



Decision Support for Development of Interpretive Approaches

Phase 2:

Findings from Qualitative Market Research

Prepared for:

The Civil War History Consortium

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND APPROACH.....	1
II.	KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS	3
	A. Experiences and Benefits Sought from Visits to Historic Sites and Museums.....	3
	B. Key Implications of These Findings for CWHC.....	8
	C. Assessment of Philadelphia as a Civil War Destination.....	9
	D. Key Implications for the CWHC Effort	13
III.	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	14
	APPENDIX	

I. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

Objectives

The Civil War History Consortium (CWHC) – a group of organizations and individuals dedicated to exploring the development of the Philadelphia region as a Civil War history destination – has been convened to assess the viability of this opportunity and to develop a strategic plan for going forward if so determined.

In order to assist CWHC in this effort, The Melior Group, a marketing research and consulting firm in Philadelphia, is conducting research with partners and potential partners of CWHC, regional community stakeholders, and key audiences. This research has three phases:

- Phase 1: in-depth interviews with partners and potential partners of CWHC
- Phase 2: focus groups with consumers and in-depth interviews with regional stakeholders and experts (recommended by interviewees in Phase 1)
- Phase 3: a consumer survey of prospective visitors.

Key objectives of the research are to:

- Identify the key themes and areas of value which will be essential to develop and interpret the regional Civil War history experience;
- Determine how best to position and market the region's Civil War treasures to target audiences; and
- Identify optimal marketing approaches for the venture and the overall potential for success.

The first phase of the research – interviews with partners and potential partners – was summarized in a report to CWHC in December 2005. This report summarizes the findings of the second phase of the research – focus groups with consumers and supporting highlights from interviews with regional stakeholders and experts. The third phase will consist of a broader market evaluation of themes which emerged as preferred in the focus groups and interviews.

Research Approach

Three focus groups were held with consumers to review themes that emerged in the Phase 1 research. Selection criteria for each of these groups were designed to compose a set of participants who represented key audience viewpoints.

- The first group was composed of teachers of grades fourth through twelfth and parents of children age 5 through 18. (In some cases, the individual was both a teacher and a parent.) These participants were also screened for having a general interest in history. This group represented a range of ages and included white and African-American participants.
- The other two groups were composed of adults with an interest in U.S. history. One group was African-American only, while the other group included both whites and African-Americans. A range of ages was represented in both these groups.

The three groups were held at a professional focus group facility in Bala Cynwyd, PA. The first group was held on February 9, 2006, and the second two groups were held on February 16, 2006. Additional information on the group participants is contained in the Appendix.

The focus groups were observed by representatives from CWHC and were audio taped for research purposes. Senior consultants from The Melior Group moderated the focus groups using a discussion guide developed by Melior with input and approval from CWHC staff. The focus group guide is attached in the Appendix.

What follows are findings from the focus groups. It is important to note that this form of research is purely qualitative in nature and provides directional information only. Results reported from this research, while stated as conclusions, are actually hypotheses based on observations and informed analysis. Any quotations used in the report are presented to clarify particular points; they represent the words of individual contributors to the discussions.

II. KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

A. Experiences and Benefits Sought from Visits to Historic Sites and Museums

In order to assess the appeal of possible programmatic themes, it is important to understand the context in which visitors with an interest in history approach sites of interest. This includes their identification of the critically important elements of a museum or historical site visit to them and the key benefits they want to experience or take from those visits.

Museum/Site Visiting

As they had been screened for an interest in history and visiting historical museums and sites, it was assumed that the participants in these focus groups would be reasonably experienced in visits of this type. This was amply demonstrated by their comments. They detailed a broad range of destinations both within and outside of the Philadelphia area.

- On the list of destinations were some that almost all participants had visited at least once. These might be called the “must-sees” and included such institutions in the Philadelphia region as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Academy of Natural History, the Betsy Ross House, Valley Forge, and the National Constitution Center. Outside of Philadelphia, many had been to Williamsburg and the Smithsonian.

Whether the participant was younger or older, parent or not, or white or African-American made little difference in this list. Most had experienced one or more of these “must-see” destinations.

- The special tastes of each of the audience segments were reflected in the rest of their destination choices. An implication for the CWHC is that these audiences will need to have specific preferences addressed.
 - Parents and teachers mentioned some destinations with a, perhaps, more education-specific purpose (such as the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the Quaker meetinghouses tour). Of course, they also named destinations that appeal to children (Lights of Liberty, National Liberty Museum).
 - Adults with an interest in history included some sites that, by their own admission, might be considered too adult for children (Mutter Museum, Holocaust Museum and Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington).
 - African-American participants, not surprisingly, had a strong interest in African-American-related sites and museums. (This was in addition to a wide range of other destinations.) All had been to the African-American

Museum in Philadelphia and most had visited the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum in Baltimore.

Key Audience Goals for Museum/Site Visits

Asked what they want to get out of their museum and historic site visits – essentially, what their goals are when they go to a specific site – participants made revealing observations. These are especially relevant to how Civil War themes might be shaped to address the needs of target audiences.

- An experience or learning desired by all audiences (and observed in other research conducted on similar topics) is the past/present comparison. Most of the participants were very interested in the presentation of past lives – how ordinary people conducted their lives, “to find out how people started out in life,” in the words of one participant. In connection with this was an interest in objects and artifacts that bring past periods to life.

Teachers and parents said that they think it is important for children and students to understand the differences between how people lived in the past and now. There is both the element of appreciation for the relative ease experienced in the present as well as understanding the sacrifices of past generations. This includes a strong component of understanding and experiencing the lives of ordinary people. Their stories have a great deal of resonance and importance for all these audiences.

Particularly among African-American participants, there is a centrally held interest in being able to relate “experientially” to significant times and events. There is far less interest – and, more importantly, far less motivation – to experience something that might amount to homage to traditionally significant events or prominent historical figures.

In addition, and important to the CWHC’s efforts, is the interest of all audiences in understanding those themes and challenges that continue from the past into the present. Focus group participants readily identified the continuing struggle for civil rights as a critical, compelling example of this.

- Also important to all audiences is learning. As one participant said, an objective of a museum or historical site visit is to “*obtain knowledge I didn’t have.*” This is important both to the parent/teacher segment – that children and students have an opportunity to learn – as well as to adult visitors who are seeking their own enrichment.

Adult visitors who find learning to be a personal enrichment also put this in the context of discovering some additional stories or truths.

“I want to learn about unknown facts or things not widely known. It makes me feel like I know a little more than the average person.”

Underlying this expression of desire for learning unknown facts, African-American participants indicate that the desire arises from a resentment – that what has been taught and lauded about the Civil War (and much of early American history) obscures or omits unpleasant facts about the African-American experience.

While the different audiences have some common goals, there are also distinctions that will be valuable to observe as CWHC develops its own offerings. Some audiences had goals that were uniquely expressed.

- For African-Americans, a key goal was “to be proud.” This audience wants to learn about the contributions of African-American heroes (both sung and unsung). Beyond the simple declaration of wanting to be “proud” and the value of that, there is an emotional disquiet. Upon probing questioning, African-American participants indicate a thirst for recognition of black individuals as vital human beings and citizens – not through a paternalistic viewpoint that praises the benevolence of white benefactors on behalf of “slaves” or “African Americans” seen as abstractions only. A strong current of thought was expressed that white benevolence in some quarters was self-serving – and especially imbued with economic self-interest – and rife with compromise, rather than noble purpose.

Related to this is the strong feeling that history taught in schools has not been inclusive and that representation of the African-American story needs to be aggressively redressed in any historical destination that has a claim on truth.

“When you go to a site like Valley Forge, there is often nothing representational of our having been there.”

“Make Black history part of American history.”

- For adult visitors, there is also the need to experience the truth. “The truth” was identified by participants in all segments (including the African-American segment) as the more complicated stories – the untold stories that were not necessarily represented by “*those facts in textbooks.*” There was a deep need to be exposed to honest narratives that might be messy and inconvenient when compared to a more conventional and sanitized story, but would be more inclusive of marginalized viewpoints. These stories are seen as real.
- Parents and some other adult visitors were also interested in museum and historical site visits as important “*conversation starters*” – a means to begin dialogue with others. Parents saw the potential for visiting destinations such as these with their children as ways to connect with them and create opportunities to discuss topics of interest. This was expressed as both intellectually and emotionally enriching.

Adult visitors also focused on the rewarding aspects of discussion – both in small visitor groups (usually family or friends) and in a larger touring group, for example – during a given visit and also post-visit. Again, this is seen as an opportunity for enrichment and a means to connect in a different way with family, friends, etc.

This also touches on another key benefit to these visitors – that of inspiration. Although that precise word was not specifically used, participants in all three groups alluded to visit experiences that were important to them in the sense of being stirred by the depiction of past lives or historical challenges overcome. These were the stories they found to be satisfying on a deeper level.

Interpretive Elements: Audience Preferences

Understanding the preferences of target audiences for certain elements of the interpretation at a historical site or museum is also important to shaping the Civil War history experience in Philadelphia. Participants in the focus groups had some strong views on what should be available to them in order for a visit to be especially memorable, rewarding, or satisfying. These findings about preferences are consistent with consumer research The Melior Group has conducted with other museums and historical sites. Key elements that were of interest include:

- Interactivity: It is valuable to have an opportunity, especially for children, to have live interaction at the site. An example of this that participants found memorable was at the Betsy Ross House. Children were invited to join a short play that interpreted the house's history. This provided an exciting entrée for them into the history of the site as well as involving them in the story in an experiential way.
- Emphasis on the personal story: Interpretation of a site or historical period that includes strong stories about how people were affected by, or affected history is another important gateway for these audiences to the learning and experiences they seek. They have intense interest in the individual human aspects of a given time – wanting to see how people lived in that time – and find it satisfying to see history portrayed through the experiences of a specific person.

Focus group participants readily offered examples of this – the passenger ticket each visitor received at the Titanic exhibit (Franklin Institute), victims' names and personal belongings at the Holocaust Museum (D.C.), and vivid exhibits of lynchings and other episodes at the National Blacks in Wax Museum (Baltimore).

- Costumes and re-enactments: Related to the appeal of interactive interpretation and telling the personal story is the availability of costumed interpreters. Re-enactments are highly memorable and valued by these audiences. Especially for parents and teachers – for whom child/student appeal is paramount – re-

enactments have the double attraction of telling a story and holding children's interest.

For all audiences, costumes and re-enactments were seen as a way to bring events to life and put a human face on historical themes. This preference is bound up with other interpretive elements that participants cited as important to them.

- Material objects: Most of the participants said that the availability of objects from the past is another important part of illustrating the key story and helping provide an enriching experience. In addition to enhancing visitors' understanding of how past lives were conducted, the presence of objects makes the past/present comparison sought by many visitors much more vital. In fact, African-American participants expressed concerns that there would be very few material objects available to illustrate their story, as so few possessions had been allowed their 19th century ancestors.
- Uncovering the past: Implicit in the preference for all of these elements is the wish on the part of these audiences to experience something new, to find out about the "hidden facts," and to have a more personal encounter with history. As one historical tourism expert put it, "*They want to learn something that nobody else knows, something very personal and special to them. They want to stand there [on a historical site] and imagine what it's like.*"

These special stories and opportunities need to be woven into the overall fabric of the Philadelphia Civil War experience and thematically marketed to the prospective visitor.

B. Key Implications of These Findings for CWHC

- **Consumers who have an interest in history want to be informed, inspired and empowered by their experiences at a historical destination.** CWHC will have to develop the Philadelphia Civil War experience to strike a balance between the educational/informational aspects of a given interpretation and addressing the deeply emotional wish to be uplifted.
- **There is also a wish by all groups – but especially among African-Americans – to hear the truth and discover the untold stories.** CWHC will have to present a more complicated narrative to bring credibility to its presentation.
- **Presentation of regional Civil War era history will have to be personal and strongly story-oriented.** These audiences want to experience a given time period through the stories of past lives. They will have little interest in abstract representations of ideas.
- **African-Americans, especially, want to be represented in whatever is told and they want to feel that the story is truthful.** Being excluded in a meaningful way from past teaching of history – particularly of this powerful period – has left scars and skepticism. There is a hunger to set the story straight coupled with guardedness about trusting the honesty of the new narrative. This is a challenge to CWHC that will have to be met with transparency and representation of many voices.
- **Part of telling the story well involves enhancements with material objects and interactivity.** The interest in understanding the past/present comparison and an overall preference for experiential learning mean that re-enactments, opportunities for dialogue, and “props” from the past will be important. Just reading the label on the exhibit case is not enough for these audiences.

C. Assessment of Philadelphia as a Civil War Destination

A key objective of the research is to identify the themes that could represent the most appealing ways to organize the Philadelphia Civil War experience. Several themes were developed from feedback obtained in Phase 1 and 2 interviews with regional and national experts and CWHC partners and potential partners. These were reviewed by CWHC staff and Melior and determined to be the following:

- African-American participation in, and leadership of the abolition movement, and as Union soldiers (the 3rd Regiment).
- Efforts to shelter slaves, to help them gain their freedom, and to improve their condition through education and other means when they became free.
- Women's involvement in the social movements of the time and their leadership in homefront activities to support the Army (e.g., the Sanitary Fair of 1864).
- Care for the wounded and advances in medicine as treating large numbers of the injured was necessitated by the War (e.g., Mower Hospital).
- Philadelphia as the chief center for manufacturing, troop recruitment, transportation, and communications during the War.
- The theme of the War as the "second great test of the Constitution" and a continued working out of the quest for freedom for all.

These themes were tested with participants in the first focus group – parents and teachers on February 9, 2006. After reviewing their feedback, CWHC and Melior decided to combine the first two themes to make the following replacement:

- African-American leadership in the abolition movement, participation in efforts to shelter slaves and help them gain their freedom (Underground Railroad), and contribution to the actual fight by enlisting as Union soldiers (the U.S. Colored Troops).

Overall Awareness of and Interest in the Philadelphia Civil War Story

Participants in all three groups had no awareness of Philadelphia's involvement in the Civil War era. Consistent with findings in the Phase 1 interviews with partners and potential partners, these audiences strongly associated Philadelphia history with the 18th century.

- One key observation is that some African-American participants said that the Civil War stories of potential interest to them may have been suppressed by the white majority.

- Interest in the Philadelphia Civil War story was low on an unaided basis – that is, when simply asked how interested they were, with no added context or explanation, most participants said they had little interest.
- When the key themes were presented to the groups, the level of interest and involvement increased substantially. Having an organizing idea or topic to consider made an important difference in participants’ level of engagement. Even with an admittedly low level of knowledge about this topic as specifically applied to the Philadelphia area, these audiences were able to engage in thoughtful discussions of how the Civil War experience could be optimally presented.

Assessment of Potential Themes

Focus group participants were asked to review and assess the themes developed with Phase 1 findings and insights. There was a period of discussion of each theme, followed by a request to participants to indicate their most preferred theme and write a short description or “advertising tagline” explaining why visitors should engage in this Philadelphia Civil War experience. (A summary of these responses is contained in the Appendix.)

There was strong consensus around the theme of African-American participation with agreement at a lower level that the quest for freedom theme was appealing.

Theme 1: African-American leadership in the abolition movement, participation in efforts to shelter slaves and help them gain their freedom (Underground Railroad), and contribution to the actual fight by enlisting as Union soldiers (the U.S. Colored Troops).

Interest was by far the strongest for this theme, with more than half of all participants saying that they most preferred this one. Both African-American and white audience segments found this theme to be the most appealing.

- African-American participants’ comments about the theme focused on the telling of the African-American Civil War story as revealing the “*untold history*,” the “*hidden facts*,” and “*the Civil War you didn’t know*.” For them, this was a truth-telling opportunity. However, this was complicated by their strongly expressed suspicion that the story may not be truthfully told – that it would again be suppressed or dressed up to fit the white majority’s self-regard. For some, this especially turned on a deeply held belief that the Civil War was not – as depicted by this majority – a high-minded endeavor to free the slaves, but rather a conflict engendered by economic and political interests in the North and South.
- The comments of the groups composed of African-Americans and whites reflected a desire to hear the whole story – to hear the voices that have not been heard and experience the Philadelphia Civil War story as a story of diversity:

“Did you know that you could find all kinds of people fighting in the Civil War?”
“Hear us [African-Americans and other marginalized groups] speak. We were essential.” For them, this was an opportunity to explore how diverse individuals contributed to the history of this period.

Theme 2: The theme of the War as the “second great test of the Constitution” and a continued working out of the quest for freedom for all.

This theme was preferred by about one-third of the participants.

- Both white and African-American participants found this theme to be appealing. African-Americans tended again to frame the theme in terms of truth-telling: *“Hear the whole truth about the continued quest for freedom.”* *“Tell the truth about freedom.”*
- Other participants discussed the theme as an inspiring story of struggle and progress towards the goal of freedom for all. They used terms such as *“progression to freedom”* and *“Follow the trails to freedom.”*
- All three audiences connected with the notion of the “quest for freedom” involving key events and people on Philadelphia soil – the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, the prominent abolition movement, and support for the Union, including significant African-American enlistment in the army.

Even though some could not wholeheartedly embrace the idea of Philadelphia as *“a place of conscience”* (after all, slaves were sold and held here), there was agreement that efforts of Philadelphians of conscience were important in the era leading up to and including the War.

Remaining themes:

Women’s involvement in the social movements of the time and their leadership in homefront activities to support the Army (e.g., the Sanitary Fair of 1864).

Care for the wounded and advances in medicine as treating large numbers of the injured was necessitated by the War (e.g., Mower Hospital).

Philadelphia as the chief center for manufacturing, troop recruitment, transportation, and communications during the War.

There was weaker interest in the remaining themes.

- Each of these themes was cited as most preferred by only two participants overall.

- Although, in comparison to the themes of African-American involvement and the quest for freedom, the audiences did not strongly prefer these other themes, they did find elements of interest in each.
- Women found appeal in the stories of this era as told through women's perspectives. They also connected with this theme as a way to understand the history through ordinary people's lives. Men were less interested.
- The Philadelphia homefront story had limited appeal, although some found potential interest in the political backdrop and the tensions between ethical and economic considerations that manufacturers faced.
- Philadelphia as a "city of firsts" was a resonant element of the medical theme. For those who had no intrinsic interest in the medical story, the idea that advances in medicine were achieved here aligned with other notions of Philadelphia as a progressive community.

D. Key Implications for the CWHC Effort

- The African-American involvement theme was strongly endorsed across racial lines. It held great appeal for all audiences as a real and complex story that is also a quintessential Philadelphia story.
- African-Americans met these themes with deep skepticism about how truthfully they would be interpreted. There is a critical need for transparency, open communication and full representation of all viewpoints so that this story can be told and illustrated with utmost credibility.
- Thematic links between the African-American participation and quest for freedom stories were evident in discussions of each theme. Each enhances and enriches the other.
- A key finding that emerged from these groups is that all audience segments connected with the “quest for freedom” theme and understood it as a logical way to “bridge” from the events of the 18th century in Philadelphia to the Civil War era. This is a potential benefit to marketing efforts, as it can help the Philadelphia Civil War destination effort work with, rather than trying to work against, the strong “brand” image of Philadelphia as an 18th century history destination. This vital connection assists in presenting the Civil War era as “the rest of the Philadelphia story.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further program development and investigation that emerged from the key findings and implications of the Phase 2 focus group research with consumers are:

- Themes that appear most promising to potential visitors are African-American participation in the history of the era and the continuing quest for freedom in Philadelphia.
- Preference for these two themes should be tested and validated with a wider audience of visitors and travelers with an interest in history in order to assess overall potential and special appeal to any segments within that larger consumer market.
- The two themes should be tested and validated as separate themes and also as a combined version. Consumers in the three focus groups evinced enough interest in the connections between these two stories that it would be fruitful to gauge whether or not the sum has more impact than do the separate parts.
- Testing the themes with the wider audience should be conducted with a web-based panel of consumers screened for an interest in history, history-related travel interest, geographic proximity to Philadelphia (day's travel), and other relevant criteria. A web survey has the advantage of defining the scope specifically and allowing those surveyed to make thoughtful responses that are not limited by time.

APPENDIX

FOCUS GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

	Gender	Ethnicity	Have children?	Teachers	Age 21-40	41-60
Group 1 parents and teachers	3 men 9 women	3 AA 9 Cau	All	4	5	7

	Gender	Ethnicity	Age				
			21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
Group 2 AAs	5 men 5 women	All AA	1	3	2	1	3
Group 3 Adults	3 men 3 women	1 AA 5 Cau	1	1	2	2	0

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS' PREFERENCE FOR THEMES

Note: Some participants gave multiple responses so the total number of responses may exceed the number of participants in a given group.

1. Parents/teachers

Theme	# of ppts preferring	Selected commentary (“advertisements”)
African-American participation/leadership	2	<p><i>“African-Americans on the move.”</i></p> <p><i>“Did you know that you could find all kinds of people fighting in the Civil War? Well today you are going to meet the men and women who changed history forever.”</i></p>
Women	2	<p><i>“Going back to see life in the eyes of a young girl, then a young mother (one who worked and then maybe one that did not) and life as an older woman in that time.”</i></p> <p><i>“Experience the life of women.”</i></p>
Test of the Constitution	2	<p><i>“Have participants fill out a questionnaire – age, sex, education, race, property owner, etc. Based on their answers discover if they would have been truly free in that time.”</i></p> <p><i>“Our progression to freedom from the Monroe Doctrine to the Bill of Rights to the Emancipation Proclamation to Women’s Vote. How we have progressed from the Underground Railroad onward.”</i></p>
Philadelphia homefront	1	<i>“Come see one of the major backbones of the Union.”</i>
Help to free, assist slaves	1	<i>“Stories of how slaves accomplished their freedom, who they were, did they have help, how did they become educated.”</i>
Medical story	1	<p><i>“The healing of old wounds into new wounds.”</i></p> <p><i>“Philadelphia – a place where history begins and never ends.”</i></p>

2. African-Americans

Theme	# of ppts preferring	Selected commentary (“advertisements”)
African-American participation/leadership	7	<p><i>“The hidden facts of the Civil War.”</i></p> <p><i>“Come and experience Philadelphia – ‘the untold history.’</i></p> <p><i>“African-Americans – ‘our place in history.’”</i></p> <p><i>“The Civil War and the African-American experience.”</i></p> <p><i>“Come re-live history in Philadelphia.”</i></p> <p><i>“A look back to understand yourself.”</i></p> <p><i>“Philadelphia – a city to be seen and not heard.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Philadelphia story – the Civil War you didn’t know.”</i></p>
Test of the Constitution/quest for freedom	3	<p><i>“Philadelphia – hear the whole truth about the continued quest for freedom.”</i></p> <p><i>“Tell the truth about freedom.”</i></p> <p><i>“Philadelphia – a place of tension, release and resolution.”</i></p> <p><i>“Philadelphia – a place of paradox and paradise/or promised land.”</i></p>

3. Adults with interest in history

Theme	# of ppts preferring	Selected commentary (“advertisements”)
African-American participation/leadership	4	<p><i>“Come. Hear us speak. We were essential.”</i></p> <p><i>“A piece of history that uniquely affected a young nation struggling to find its identity. Philadelphia played an important role.”</i></p> <p><i>“Still rolling on – the Underground Railroad experience. Civil War start to Martin Luther King and beyond as the light at the end of the tunnel.”</i></p>
Test of the Constitution/quest for freedom	2	<p><i>“Explore the trails of history in Philadelphia.”</i></p> <p><i>“Follow the trails to freedom.”</i></p> <p><i>“Come learn and experience the unknown stories of Philadelphia’s involvement with the Civil War. Hear how many of our citizens were instrumental in helping in the struggle for freedoms and rights.”</i></p>
Philadelphia homefront	1	
Medical story	1	



Civil War History Consortium

Focus Group Discussion Guide

February 15, 2006 FINAL (revised)

Introduction

Here to talk about your experiences visiting historical sites and museums, generally, and discuss areas of interest with a focus on Civil War era history. Want to find out what is important and valuable to you about sites with a historical focus and historical museums. Also to assess some approaches to history presentation.

No right or wrong answers. Just want to hear what you think, your opinions and ideas.

Independent market researcher. My job is to facilitate discussion, so please feel free to speak openly and honestly about your likes and dislikes, make suggestions and generally be creative.

We will be taping our discussion to facilitate report writing. However, your responses are reported in the aggregate and your anonymity is assured.

Let's begin by your introducing yourselves – first name, where you live, family – ages of children if they are under 18 and living at home, occupation inside or outside the home.

General Museum-Going Experiences

Let's talk about your experiences going to historical museums or living history sites. What are your goals for these visits? What are you looking to get out of such a visit?

What are the types of experiences you want to have? [note on flipchart]

What makes a visit successful in your opinion?

Thinking about historical sites you visit, where do you go? [tally on flipchart] Which are most successful? Least successful? Why?

Which ones do you return to? Reasons for repeat visits? Which are “one and done?” Why?

If you think about history as presenting a story or theme, which of these sites/places had the strongest, most appealing stories for you? How would you (briefly) describe these stories?

What about the stories appealed to you? What about the way they were presented appealed to you [probe on these elements]?

Civil War Focus

[to the extent this is not covered in open-ended questions in section above] How much interest do you have in CW era history – by that I mean not just the War years but the history and events leading up to and following the War itself? Why/why not? What interests you in particular [probe on these topics]?

[to the extent not covered by above] What sites have you visited that relate to this topic? Which were successful? Which not successful? Reasons? Which did you visit again? Reasons?

Overall Awareness of Philadelphia as a Civil War History Destination

What about Philadelphia as a place to explore CW history material? How aware are you of people in this area important to this time and key events that took place in this area?

How much interest do you have in the Philadelphia CW story? Why/why not? [if low interest:] What would make you more interested?

Assessment of Themes

Several potential themes or stories have been identified that might be developed as the core of the Philadelphia CW experience. I am going to list them and then let’s go over them one by one. They are [listed on flipchart]:

- African-American leadership of the abolition movement, participation in efforts to shelter slaves and help them gain their freedom (Underground Railroad), and contribution to the actual fight as Union soldiers (the U.S. Colored Troops).
- Women’s involvement in the social movements of the time and their leadership in homefront activities to support the Army (e.g., the Sanitary Fair of 1864).
- Care for the wounded and advances in medicine as treating large numbers of the injured was necessitated by the War (e.g., Mower Hospital).

- Philadelphia as the chief center for manufacturing, troop recruitment, transportation, and communications during the War. Buildings from that era still standing. [What wasn't made here probably flowed through here.]
- The theme of the Civil War era as the continued working out of the quest for freedom for all.

Taking each of these themes individually, let's talk about the strengths and weaknesses of each as a concept on which to sell Philadelphia as a CW destination.

African-American story/theme [repeat brief description if necessary]

How interesting and appealing do you think this is as a theme? As you see it, what are the components of this story (or stories) that would be most compelling? Which are least compelling?

What you want to see in connection with this? What parts of this story would have to be "illustrated" in some way? i.e., to use material objects or materials or historical assets that visitors could actually touch or interact with in some way. Examples of how this might be done?

Which components would be easiest to put a human face on – i.e., to tell the story through the lives of ordinary people? Examples? Which would be most difficult?

How much do you think this theme would be enhanced by emphasizing CW history as a companion piece to the story told by the National Constitution Center – Philadelphia as a "place of conscience?"

How about illustrating this theme with the idea of a citizens' album – like a family album showing Philadelphia people who made an impact or were otherwise important in this time? They could be famous or "ordinary."

How would this theme be enhanced by supporting and highlighting it with a kick-off event or focus such as the CW 150 celebration in 2010?

[repeat questions for the remaining 4 themes]

..women

..medicine

.. manufacturing, etc.

.. struggle for freedom for all

Overall, which concept do you think would be most successful? Why?

If you had to write a one-line commercial for it, what would that be? [have them write down, then discuss]

Close

Do you have any comments or is there anything we haven't touched on?

What is the one thing that a CW history tourism organization could do to get visitors such as yourselves to view and visit Philadelphia as a CW capital?

Thank you!