 6).

What this means for practical application, is that museums can present information in a meaningful way that will allow for maximum interest and retention through a visitor’s personal combination of intelligences. For instance, museums can present information in ways that will cater to not only the linguistic intelligence, but also the logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, or intrapersonal intelligences. In any

museum space, whether a science discovery room or a historic home, educators “need to help learners utilize as many intelligences as possible” (Dierking 1991, 6).

Once museum educators embrace ideas such as different modalities and multiple intelligences, they can begin to build environments with elements that pertain to many variations of visitors’ learning styles in order to captivate and interest the widest possible audience. Both of these approaches harken back to one of the most forward-thinking men of the mid-twentieth century, Freeman Tilden. His first principle of interpretation states that “any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile” (Tilden 2007, 34).

As a result of museums’ efforts to present information through a variety of ways, learners can benefit from the information being interpreted in a way that is no longer sterile to them, but has a deeper meaning that is unique to each individual. Through this approach, it becomes clear why interpretation became, and continues to be, the vehicle through which many museums are choosing to diffuse knowledge. Often, this is directed through an interpreter or docent facilitating the learning experience or tour.

In terms of diffusing knowledge, several approaches to interpretation can be utilized. Education through interpretation can provide visitors with the opportunity to “touch, observe, and examine [because] knowledge begins with wonder” (LeBlanc 1999, 53). From that wonder, knowledge is “mediated through group social interaction, including conversation, gestures, emotions, and observation” (Dierking, et. al. 2001). This diversity allows for a wide array of opportunities in which institutions can pursue their educational endeavors. One of the most modern and fruitful pursuits is that of free-

choice learning. “Free-choice” encompasses a cornucopia of topics, and is thus difficult to define. One definition shows free-choice learning as an invitation to “move past our limited focus on a ‘school system’ to imagine the stunning potential of a ‘learning system,’ a system that utilizes all of the educational resources of our communities to connect and extend learning opportunities across a lifetime” (Falk and Dierking 2002, ix) Essentially, free-choice learning is ubiquitous in every-day life.

In museums, free-choice learning occurs whenever an outside influence (i.e., a docent or exhibit) does not directly facilitate a learning moment. People partake in free-choice learning every day when they take in new and useful information while flipping through television, glancing at the newspaper, or having conversations. Since this mode of learning is so common amongst the general population, it stands to reason that it would be sensible to translate free-choice learning into the museum setting.

Free-choice learning does have some difficulties to overcome in museums. Among them are the often-preconceived notions that little to no actual learning will take place or the visitor will not learn what the museum exhibits intended for them to learn. The traditional role of the museum only as teacher has been hard to move beyond. Fortunately, authors such as Falk and Dierking have made a strong case for free-choice learning in museums. When entering a museum (for educational or leisurely reasons), it becomes second nature to take in the content and learn in some respect. Americans are comfortable with free-choice learning, it is how they take in nearly all daily information. So, without noticing it, visitors are likely to learn something during a free-choice museum visit. From a glance across an exhibit label, context clues throughout the exhibit, or an innovative object design they have not seen before (Falk and Dierking 2002, 9-13).

Regardless, successful free-choice learners will have “grabbing” moments from their museum encounters that enable them to relate the content back to their personal experiences. It is of benefit to museums to include various types of free-choice learning as well as directed learning in order to allow each visitor to learn in the way that suits them best.

### *Education in Historic Homes and Buildings*

Traditionally, historic homes and buildings have had difficulty with looking outside the directed education box and away from docent-led, primarily directed, formal education based on architecturally- and decorative arts-focused tours. One editor, Jessica Foy Donnelly, describes the situation well: “Historic house interpretation can be exciting and invigorating or lackluster and just plain boring. Too often, the latter holds true, despite the diligence of [the] volunteers and paid staff” (Donnelly 2002, 1). Subsequently, historic homes and buildings may be the least likely of museums to adopt a less-structured free-choice educational approach.

Reasons abound for this reluctance by historic homes and buildings to implement this approach. Collections can be limited (in scope, availability, and storage areas), a building may have a narrow range of variation on interpretation approaches, and the building/collections that are present do not often allow for large retrofitting projects, exhibit installations, or hands-on educational undertakings. Traditionally, this has resulted in the more established techniques of interpretation, such as exhibit labels and item-by-item tours. Although informative, this rather passive approach is not particularly effective to all types of learners. Much more functional is providing an interpretation



regarding the how and why behind objects and creating a narrative. Through this approach, visitors become more engaged and the material becomes more meaningful (Schell 1985, 8).

Despite challenges in choosing an interpretation style, historic homes and buildings are nonetheless popular among Americans. The original idea to preserve historic structures began in 1847 with the efforts to save the Hoyt House in Deerfield, MA (Butler III 2002, 18-19). Since that time, some of the most well-known historic institutions have include George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, which opened to the public by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in 1860 (Mount Vernon Ladies Association) and Colonial Williamsburg, which began its preservation in 1926, but chronicles the town's history when it was an eighteenth century political hub (The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation). Large institutions are not alone in their quest to preserve America's past. Local house museums and historical buildings exist throughout the nation, many of which were established after events occurred that reminded U.S. citizens of the importance of their history.

With the onset of the Civil War, Americans witnessed death and destruction on an unprecedented scale. A decade after the war's conclusion, the centennial celebration of the nation commenced. The combination of these two occurrences pushed Americans to realize the importance of the history surrounding them and the history they were making. In 1860, only 48 historic buildings were accounted for in a nationwide survey. By 1890, the number grew to 161. The same pattern can be seen after World War I when historic properties surveyed increased to 321 in the 1920s (AAM 1965, 14).

Although the number of historic structures was on the rise, nothing can rival the influx in growth of historic properties and institutions that began in the 1970s. Supporting this escalation in numbers was the National Historic Preservation Act, which was passed in 1966. The act created the National Register of Historic Places, which required states to create an official list of historically significant places, with the goals of advocating for expanding resources for national preservation issues (Tyler et al. 2009, 42-47).

The National Historic Preservation Act and the National Trust were not mere coincidences. After two world wars and the nation's bicentennial in 1976, there was a renewed sense of national pride, and a reminder to Americans to preserve their heritage. And through these legislations, historic properties now had the ability to become national treasures. Through the years, many properties were lovingly restored (Smith 2011, 23). By 1979, nearly 5,000 museums existed in the United States (AAM 1984, 28). About half of these museums could be labeled as history museums and, within these, most were historic sites (Schell 1985, 7).

Although people have strong connections to the historic homes and buildings that appeared in their communities over the past fifty or more years, many visitors are calling for more. A mounting number of citizens and historians are growing tired of the stagnant nature of these buildings, feeling they are isolated from the modern day and no longer offer a strong connection to those who are potential visitors. Fewer visitors are looking for the history of the proverbial 'dead, white men'; they want something more diverse and more interesting (Donnelly 2002). In order to do this, historic homes and buildings must look beyond trying to tell visitors a string of facts about their properties, and instead attempt to establish a connection personally, regionally, or otherwise (Harris 2007, 112).

Several options are available for institutions hoping to initiate a resurgence of interest in their properties. The main options are interpreting the entirety of the historic structure and its story, providing “real-life” experiences through first-person portrayals or hands-on activities, and looking outside the box with landscaping, architecture, building techniques/trends, etc. (Zeller 1998, 8-11).

In many cases, historic properties exhibit period landscaping and minimally changed architecture, which makes shifting focus to those topics a practical venture in reinterpretation efforts for their ease to implement and the relatively nominal application of effort in comparison to other options. One of the most prominent examples of landscaping, architecture, and building techniques all playing a major role in analysis of a property is Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello. Jefferson was widely involved in the building of his home and surrounding grounds. He had a

preoccupation with working through relationships between the house and the hill – the lawns, fields, orchards, vineyards, woodlands, gardens, architectural embellishments, and the ‘roundabouts,’ his walks and roads, [and he had a] complex visual and kinesthetic plan for this landscape, a plan inspired by the concept of [an ornamental farm] associated with the development of the English landscape gardening movement (Howett 2002, 111-112).

Several drawings and sketches done by Jefferson during the planning of his residence illustrate this phenomenal interrelation of a building, its construction processes, and the grounds on which it lies. With all this information, Monticello has embraced the opportunity to open a window to the man Jefferson was outside his presidency, offering a unique interpretation by looking beyond the façade of his residence. Other than educating the public about the owner of a property, landscaping and architecture can also lend itself

to a discussion of culture and society. In this way, Monticello has become an example of innovative interpretation in a historic property.

At the Frank House Museum on the University of Nebraska at Kearney grounds, a unique story is also told. The story is one typically under-represented in the interpretation of historic homes: that of the servant. During a visit to the Frank House, the visitors are treated to a narrative that is pulled into the docent-led tour, supported only by an unusually situated servant's quarters and a set of silver dishes. Docents usually tease the visitors with tidbits while on the first portions of the tour by slipping in hints about the Frank's main servant, Alice. The main clue is the odd location of her quarters on the same floor as the guest quarters. By the time the docent leads the visitors into the last room of the tour (the dining room), they can show off the elegant and beautiful set of silver dishes that belonged to the Franks. The family loved Alice so much that they gave her the dishes as a token of thanks for helping them and foregoing her salary through the 1890s depression. Furthermore, docents add an anecdote about how beloved she was within the community; not only changing diapers on the wealthy when they were young, but also catering their weddings with the dishes left to her. This circumstance is, of course, unusual by 1800s – early 1900s standards. However, through diligent and extensive research, these topics have been uncovered and offer a brilliant look into the Frank family and their home. Through an innovative interpretation approach, docents take the visitors on a journey guided by family stories rather than the decorative arts-based tour typical of many house museums.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Frank House research is conducted by a variety of staff members and student workers, and is incorporated into tours once new information is discovered. Author gained knowledge of the Frank House's method of conveying information on tours while being employed as a docent.

Monticello and the Frank House are not alone in their endeavors. The McFaddin-Ward house in Beaumont, Texas has created a push to focus on the story behind the collection and boosting the facets of their operation in order to “strengthen [their] ability to tell a good story” (White 2008, 2). Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia undertook a venture in rebranding to show it can cater to more than a well-educated Anglo-Saxon demographic. To solve this dilemma, a new storyline for presentation was chosen: “Choosing Revolution,” an ode to what it was like to become American in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Ultimately, it led to calling Colonial Williamsburg Revolutionary City and offering a curriculum of “Education for Citizenship,” all the while looking for ways to better engage the visitor (Graft 2007, 13-15). Connor Prairie in Fishers, Indiana made an effort to “adapt to how different guests learned and what they were interested in, not simply recite the same rote information in the same way” (Bubp and Allison 2007, 21). The changes made at Connor Prairie emanated into the culture of the museum, changing how staff viewed their position at the institution. Soon, they realized they were there because “people choose to spend their time and money [there]. The concept that visitor’s needs should come first became inculcated into Connor Prairie” (Bubp and Allison 2007, 21). Ultimately, Connor Prairie’s experience with reinterpretation envelopes what any good interpretation should: it took into account guest needs, learning styles, and expectations, and the result was positive on all levels (Bubp and Allison 2007, 23). Each of these historic sites has realized that the public’s desire is for a more diverse, interesting, and entertaining historical experience.

Recently, Mount Vernon followed suit and made a major financial investment in an attempt to embrace new educational approaches and meet modern visitor needs. In

2006, Mount Vernon concluded a major financial campaign and debuted new orientation and education centers (Arroyo 2007, 48). James Rees, the executive director, stated the new approach would involve merging “traditional communication methods with a modern approach” and that a “better presentation and interpretation would allow them to blend education and entertainment in an effective manner, and that people having fun are much more open to learning at the same time” (Arroyo 2007, 48, 50). Rees brilliantly concludes that although many institutions may shy away from this method because “they’re afraid [it will] make history seem trivial, when in fact it sometimes makes history feel relevant” (Arroyo 2007, 50). The new approach involves, as always, exhibits and the “basic” George Washington history; but it also delves into films, one-week programs, distance learning, curriculum materials, an education section of the website, additions to the education staff, and an expansion of topics such as Mount Vernon being one of the first historic plantations to interpret slavery or little-known facts about the country’s first president (Arroyo 2007). All in all, the pedagogical renovation encompasses a new approach that will allow for a “rebirth of excitement” at one of the most renowned historical centers of the United States (Mount Vernon Ladies Association).

As illustrated by the previous examples, interpretation is the key challenge facing historic properties in the public realm. However, a dull presentation is not the only issue facing many institutions. With the recent downturn in economic stability, many nonprofits, including historic homes and buildings, are feeling the effects. Unfortunately, the recession leads to a major challenge facing historic properties internally: finances (Smith 2011, 21-22).

Financial challenges are hampering the efforts of some historic properties to embrace more engaging approaches. For example, incorporating hands-on components can be costly. Oftentimes, installing interactive components can also be especially hard on the collection and buildings. Retrofitting a historic property may, at best, involve drilling holes for hooks, shelves, or other interactive media. Many institutions, such as Dallas Heritage Village, The Farmers' Museum, and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, all possess two separate collections: one for preservation, one for public use/education. This solution may be expensive in terms of acquiring multiple objects, caring for them, and storing them, but it is an extremely viable option for historic properties that want to allow for hands-on interaction but also want to preserve historically important pieces (Cottrell 1995, 15).

Tangential to hands-on interaction is first-person interpretation. It differs from basic docent-led and self-guided tours because, like hands-on activities, it offers a dynamic approach to historical presentation. First-person interpreters are one of the oldest and most commonly used methods to up the ante in terms of providing an interesting experience beyond a basic tour. Despite the relative ease of inserting first-person interpreters into a historic property, many institutions fail to offer them on the basis of finance means; not all institutions have the volunteer base to constantly staff properties with first-person interpreters and/or the funds to hire such a staff member.

Unfortunately, this means components that “[make] living history so appealing to visitors – interactions between interpreters and visitors – also [make] it very expensive for museums to operate” (Smith 2011, 23). No longer do plans of an expansion or building a remarkable museum work (nor are the funds for these plans easy to come by).

Museums and historic properties now have shifted their focus from transferring information to entertaining education. Better customer service and public offerings must be offered in order to draw in the necessary crowds in order to turn a profit in the current economy (Smith 2011, 23-24). These issues (finances and interpretation) have imbedded themselves in historic homes and buildings across the country and have challenged staffs to produce creative and effective solutions to overcome them.

On trend with other historic homes and buildings, Dallas Heritage Village in Dallas, Texas has travelled the path many historic institutions before it have traversed. It has risen from a grass-roots volunteer-run organization to the current organization involving several paid staff members working in conjunction with many volunteers. Along the way, Dallas Heritage Village has undergone extreme challenges with finances while still providing a meaningful visitor experience (Smith 2011, 24). Dallas Heritage Village, like other institutions, is looking to an ongoing reinterpretation (begun in 2006) to be able to more fully engage visitors and further carry out its role of public service.



## **Project Implementation and Results**

### *Staff Interviews*

The implementation and completion of this project required close work with DHV staff, so it was crucial to gauge the needs, concerns, and ideas from essential staff at DHV.<sup>4</sup> The feedback from interviews before implementation of the project helped shape the direction and design of the activities and to ensure appropriate activities and components were used during this project.

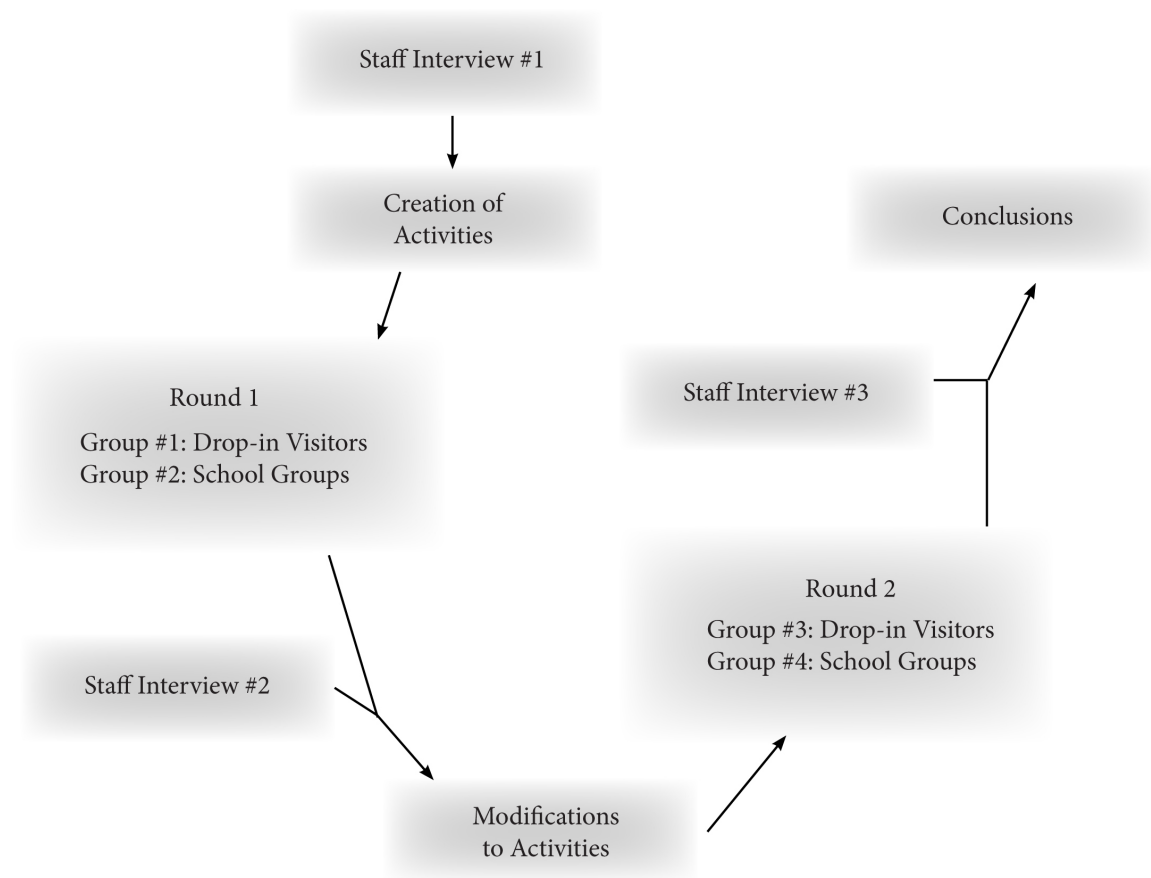
After concluding that pre-implementation interviews should be conducted, and who should be interviewed, the next step was to determine which questions would yield the most valuable information in terms of interactive component design and goals for the overall project. It was deduced that questions based on increasing the activity level and engagement of visitors within the building as well as what staff envisioned as an end result would be the most effective. (For a full list of interview questions, see appendix A.) Because only a few questions were used, total interview time ranged from five to ten minutes. Follow-up questions for clarification were posed when needed.

After the initial interview, two more staff interviews were conducted. The second interview took place after the first round of visitor surveys and observations occurred to determine if the interactive activities were following parameters that would produce viable results for DHV's revitalization efforts. The third interview took place after all visitor surveys and observations were completed; this interview was focused on establishing the validity of the activities in terms of DHV's long-range reinterpretation

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<sup>4</sup> In order to obtain the most useful assessment, one staff member each from education, collections, and administration were interviewed. Throughout the project, the same staff members were used for all three rounds of interviews.

plans for the Citizen's Bank. For visual aid, the testing schematic is repeated from earlier pages below:



### *Staff Pre-Implementation Interview Data Summary*

As previously stated, the data gathered from the interviews aided in the creation of the activities utilized in the bank based on the input, ideas, and concerns the staff voiced. The overall theme presented in the responses was increasing the level of interest and engagement. Project relevant responses are presented below, delineated by each question asked of the interviewees.

The data from the interviews indicated that staff felt it was important to move forward with the reinterpretation as planned for the “Main Street” area of DHV. Many comparisons were made to the Blum Brothers General Store, since it appears to be one of the most popular buildings with visitors. As indicated by multiple staff members, it was essential to take into account the engagement level of visitors as well as considerations for proper collections and building care.

#### *What might be done in the bank building in order to increase the activity level?*

- Increase interaction
  - Allow access behind the teller cage
    - “Opportunities to ‘use’ the building as it was originally intended.”
  - Develop hands-on activities
- Teach about the role of banks in nineteenth-century society.

#### *Are there any activities, specifically, that you would like to see placed in the bank?*

- Role play: banker-customer
  - Include banking activities (deposit slips, checks, etc.)
  - Possibly samples of historic currency
- General interaction with banking equipment

*What is the end result that you envision for the bank?*

- Increase visitation time within the bank
- Disseminate knowledge of varying topics: employment practices, women in the workplace, office technology, centrality of banks to the lives of people in DHV's time period.
- "A place where people can go, including kids, to learn something about banks and what purpose they served."
- Increase learning and interaction "...because people don't understand much about how banks work today, much less 100 years ago."

*Do you have any concerns you would like to see addressed within the bank?*

- Few methods present to encourage learning despite the rich architecture of the building
- Accessibility: define what can be used for school groups vs. the general public
  - Possibly only allow access behind the teller cage during school tours
- Staffing
- Vault door: many moving parts resulting in a high chance of hand injury
- Visitors crossing barriers

As a result of the interview responses, it was determined that a variety of activities concentrating on engaging everyday visitors and school groups in order to present pertinent information about banking during the DHV interpretation period (1840 – 1910) would be designed as follows:

- Activity sheets allowing visitors to use math in a way that explained collateral in a nineteenth-century bank (activity sheet examples can be found in appendix D)
- Activity sheets detailing the process of catching a bank robber
- Text (masquerading as "notice signs" about acquiring and giving loans) prompting visitors to role play as bankers and bank customers
- Hands-on activity inviting visitors to use combination locks to simulate the banker's actions when accessing the vault

After this determination, conversations were held with staff members in order to ensure the effectiveness of the components to increase activity in addition to levels of interest and engagement. Using information garnered from the staff pre-implementation interviews and conversations, the first round of activities was created; and in order to appeal to a wide audience base, language was chosen that was comprehensible for various visitors from children to adults.

Lastly, special considerations of space usage within the bank and the safety of the building and the public were taken into account. This was particularly important since a safety hazard existed with the safe door. Also, many collections items are placed in the bank, and needed to be moved or replaced with items from DHV's educational use collection. Finally, the layout of the bank provided for minimal movement within the space, and therefore determined placement of some activities.

### *Creation of Activities*

In terms of determining effective activities, the most important consideration was to ensure anything introduced could be carried through to a permanent installation for DHV in the Citizen's Bank, and blend in with the revitalization and redesign already implemented on the property. For practicality, this meant the educational activities were simple, would involve little expense, and could be modified easily and quickly. The activities could be used as a stand-alone activity for free-choice walk-in visitors or for scheduled, guided tours led by docents. The end result was to create activity sheets that can be completed in the bank or as a take-home activity, provide opportunities for period-

appropriate role-play, and hands-on elements, such as operating locks to simulate opening the bank safe.

Each of these activities was aided by text and/or instructions. However, in order to preserve the integrity of the bank's historic aura, traditional text panels were kept to a minimum. Instead, text was placed only where needed to provide specific visitor instruction (such as telling children how to operate a combination lock), or masqueraded as "instructions" to the banker on how to do his job. Although instructions would not have been in place during the nineteenth century, it was effective to employ this method of exhibiting text to help the Citizen's Bank appear more historically accurate by diminishing large and laborious text panels. Also supporting this method of label presentation is the notion that a majority of text within a museum is not typically read by visitors (Falk and Dierking 1992, 70). Through an installation of text as "instructions," visitors might be more likely to engage themselves with the information presented.

### *Surveys and Observations, First Round*

In order to gauge the effectiveness of the activities within the bank, it was pertinent to conduct surveys of visitors after their time in the bank building. Surveys targeted two groups: parents and teachers. These two groups were the focus of study since school groups and families are the most popular visitor demographics at DHV, and because parents/families represented a free-choice approach and teachers/school groups represented a more directed approach. In addition to parental and teacher survey forms, children (from families, not school groups, in order to allow for parental consent) were

also observed and their activities recorded in order to offer a first-hand assessment of how children interacted with the activity components.

The questions in the survey forms were similar between family and school groups, varying only to meet the specific demographic differences. Questions addressed interest level, engagement/learning level, and likability level. The observations consisted of tallying the number of times each activity was utilized, how long children spent there, and words spoken that would be pertinent in the decision to continue, terminate, or alter the activities (i.e.: “This is fun!” or “What does this mean?”). In order to follow privacy guidelines, only children with parents present were observed to allow for parental consent. (For a sample of survey or observation forms, consult appendices B and C.)

#### *Round One Data Summary and Observations*

As seen in the mid-implementation interview results, staff at DHV felt the activities were a positive change to the presentation and education within the Citizen’s Bank building, and that the activities presented were beneficial to the learning process and would blend with already-occurring revitalization project at DHV. To determine visitor opinion, engagement, and likability of the activities, survey forms were administered to parents and teachers. Questions on the forms asked for a ranking from 1 to 5 (with 5 being the best rating).

When examining the results from all 13 surveyed parents, 61.54% of parents ranked the activities in the 4 – 5 range, which showed they were generally in favor of the activities presented. Looking individually at the survey questions, 61.54% of the parents had a favorable opinion of how their children felt about the activities with a ranking of 4

or 5 (chart 1). Furthermore, 61.54% also felt (with a ranking of 4 or 5) that the activities not only helped their children learn something (chart 2), but also enhanced the learning experience (chart 3). This shows that the activities made a positive impact on visitors who entered the bank. Below is the full breakdown of the percentage of parents who provided each ranking:

Chart 1 The activities presented related to and/or reinforced topics of interest to your child	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	7.69%
Ranking of "3"	30.77%
Ranking of "4"	38.46%
Ranking of "5"	23.08%

Chart 2 You feel your child learned something through the activities	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	15.38%
Ranking of "3"	23.08%
Ranking of "4"	23.08%
Ranking of "5"	38.46%

Chart 3 The activities enhanced the learning experience	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	7.69%
Ranking of "3"	30.77%
Ranking of "4"	23.08%
Ranking of "5"	38.46%

Teachers reported survey numbers similar to that of parents. In total, 6 teachers were surveyed, and they felt overall that the interactive activities provided a positive experience within the bank with 50% of the teachers providing rankings in the 4 – 5 range. Looking individually at the teacher-specific questions, 50% showed (through a ranking of 4 or 5) a favorable opinion of how the activities related to and/or covered topics from the classroom (chart 4), and 50% also indicated (through a ranking of 4 or 5) that the activities engaged their students (chart 5) as well as promoted learning styles used in the classroom (chart 6). This shows that the activities made a relatively constructive impact on school groups who entered the bank. Below is the full breakdown of the percentage of teachers who provided each ranking:

Chart 4 The activities presented related to and/or reinforced topics covered in the classroom	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	16.67%
Ranking of "3"	33.33%
Ranking of "4"	33.33%
Ranking of "5"	16.67%

Chart 5 The activities engaged your students	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	16.67%
Ranking of "3"	33.33%
Ranking of "4"	33.33%
Ranking of "5"	16.67%

Chart 6 The activities used learning styles the you like to promote in your classroom (linear thinking, problem-solving, etc.)	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	0.00%
Ranking of "3"	50.00%
Ranking of "4"	50.00%
Ranking of "5"	0.00%



On the survey forms, parents and teachers were also asked which of the activities their children and students most and least enjoyed. During the first round, parents' data reflect an interesting, yet understandable, inconsistency in that role-play was rated as both the most and least enjoyed. Clearly this reflects different learning personalities and learning preferences of individual children. However, teachers were clearer in their rankings, and chose the lock activity as the most enjoyable with the activity sheets and role-play tying for least enjoyable. Below is the full breakdown of the percentage of parents and teachers who provided each answer:

<b>Parents</b>	Which activity did your child enjoy the most?		Which activity did your child enjoy the least?	
	Locks/Safe	30.00%	Locks/Safe	10.00%
	Activity Sheets	40.00%	Activity Sheets	30.00%
	Role Play	50.00%	Role Play	60.00%
<b>Teachers</b>	Which activity did your students enjoy the most?		Which activity did your students enjoy the least?	
	Locks/Safe	66.67%	Locks/Safe	20.00%
	Activity Sheets	16.67%	Activity Sheets	40.00%
	Role Play	16.67%	Role Play	40.00%

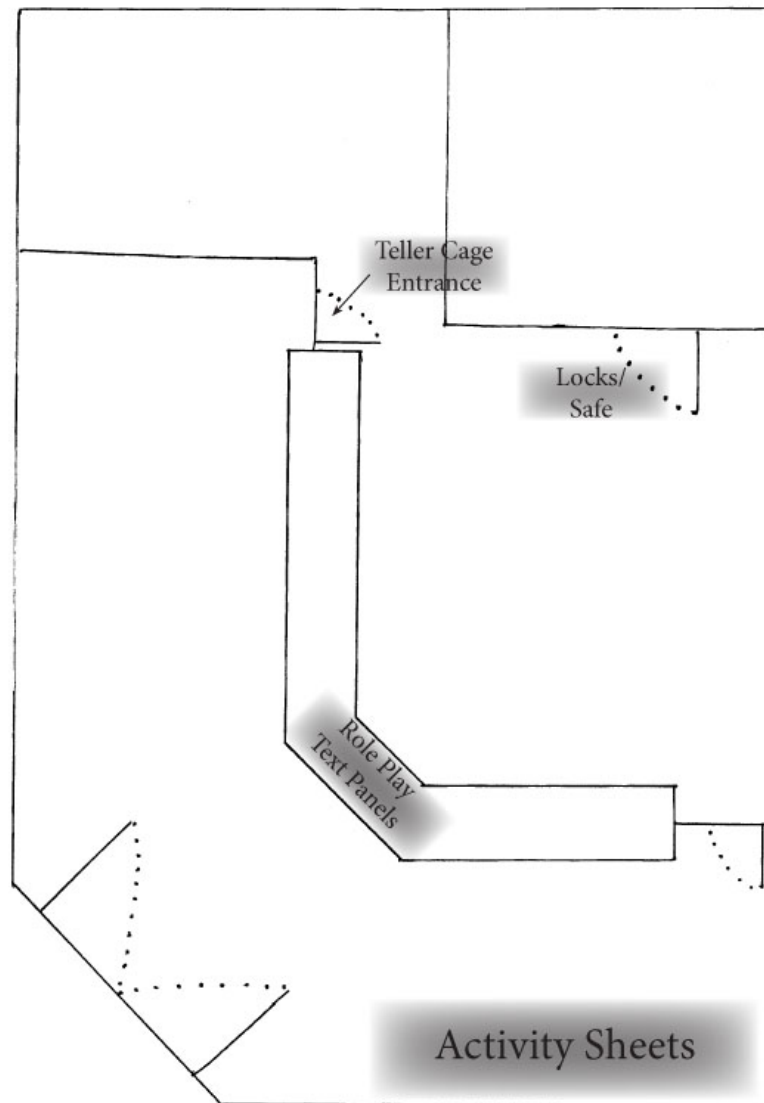
The percentages show no clear pattern. However, they do show a great diversity of preferences. This supports the notion that a variety of techniques are essential to engage all types of learners.

Supporting the quantitative rankings, qualitative measurements were gathered through observations. These observations garnered data useful in determining the engagement level of the activities. Parents and teachers were not given the option of ranking the three activity sheets separately. Therefore, only through observation could it be determined the likeability of each individual activity sheet. Observation showed that only two of the three activity sheets were actually used. The math-centered activity sheet about collateral was widely ignored by children, even when adults tried to encourage

them to utilize it. This dismissal is thought to be the by-product of heavy use of text on the sheet, possibly giving the impression that the directions were unclear or too complicated.

Other issues were also noticed during round one observation. Due to large volumes of children (either with school groups or with families on special event days) entering the bank at once and participating in the activities, the door to enter the teller cage within the bank was consistently being pushed and knocked into the counter behind it or closed altogether. (The location of the teller door can be found on the floor plan on the following page.) An additional physical issue with the bank interior included the counter height behind the teller cage. It stands at 42 inches, and many children could be seen pulling themselves up, avoiding this area because they were too short, or climbing on top of stools to see. Also, traffic flow tended to bottleneck by the front door as the activity sheet table was to the immediate right and there were signs encouraging role-play to the immediate forefront on the teller window. (See the floor plan on the next page for visual.) Despite the role-play sign being in open view, this activity showed little to no engagement unless encouraged by adults. Several factors may have initiated this: the verbiage being too complex or not attention-grabbing enough; children's desire to engage in other tactile learning opportunities; or the sign may have simply been too high for them to see or read. Also noted through observation was that few children made the effort to memorize the combinations for the locks and they also had issues recognizing the tick mark on the locks to indicate where to turn the lock face.

Citizen's Bank Building Floor Plan:



### *Staff Mid-Implementation Interview Data Summary*

After the first round of surveys with parents and teachers in addition to observations of children's behavior, a second round of staff interviews was conducted to determine staff opinion on changes that needed to be made or procedures that should be continued. Also gauged was the staff opinion pertaining to the study's ability to aid DHV in the bank revitalization project and be in line with previous implementations of the revitalization project at DHV. Project-relevant responses are presented below, delineated by each question given to the interviewees.

The data from the interviews indicated that staff felt the surveys and observations conducted were helpful in determining what would work when the reinterpretation was put into place. The results also indicated that staff members felt the activities were beneficial to the learning process and would blend well with the existing revitalization at DHV if implemented.

*Do you think the activities tested in the bank will increase the activity level?*

- "Absolutely! Right now, the only way people can learn is by looking. And looking usually doesn't take that long."

*Are there any activities you would like to see added or changed?*

- No

*Are the activities and set-up cohesive with the other reinterpretation projects taken on by DHV?*

- "Yes. It's a great combination of asking people to do something, as well as information being presented in more traditional ways."
- "Yes. The bank project is a logical extension of what we have done in the General Store, and what we have planned in other buildings, including the Depot."

*Do you have any concerns you would like to see addressed in regard to the activities?*

- No

As a result of the interview responses, it was determined that the activities were serving the needs of DHV staff, so there were no specific changes based on staff concerns.

### *Modifications to Activities*

As a result of the data and observations gathered during the first round of surveys and observations, the following changes were implemented before the second round:

- Due to the collateral activity sheet's relative disregard, it was traded out for a new activity sheet encouraging visitors to think about how banking has changed since the 1800s, requiring them to determine elements of a 1800s vs. elements of a 2000s bank.
- Door to teller cage will be tied down to prevent it from hitting the counter or closing.
- Some wording was changed on the role-play signs to further encourage visitors to take part in the activity.
- The role-play-encouraging text panels was moved to a different teller window in order to avoid bottlenecking and lowered to allow children to more easily read the sign. (See next page for visual representation. On the top, the first location. On the bottom, the second location.)

Position during first-round role-play:



Position during second-round role-play:



### *Round Two Data Summary and Observations*

The survey and observations methods reflected the visitor experience well during the first round of the study, and therefore were not changed or used differently during the second round of the study. However, changes were made to the activities based on the visitor feedback received during round one. Formative evaluation such as this is essential for the improvement of programs and activities, which is why a second round was conducted with the goal of determining if changes to the project's activities would make a difference. The results showed an improvement in engagement due to the changes made between round one and round two. For example, observations provided evidence that role-play was engaged in more often after the text panel was moved to a more universal eye-level (to include children), and the newly-implemented compare/contrast activity sheet was used more often than the previous collateral activity sheet it replaced.

When examining the results from all 11 surveyed parents together, 81.51% of parents ranked the activities (as a cohesive whole) in the 4 – 5 range, which showed an overall improved ranking in favor of the activities presented (from 61.54% in round one). Looking individually at the survey questions, 81.81% of the parents had a favorable opinion of how their children felt about the activities with a ranking of 4 or 5 (chart 7). Furthermore, 72.72% also felt (with a ranking of 4 or 5) that the activities helped their children learn something (chart 8), and 90.00% reported (through a 4 – 5 ranking) that the activities enhanced the learning experience (chart 9). This shows that the activities made a positive impact on visitors who entered the bank. These totals allow for the conclusion that activity modifications were successful. On the following page is the full breakdown of the percentage of parents who provided each ranking:

Chart 7

The activities presented related to and/or reinforced topics of interest to your child	
Ranking of "1"	9.09%
Ranking of "2"	0.00%
Ranking of "3"	9.09%
Ranking of "4"	45.45%
Ranking of "5"	36.36%

Chart 8

You feel your child learned something through the activities	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	9.09%
Ranking of "3"	18.18%
Ranking of "4"	27.27%
Ranking of "5"	45.45%

Chart 9

The activities enhanced the learning experience	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	10.00%
Ranking of "3"	0.00%
Ranking of "4"	40.00%
Ranking of "5"	50.00%

Teachers reported survey numbers comparable to that of parents. In total, 6 teachers were surveyed, and they felt overall that the interactive activities provided a positive experience within the bank with 77.78% providing rankings in the 4 – 5 range, which showed an overall improved rating from round one to round two (with 50% in round one). Looking individually at the teacher-specific questions, 66.66% showed (with a ranking of 4 or 5) a favorable opinion of how the activities related to and/or covered topics from the classroom (chart 10), and 83.34% indicated (through a 4 – 5 ranking) that the activities engaged their students as well (chart 11). Furthermore, 83.33% of teacher ranked the activities a 4 or 5 in regard to them promoting learning styles used in the classroom (chart 12). This shows that the activities made a good impression on students who entered the bank. In total, teachers' data also reflects an increase of likeability and engagement from round one (50.00%) to round two (77.78%). These changes support the previous conclusion gathered from parental surveys that activity modifications were successful. The full breakdown of the percentage of teachers who provided each ranking can be seen below:

Chart 10

The activities presented related to and/or reinforced topics covered in the classroom	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	0.00%
Ranking of "3"	33.33%
Ranking of "4"	33.33%
Ranking of "5"	33.33%

Chart 11

The activities engaged your students	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	0.00%
Ranking of "3"	16.67%
Ranking of "4"	16.67%
Ranking of "5"	66.67%

Chart 12

The activities used learning styles the you like to promote in your classroom (linear thinking, problem-solving, etc.)	
Ranking of "1"	0.00%
Ranking of "2"	0.00%
Ranking of "3"	16.67%
Ranking of "4"	33.33%
Ranking of "5"	50.00%



As with the first round of surveys, the second round saw high rankings on the likability and engagement level numbers garnered from the surveys. This is also evident in the portion of the survey forms where parents and teachers determined which activities were liked most and least by their children and students. During the second round, data from parents indicates that their children liked all three of the activities fairly equally, but some children did not care for the role-play as much. Teachers overwhelmingly (with 71.43%) elected the lock activity as their students' favorite and the activity sheets (with 66.67%) as the least favorite. Below is the full breakdown of the percentage of parents and teachers who provided each answer:

<b>Parents</b>	Which activity did your child enjoy the most?		Which activity did your child enjoy the least?	
	Locks/Safe	36.36%	Locks/Safe	33.33%
	Activity Sheets	27.27%	Activity Sheets	11.11%
	Role Play	36.36%	Role Play	55.56%

<b>Teachers</b>	Which activity did your students enjoy the most?		Which activity did your students enjoy the least?	
	Locks/Safe	71.43%	Locks/Safe	16.67%
	Activity Sheets	0.00%	Activity Sheets	66.67%
	Role Play	28.57%	Role Play	16.67%

Again, this series of questions is quite subjective since different visitors have interests in different areas; meaning the data represents only the opinions of parents and teachers, not those of the children and students.

Observations generally supported the data gathered from the survey sheets during round two. However, during this round, observations contradicted survey data in relation to teachers' ranking of 0% of students enjoying the activity sheets the most. Monitoring student activities within the bank, it was noticed that many engaged with the activity sheets, but did so without their teacher present. This example shows that, in many cases,

qualitative data from observations combined with quantitative data from surveys gives a clearer picture.

Other observations concluded that all three activity sheets (once the collateral-based one was replaced with a new topic) were used relatively equally by visitors. Also, the re-wording and movement of the role-play text panel encouraged more children and students to partake in role-play activities. Lastly, the most significant observation showed that many visitors overwhelmingly preferred to manipulate period-specific banking equipment (typewriters, adding machines, etc.) in conjunction with role-play activities. This was not separated out on the survey forms, and is therefore immeasurable through quantitative methods. However, through observation, it can be deduced that imaginary role-play alone was not sufficient as three-dimensional artifacts add an authenticity that interests many visitors.

Comments that were provided on some survey forms added another dimension to the summary of gathered data by providing supplemental information. The main suggestion from parents and teachers was to provide a first-person interpreter in order to help better engage visitors and to better disseminate information. The other main suggestion was to continue encouraging a hands-on approach, especially utilizing nineteenth century banking equipment. This supports the use of both directed and free-choice approaches.

### *Staff Post-Implementation Interview Data Summary*

After both rounds of surveys and observations from families and school children, a third group of staff interviews were conducted to determine staff opinion on the overall success of the activities, their ability to fit in with current DHV revitalization, and their feasibility of continuation. Project-relevant responses are presented below, delineated by each question given to the interviewees.

*Do you think the activities tested in the bank will increase the activity level?*

- Yes
- Certainly

*Were the activities and set-up cohesive with the other reinterpretation projects being taken on by DHV?*

- “Yes, they fit very well with recent efforts we have made across the board to be more interactive.”

*Did the activities offer a reinterpretation of the bank that you envision DHV keeping?*

- “Absolutely!”

The data from the interviews indicated that staff felt the study was successful in aiding DHV in moving forward with the bank’s reinterpretation process. The results also indicated that staff members felt the activities would blend well with the existing revitalizations at DHV if implemented.

## **Conclusions**

### *Summary of Project Results*

One of the primary concerns voiced by DHV staff was to increase the engagement level with visitors in the Citizen's Bank building. One staffer noted in the pre-implementation interview that the bank should be "a place where people can go, including kids, to learn something about banks..." In addition, staff hoped to increase the amount of time each visitor spends in the bank as well as knowledge about how banks worked and their centrality to early Texas communities. Previously, many visitors walked into the bank, spent a few moments inside, and exited. Consequently, this left little time for learning to take place, so observations were employed to determine if newly implemented activities were fulfilling staff concerns, and surveys were administered to get a sense of the level of effectiveness of the activities.

The survey and observation data showed that visitors not only enjoyed having activities to engage in, but also spent more time in the bank. Ultimately, this provides an opportunity for more effective learning to take place. These new opportunities did engage visitors which was supported by the survey and observation data. Staff at DHV also felt the activities were an effective and constructive change within the Citizen's Bank building.

### *A Blended Approach to Interpretation at Dallas Heritage Village*

After the surveys and observations were carried out and all rounds were completed, data indicated that applying a free-choice element to the bank in conjunction with some directed elements yielded positive results. Overall, visitors responded well to a mixture of directed and free-choice interpretation, such as that which is seen in the already-reinterpreted Blum Brothers General Store. During this project, the activity sheets, role-play, and locks all succeeded in more fully engaging visitors. In addition to the activities designed for this project, the ability to use nineteenth-century banking equipment already in place within the bank building appeared (through observation) to be the favorite activity of all visitors (regardless age or respective group: school or family).

The blended use of both directed elements (such as text, instructions, pamphlets, and interpreters when available) and free-choice interpretation (such as a variety of hands-on components, role-play, and choosing from a variety of activity sheets) successfully addresses two needs: 1) engaging different types of learners; and 2) recognizing the financial challenge of full-time staff presence.

A successful dual interpretation model in the bank would offer the ability for visitors to engage in hands-on and/or free-choice learning through role-play, period-specific banking equipment manipulation, and other pertinent activities such as those used in this project. When possible, in order to more fully engage and educate visitors, a more directed interpretation would be present in the form of semi- or completely docent-guided tours as well as labels and instructions.

Based on the current business model and resources available at DHV, staff numbers may limit the personnel available to provide guided tours to every guest or

group of guests, so a model of interpretation that can be used for self-exploration and well as during tours will be the most beneficial. Evidence of this was seen during the project as the activities were able to handle as few as 2 to 3 drop-in visitors, or 10 to 15 visitors completing semi-guided visits (using an existing question-and-answer guide while on school tours). Furthermore, the cost of producing activity sheets and simple educational components, such as the lock activity, is minimal. These components can easily be augmented and/or changed when needed in order to best suit the needs of the institutions and its visitors.

#### *Project and Survey Limitations*

One of the primary limitations within this project was that of sample size. Because DHV is a multi-building outdoor organization, there is no guarantee that every visitor will enter the bank. Therefore, visitation numbers within the bank were unpredictable and, on some observation days, were quite low. In addition to this, the project was conducted over a time period of only two months. The limited time frame allowed for few disruptions in the schedule. When incidents such as inclement weather occurred, a new schedule needed to be pieced together to accommodate the short time span. This also allowed enough time for only two rounds of surveys and observations. Although the total number of survey participants (36) was too low to result in visitor-wide generalizations, it was enough to confirm that activities did engage visitors and to some degree gauge what visitors' opinions were of the activities presented.

In regard to DHV, as with many outdoor historical sites, the most unpredictable matter was that of weather. Since DHV is a primarily outdoor property, its attendance is

heavily influenced by weather. On more than one occasion over the course of the project, weather influenced attendance numbers, which directly correlated with the number of visitors available for surveys and observations. When poor weather occurred, attendance numbers dropped, leaving fewer constituents available for surveys and observations. Based on such a limited sample, results cannot be yielded that can be generalized to the entire visitor base. However, this project does give DHV insights into preferences of and possible ways to successfully engage visitors.

The creation and implementation of survey instruments also presents challenges. Some teachers (and also some parents during family visits) may have felt pressured to complete the survey and rushed through the questions without considering them fully. In addition to this, the possibility of those surveyed providing answers they felt were “polite and positive” sometimes occurs. Although parents and some teachers ranked activity sheet positively, observation indicated that only two of the three activity sheets were utilized in round one. This is why using basic observation as part of the evaluative process is important. Observation provides the opportunity to gather data not collected via surveys.

Surveys and observations were valid ways to evaluate; however, it was the use of formative evaluations that mattered most. This process was essential in regard to this project. Conducting two rounds of surveys and observations not only confirmed the validity of the potential of the activities for implementation within the bank, but it also provided an iterative component to the study. Through this, it became evident that through quick and easy changes to the activities, a marked improvement in likeability and

engagement level emerged. Lastly, the evaluation process provided an opportunity to assess how the activities worked within a historic building.

Before the project began, several staff concerns were brought forth about not only the safety of the building and collection items, but about the safety and comfort of visitors as well. These included apprehension about installing any permanent exhibit components or altering the physical elements of the bank, as well as floor plan conundrums and visitor safety issues.

Since this project required engagement with an operational historic village, it was imperative to work closely with DHV in order to determine the needs, concerns, and ideas of staff; not only for ease of the project, but also to yield results that may be useful to DHV in the upcoming reinterpretation of the Citizen's Bank building. For these reasons, building-specific concerns expressed by staff, coupled with observation during the project, resulted in some specific recommendations. The following list details those concerns:

- The teller cage counter stands at 42 inches above the ground, and is therefore difficult for many small children to see over. In the interest of safety for visitors (so children no longer attempt to pull themselves up to of try to climb over the counter) and the counter itself (visitors pulling themselves up on the counter may damage it over time), a step box (or similar apparatus) may circumvent this problem.
- Since current visitors are not regularly allowed behind the teller cage, a narrow space is all that remains for visitors to move around in while entering the bank. This became an issue during the project when foot



traffic bottlenecked in specific areas. Observations during both rounds of the project resulted in the conclusion that the teller cage should be opened to the public.

- During pre-implementation interviews, several staff members expressed the desire to allow visitors access to the entirety of the bank. However, one staff member suggested access only be allowed for special occasions or school tours, offering more control over building access.
  - When visitors were allowed behind the teller cage during the project, some issues arose with the archival material stored in drawers or on shelves. These were occasionally handled since it was difficult to delineate that only a few areas were open to hands-on learning. In particular, many visitors failed to take notice of the barrier between the teller area and the stanchioned-off area of the bank president's desk; on which resided several archival documents.
  - When visitors were allowed behind the teller cage during the project, one major area of staff concern had to be taken into account: the safe vault door. There are many moving parts on the door, offering many opportunities for visitors to injure themselves or damage the door, should they be allowed to manipulate the door. During the project, activity tables were set up in front of the vault in order to discourage visitors from maneuvering the door.

- During the first day of surveying and observing, it was clear the door that allows access to the teller cage required securing. It continually would collide with the counter behind it or close.
- The last issue in regard to the bank building is one of visibility. Upon entering the bank, visitors are greeted with a teller window covered by bars. This is standard of the time period, but the bars block the view inside the teller cage. Upon examination, it appears the teller window bars may be able to open. If opened, it may allow for maximum visuals behind the teller cage upon entering the building, maximizing full-building views, and therefore engagement.

Despite challenges and limitations that had to be addressed, the project yielded meaningful results. It showed that through adding simple educational activities within the Citizen's Bank building, the engagement level increased. Surveys and observations garnered data to support this. As a result of conducting two rounds of surveys and observations, engagement and likability were increased through minor adjustments suggested primarily through simple visitor observation. With the cooperation of the visitors and helpful input from the staff at Dallas Heritage Village, this project demonstrates that improvements to interpretive approaches can be made with minimal resources.

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## **Appendices**

### *Appendix A: Interview Questions*

#### Pre-Implementation Interview Questions:

What might be done in the bank building in order to increase the activity level?

Are there any activities, specifically, that you would like to see placed in the bank?

What is the end result that you envision for the bank?

Do you have any concerns you would like to see addressed within the bank?

#### Mid-Implementation Interview Questions:

Do you think the activities tested in the bank will increase the activity level?

Are there any activities you would like to see added or changed?

Are the activities and set-up cohesive with the other reinterpretation projects being taken on by DHV?

Do you have any concerns you would like to see addressed in regard to the activities?

#### Post-Implementation Interview Questions:

Do you think the activities tested in the bank will increase the activity level?

Were the activities and set-up cohesive with the other reinterpretation projects being taken on by DHV?

Did the activities offer a reinterpretation of the bank that you envision DHV keeping?



*Appendix B: Survey Forms*

PROTOTYPE TESTING SURVEY - TEACHERS  
KELLI CAVENAH, BAYLOR UNIVERSITY  
DALLAS HERITAGE VILLAGE BANK

Survey Date:

**Please rate the following questions from 1-5**

**1 being the worst**

**5 being the best**

1) The activities presented related to and/or reinforced topics covered in the classroom

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2) The activities engaged your students

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3) The activities used learning styles that you like to promote in your classroom  
(ie: linear thinking, tactile learning, problem-solving, etc.)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4) Which activity did your students enjoy the MOST?

Locks/Safe                      Activity Sheets                      Role Play

5) Which activity did your students enjoy the LEAST?

Locks/Safe                      Activity Sheets                      Role Play

Any additional comments/suggestions?

*Appendix B: Survey Forms*

PROTOTYPE TESTING SURVEY - PARENTS  
KELLI CAVENAH, BAYLOR UNIVERSITY  
DALLAS HERITAGE VILLAGE BANK

Survey Date:

**Please rate the following questions from 1-5**

**1 being the worst  
5 being the best**

1) The activities presented related to and/or reinforced topics of interest to your child?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2) You feel your child learned something through the activities?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3) The activities enhanced the learning experience?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4) Which activity did your child enjoy the MOST?

Locks/Safe                      Activity Sheets                      Role Play

5) Which activity did your child enjoy the LEAST?

Locks/Safe                      Activity Sheets                      Role Play

Any additional comments/suggestions?

*Appendix C: Observation Form*

PROTOTYPE TESTING OBSERVATIONS  
KELLI CAVENAH, BAYLOR UNIVERSITY  
DALLAS HERITAGE VILLAGE BANK

Observation Date:

1) How often is each activity interacted with (please tally)?

Locks/Safe	Activity Sheets	Role Play

2) Approximate time (in minutes) spent at each activity?

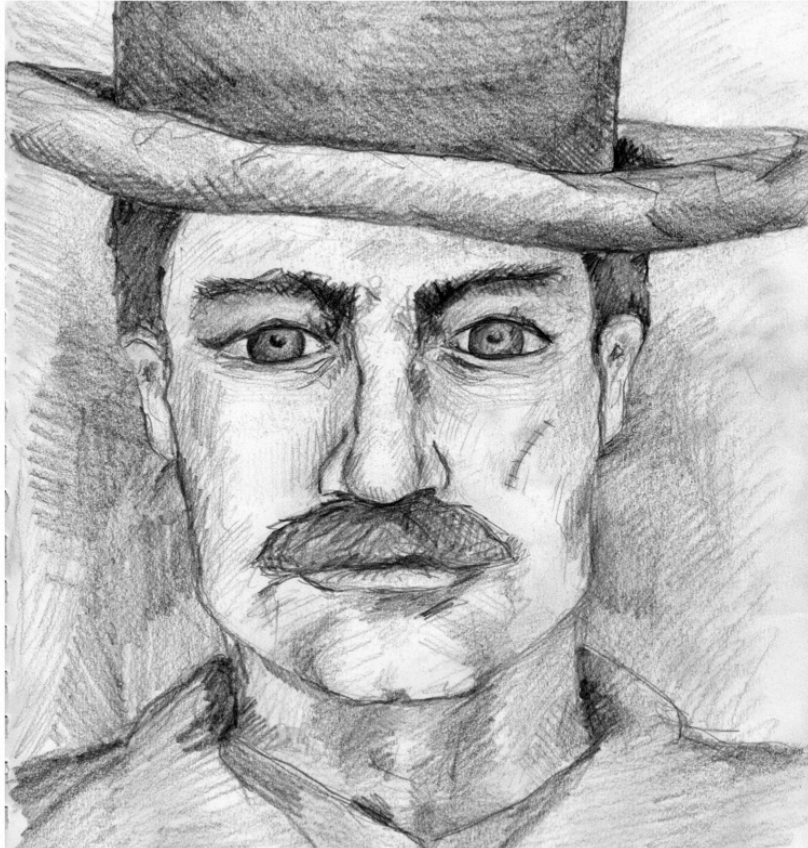
Locks/Safe	Activity Sheets	Role Play

3) Anything spoken that is pertinent to the continuation, termination, or adjustment of the activities (write quote only, no identifiers)?

Locks/Safe	Activity Sheets	Role Play

## Could you help find a bank robber?

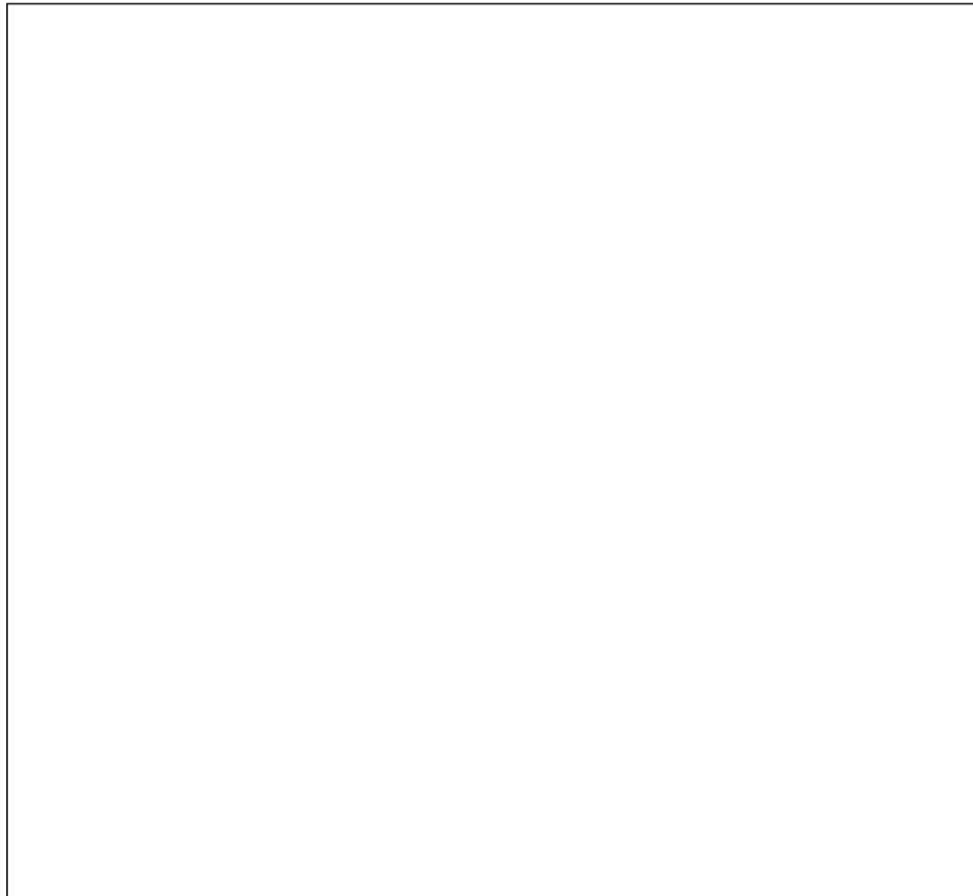
Using the picture, circle the words that would help the Sheriff find the bank robber



<b>Man</b>	<b>Thin Eyebrows</b>	<b>Dark Skin</b>	<b>No Facial Hair</b>
<b>Woman</b>	<b>Bushy Eyebrows</b>	<b>Light Skin</b>	<b>Moustache</b>
<b>Old</b>	<b>Fat</b>	<b>Freckles or Spots</b>	<b>Beard</b>
<b>Young</b>	<b>Skinny</b>	<b>Tall</b>	<b>Short Hair</b>
<b>Cowboy Hat</b>	<b>Muscular</b>	<b>Short</b>	<b>Medium Hair</b>
<b>Top Hat</b>	<b>Big Nose</b>	<b>Small Ears</b>	<b>Long Hair</b>
<b>Scars</b>	<b>Small Nose</b>	<b>Big Ears</b>	<b>Bald</b>

**Could you help find a bank robber?**

**Using the description below, draw a picture that would help the Sheriff find the bank robber**



**The man wanted for the robbery of the bank in Dallas was 6'3", skinny, and 25 years old. When he stole from the bank, he was dressed like a cowboy, and wore a cowboy hat. His black hair is long and he has thin eyebrows and a big nose and big ears. The robber has light skin and a beard. If you have seen this man, please let the Sheriff know.**

## What would you do in 1890 if you needed money from the bank, or a loan?

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*If you needed money, you would take out a loan from the bank, just like you can today*

Today, you can take out a loan for \$10,000 if you have a car worth \$10,000. If you don't pay back the bank for your loan, they take your car.

In 1890, it was very similar. If you needed \$4,000, you would need to tell the bank you would give them things you had worth \$4,000 if you didn't pay them back.

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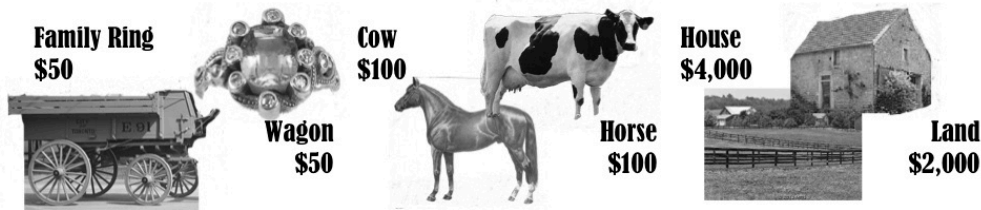
Use the images and prices below to determine what you might need to borrow each amount of money from the bank

**Example:**

If you needed a loan for \$2,300, you would need to tell the bank you would give them your family ring (worth \$50), your wagon (worth \$50), your cow (worth \$100), and your land (\$2,000) if you didn't pay them back.  $(50+50+100+2,000=2,300)$

**A loan for \$2,300:**

FAMILY RING, WAGON, COW,  
HORSE, LAND



**A loan for \$2,200:**

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**A loan for \$6,000:**

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**A loan for \$4,150:**

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**A loan for \$250:**

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What items would you find in a bank in the 1800s?  
What items would you find in a bank in the 2000s?

Look at the items below, and think about if you would find it in  
a bank in 1885 or if you would find it in a bank in 2005.

Draw a line from the item to the century it belongs in.



1800s

2000s