

**A STUDY OF VISITATION AT LIVING HISTORY
FARMS AND AGRICULTURAL MUSEUMS**

by

Melissa Butler

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Public Horticulture

Summer 2006

Copyright 2006 Melissa Butler
All Rights Reserved

UMI Number: 1437428



UMI Microform 1437428

Copyright 2006 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

**A STUDY OF VISITATION AT LIVING HISTORY
FARMS AND AGRICULTURAL MUSEUMS**

by

Melissa Butler

Approved:

James E. Swasey, Ph. D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved:

Robert E. Lyons, Ph. D.
Professor, Plant and Soil Science, Longwood Graduate Program
Director

Approved:

Robin W. Morgan, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Approved:

Conrado M. Gempesaw, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Academic and International Programs

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge The University of Delaware and Longwood Gardens for providing the opportunity to study the field of public horticulture through the Longwood Program. Since leaving the university, the skills, connections, and core beliefs developed during studies and experiences have proven essential to my career and enriching to my life.

I also would like to acknowledge my thesis committee. Dr. Jim Swasey was a constant support throughout the long process. Dr. Bryant Tolles' expertise in the field of museum studies promoted a depth and viability that would have been absent otherwise. Finally, Mr. Stephen Miller whose familiarity with the living history museum industry helped guide the construction of the research to ensure its relevancy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ABSTRACT	x
Chapter	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 What is a Living History Museum (LHM)?	1
1.2 Goals of the Research	3
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 What is a Traditional Museum?	6
2.2 The Traditional Museum Visitor	7
2.3 An Examination of Related Fields	8
2.4 Why Bother to Study the Visitor?	11
3 MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY	14
3.1 The Visitor Aspect	14
3.2 The Institutional Aspect	18
3.2.1 Institutional Profiles	20
3.2.2 Institutional Questionnaire	22
4 RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	23
4.1 Demographic Information	24
The age of the respondents	25
The gender of the respondents	28
The respondents' level of education	30
The respondents' enrollment in school	32
The race, or decent, of the respondents	33
The number of times respondents had visited a living history farm museum	35
The respondent's satisfaction with his or her visit to the living history farm museum	38
The company with whom the respondent visited the living history institution	40

	The distance the respondent was willing to drive to visit a living history institution	42
	The length of time the respondent planned to be in the area of the living history institution	44
	The amount respondents were willing to pay to visit a living history institution	45
	The other activities respondents planned to do while in the area	47
	How respondents learned of the living history institution	49
4.2	Visitors' Perceptions of the Importance of Museum Amenities	52
	Locating the museum easily	52
	Discounts or coupons for admission	54
	A website about the museum	55
	Polite museum staff	58
	Knowledgeable guides at every site in the museum	59
	Learning from signs on exhibits	61
	Public classes on weekends or in the evenings	64
	A guidemap of the museum	65
	Nature and scenic trails	67
	Easy paths on which to walk	69
	A restaurant or snack and beverage machines	70
	A gift, souvenir, or museum shop	72
	Clean and ample restrooms	74
	Places to sit and rest	75
4.3	Visitors' Perceptions of the Importance of Various Characteristics of LHMs	76
	Watching costumed craftspeople at work	76
	Talking to someone who seems to come from a different time	78
	The historical accuracy of costuming	81
	Seeing authentic antique items	82
	Handling and using reproduction items	84
	Seeing and interacting with animals; Seeing, touching, and interacting with plants	86
	Watching re-enactments	88
	Participating in re-enactments	90
	The respondents' participation in, willingness to participate in, and willingness to pay to participate in a special event	91
	Learning	95
	Having fun	97
5	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	99
5.1	Percentage of Respondents Who Rated the Characteristics as "Very Important"	99
5.2	The Living History Museum Visitor Profile	100

5.3	Recommendations for Future Research	103
APPENDICES	.....	104
A: Visitor Survey	.....	105
B: The Institutional Questionnaire	.....	110
C: Human Subjects Review Board Letter of Exemption	.....	116
BIBLIOGRAPHY	.....	117

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The respondents' age at the four LHMs	25
Figure 2: The respondents' gender at the four LHMs	28
Figure 3: The respondents' level of education at the four LHMs	31
Figure 4: The respondents' current enrollment in school at the four LHMs	32
Figure 5: The respondents' race, or descent, at the four LHMs	34
Figure 6: Number of previous times respondents at the four LHMs had visited a living history farm museum	36
Figure 7: How the respondents at the four LHMs felt the visit met their expectations	38
Figure 8: The company with whom the respondents at the four LHMs visited the living history institution	40
Figure 9: The distance respondents at the four LHMs were willing to drive to visit a living history institution	43
Figure 10: The length of time respondents at the four LHMs planned to be in the area of the living history institution	44
Figure 11: The amount respondents at the four LHMs were willing to pay to visit a living history institution	46
Figure 12: The other activities respondents at the four LHMs planned to do while in the area of the living history institution	48
Figure 13: How respondents at the four LHMs learned of the living history institution	50
Figure 14: The respondents' perception at the four LHMs of the importance of locating the museum easily	53

Figure 15: The respondents' perception of the importance of discounts or coupons for admission at the four LHMs	54
Figure 16: The respondents' perception of the importance of a website about the museum at the four LHMs	55
Figure 17: The respondents' perception of the importance of polite museum staff at the four LHMs	58
Figure 18: The respondents' perception of the importance of knowledgeable guides at every site in the museum at the four LHMs	60
Figure 19: The respondents' perception of the importance of learning from signs on exhibits at the four LHMs	62
Figure 20: The respondents' perception of the importance of public classes on weekends or in the evenings at the four LHMs	64
Figure 21: The respondents' perception of the importance of a guidemap of the museum at the four LHMs	66
Figure 22: The respondents' perception of the importance of nature and scenic trails at the four LHMs	68
Figure 23: The respondents' perception of the importance of easy paths to walk on at the four LHMs	69
Figure 24: The respondents' perception of the importance of a restaurant or snack and beverage machines at the four LHMs	71
Figure 25: The respondents' perception of the importance of a gift, souvenir, or museum shop at the four LHMs	73
Figure 26: The respondents' perception of the importance of clean and ample restrooms at the four LHMs	74
Figure 27: The respondents' perception of the importance of places to sit and rest at the four LHMs	75
Figure 28: The respondents' perception of the importance of watching costumed craftspeople at work at the four LHMs	77
Figure 29: The respondents' perception of the importance of talking to someone who seems to come from a different time at the four LHMs	79

Figure 30: The respondents’ perception of the importance of the historical accuracy of the costumes at the four LHMs	81
Figure 31: The respondents’ perception of the importance of seeing authentic antique items at the four LHMs	83
Figure 32: The respondents’ perception of the importance of handling and using reproduction items at the four LHMs	84
Figure 33: The respondents’ perception of the importance of seeing and interacting with animals at the four LHMs	86
Figure 34: The respondents’ perception of the importance of seeing, touching, and interacting with plants at the four LHMs	87
Figure 35: The respondents’ perception of the importance of watching re-enactments at the four LHMs	89
Figure 36: The respondents’ perception of the importance of participating in re-enactments themselves at the four LHMs	90
Figure 37: The respondents’ participation in a special event the day of the survey at the four LHMs	92
Figure 38: The respondents’ willingness to participate in a special event in the future at the four LHMs	93
Figure 39: The respondents’ willingness to pay extra to participate in a special event in the future at the four LHMs	94
Figure 40: The respondents’ perception of the importance of learning at the four LHMs	96
Figure 41: The respondents’ perception of the importance of having fun at the four LHMs	97
Figure 42: The percentage of respondents at the four LHMs who rated the characteristics as “Very Important”	102

ABSTRACT

The purpose of a living history institution and what sets it apart from other museums is the preservation of both tangible historical artifacts and intangible folkways – the practices, customs, or beliefs shared by members of a group as parts of their common culture.¹ Less than 150 living history museums are recognized by the Association for Living History, Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM),² although the historic house or site museum is the most common type of museum in America (Grogg 1994, 1). While these museums are popular, relatively little literature or research has been produced regarding visitors to this type of institution.

The purpose of this study was to begin research that will reveal the characteristics of the typical living history museum visitor. Surveys were used to gather information regarding three areas of interest to museum administrators; visitor demographics, the visitors' perceptions of the importance of museum amenities, and the visitors' perceptions of the importance of various characteristics of living history museums.

The data collected found that the typical visitor to living history museums is female, between the ages of thirty-six and fifty-five, and highly educated. They place the greatest amount of importance on having fun and learning. They also consider the presence of polite and knowledgeable museum staff to be very important. Finally, the

¹ *The American Heritage Concise Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. "Folkway."

² The Association of Living History Farms and Agriculture Museums website, "So What Is Living History? Sounds like an oxymoron to me," <http://www.alhfam.org/alhfam.help.html> (accessed February 6, 2006).

presence of clean and ample restrooms was a vitally important aspect of a visit to a living history museum.

Knowledge of these and other visitor demographics and opinions should help museum administrators of all types and sizes of institutions make decisions influencing their institutions. This information can guide the development of programming, human resources management, and budget priorities and management. Making mission- and visitor-driven decisions should improve museum performance and audience numbers. Increased audiences will broaden each museum's ability to achieve its mission and justify its existence and professional validity.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Section 1.1: What is a Living History Museum (LHM)?

The purpose of a living history institution and what sets it apart from other museums is the preservation of both tangible historical artifacts and intangible folkways – the practices, customs, or beliefs shared by members of a group as parts of their common culture¹. In addition to preserving these folkways, living history museums have also devoted themselves to sharing with and educating the public through reenactments of those folkways. The Association for Living History, Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) consider living history institutions to be those that engage the public by using historic objects and surroundings in conjunction with the recreation of activities “to tell the stories of the people who used those objects” in the past.² An article published by the National Association for Interpretation details living history as:

the recreation of specific periods of the past or specific events utilizing living “interpreters” usually clothed and equipped with the correct tools and accouterments of a depicted era. Their representations portray celebrated occurrences as well as daily life of peoples and cultures. In utilizing many resources from archaeological remains, artifacts, personal journals, primary resources, anthropological cultural evaluations, and common sense, “living history” is able to present the closest tactile conception we have of our past. (Luzader 1996, 241)

¹ *The American Heritage Concise Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. “Folkway.”

² The Association for Living History, Farms and Agricultural Museums website, “So What Is Living History? Sounds like an oxymoron to me,” <http://www.alhfam.org/alhfam.help.html> (accessed February 6, 2006).

While the historic house or site museum is the most common type of museum in America, comprising nearly one-quarter of all museums in this country (Grogg 1994, 1), there are relatively few living history museums. Less than 150 are recognized by ALHFAM. Living history institutions are a relatively new branch of the museum industry. Open air museums originated with Skansen in Sweden in 1891 when buildings were included in an effort to preserve a pre-industrial culture. In the late 1920s the open air historical museum gained the breath of life when staff was “put to work recreating the work and the daily life of the people who populated these historic environs.”³ Now, seventy years later, the first-person interpretive techniques have become more expert, but competition for visitors’ leisure time in contemporary American society has become more challenging.

Research has shown that individuals learn better through hands-on methods (Bitgood 1986, 4). This approach to education is the keystone of any living history institution. These museums, by definition, educate the public about history by engaging them in a ‘real-life’ historical setting. Often the museum visitor can pick up a hammer or cooking utensil and see how a particular object or task feels. “The use of live interpretation through docent presentations and demonstration helps make the museum more exciting to segments of the audience that are not deeply involved with museums” (Loomis 1987, 254-5). Knowledge retention from experiences such as these has proven to be higher than retention from the old-fashioned museum approaches such as glass cases, velvet ropes, and auditorium lectures.

³ The Association for Living History, Farms and Agricultural Museums website, “So What Is Living History? Sounds like an oxymoron to me,” <http://www.alhfam.org/alhfam.help.html> (accessed February 6, 2006).

By all accounts living history museums and interpretation are looked upon favorably by the public. Douglas M. Knudson and his fellow authors cite research that states that 95% of the public attending living history programs in museums judge them to be better than traditional exhibits in “presenting historical information in a meaningful and enjoyable manner” (Knudson 1998, 340). Another source, *Interpretation for the 21st Century*, predicts a rosy future for this industry by stating the living history is widely popular with the public and this popularity continues to grow (Beck 1998, 89). With such glowing recommendations, professionals in this industry should feel confident that they are employed in a worthwhile and prosperous undertaking.

The average person travels to escape his everyday life (Pizam 1999, 9), a fact that is particularly to the advantage of living history museums. After all, they are being asked to step out of the present day and into the world as it was decades, even centuries, ago. The traveler’s eagerness to go back in time and create a meaningful experience for himself requires living history institutions to take great care in shaping the historical, educational, and entertaining environment into which they invite visitors to submerge themselves. Those institutions which can provide an experience that meets the expectations of their visitors will be able to both retain and gain new visitors.

Section 1.2: Goals of the Research

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the characteristics of living history museum visitors. Who are they? What do they need? What characteristics of a living history institution are important to them? By identifying and examining

answers to these questions, museum administrators will be able to establish priorities and develop programming that will improve the visitor experience, thereby retaining and increasing the core audience.

A second goal was to provide a starting point for individual institutions to look at their own particular audience and to combine that knowledge with efforts to expand and retain their audience while enriching the experience. Museums should be able to conduct their own visitor evaluations to see how they are similar or different from other living history museums. This will help administrators recognize what they can learn from similarities with other institutions, and conversely when they are dealing with problems or audience characteristics that are particular to themselves.

Many institutions grapple with the question of how to improve their practices. The answer to this question does not necessarily lie in further knowledge of the subject of the museum; rather, it lies in advanced knowledge of the museum's audience. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill states that:

Information about the uses of the institution in relation to resources is vital to demonstrate managerial competence. Museum staff will not be perceived as professionals by government, colleagues in other areas of leisure or educational work or other business colleagues, unless detailed knowledge of the operation of the museum can be called upon when required. No business can succeed if its managers do not know who wants its products or services. (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 54)

“Effective evaluation arms the decision-maker with additional information for establishing worth and pays its way either by opening up new possibilities, providing validation for existing ideas, or a combination of both” (Loomis 1987, 6). For example, knowing the activities a museum's visitors enjoy helps the museum educator develop

programming that will appeal to them. A visitor service manager can use knowledge of visitor needs to prioritize projects, purchases, and efforts. A director may discover that people are coming to his museum for reasons other than what was expected, or that museum objectives could be better met through different methods. “Knowledge of the general level and structure of patterns of museum... visiting will give a measure against which to assess achievements in individual institutions.” (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 55)

The researcher also had a personal motivation in undertaking this study. This research topic was chosen as a way to gain expertise in both the living history field and the field of visitor education and experience. This subject and this research have proven to be applicable in many career endeavors including living history and public horticulture.

There were two specific objectives to this research. The first was to gather general information about living history audiences; their likes, dislikes, interests, and demographics since relatively little research has been published in reference to this group. The second was to correlate that information to living history museum practices. The hypothesis supporting these objectives is that there are particular factors which museums can use to improve the visitor experience, and, in so doing, audience numbers. In the following chapter, the answers to these questions begin to emerge through a review of relevant literature.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Section 2.1: What is a Traditional Museum?

Before one can begin to explore the characteristics that define a living history museum, one must have an understanding of the traditional museum. The American Association of Museums (AAM) website estimates that there are approximately 17,500 museums in the United States⁴ (less than 150 of them being living history museums). The AAM defines a museum as an institution that makes a “unique contribution to the public by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the things of this world.”⁵ This website goes on to offer ICOM’s (The International Council of Museums) definition of a museum: “a non-profitmaking, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.” Finally, the AAM website lists the Federal Government’s definition of a museum as outlined in the Museum and Library Services Act. This Act states that a museum can be either

a public or private nonprofit agency or institution organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes, which, utilizing a professional staff, owns or

⁴ American Association of Museums website, “ABCs of Museums.” <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/abc.cfm> (accessed February 6, 2006).

⁵ American Association of Museums website, “What is a Museum?” <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/whatis.cfm> (accessed February 6, 2006).

utilizes tangible objects, cares for them, and exhibits them to the public on a regular basis.

The concept of a museum centers around the collection, preservation and display of tangible material objects. Living history museums do this, but they also add the feature of collecting and researching those *intangible* folkways mentioned in Chapter One.

In a broader sense, museums are much more than warehouses for artifacts. They are often highly social gathering places and community centers. Many museums are able to offer meeting places for clubs or outside organizations. They provide classes, lectures, volunteer projects, and myriad other opportunities for members of a local community to meet and establish connections with each other and with the museum.

Section 2.2: The Traditional Museum Visitor

The publication *Museums and their Visitors* states that the largest age group of visitors to museums is the 25-44-year-olds, with the bulk of the numbers in the older half of this age group. The publication goes on to extrapolate that this group is the most likely group to have children. The author also mentions that “people aged 45-59 are active, energetic, have generally completed... their child-focused years” implying that this group, while not the largest, is very important to museums (Hooper-Greenhill 1997, 63-4).

Museum visitors are cultivated from childhood. People who have grown up going to museums typically continue to visit museums in their adulthood. They are likely to

introduce their children into the museum-going culture, and are also users of other cultural institutions such as libraries and performing arts centers (Loomis 1987, 121).

While these demographics can generally be applied throughout the museum industry, many professionals may recognize that museum audiences reflect many different factors. Local population demographics, the subject of the particular institution, marketing methods, and specific programming activities influence museum audiences and create variances from the average.

A survey conducted on behalf of the Toledo Art Museum established that the museum's "heavy users" felt that visiting the museum fulfilled six major value criteria: 1.) being with people and engaging in social interactions, 2.) feeling that one is doing something worthwhile, 3.) feeling comfortable and relaxed in one's environment, 4.) being challenged by new activities, 5.) having an opportunity to learn, and 6.) being an active participant.

Section 2.3: An Examination of Related Fields

While volumes of research about visitors to traditional museums exist, relatively little research has been conducted specifically about audiences of living history institutions. In the course of this research, many sources were referenced from multiple disciplines, including traditional museums, parks and recreation, and the travel and tourism industry.

The tourism industry is primarily concerned with increasing its profits by increasing its consumers. In a similar manner, a LHM is greatly concerned with

increasing public knowledge about its subject by increasing its visitation. This profit-motivated mentality can repel many museum professionals.

There is still a great fear amongst some curators that making it easier for visitors to understand the ideas that collections represent and that exhibitions tackle will begin a slide into commercialism, poor scholarship, facile interpretation and mindless entertainment. This fear must be converted into an understanding and appreciation of the desire of a great many people to like museums and to find them both useful and enjoyable... (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 113).

Adopting this profit motivated mentality can be accepted by the museum community as a positive way to hone the marketing and visitor service abilities in a way that does not compromise the quality of the museum's experience or its mission. For example, Bitgood tells us that signs with fewer and larger words have greater holding power for visitors (1986, 8). The museum that applies this knowledge will create more effective interpretive signage even though each sign may not contain as much information as its creator originally hoped.

An interesting characteristic about audiences of living history institutions is that traditional museum writings are not the only ones that can apply. Studies directed at parks, including National and State Parks, apply equally because of their shared characteristics of being open air, conducive to socialization, adventurous, and attended as a leisure activity. One author, writing about national parks, makes a statement that strikes close to home for LHMs:

National parks by their very nature, contain natural or cultural features renowned for their exceptional qualities but which may also be rare, fragile and subject to damage from visitors or conflicting uses. (Butler 2000, 225)

The author goes on to describe the complexity of providing positive experiences for visitors while protecting the site they came to see (Butler 2000, 240). In the same way LHMs face the challenge of protecting the integrity of historical buildings, landscapes, and interpretations and maintaining the visitor experience at the same time. If museums take a another lesson from the parks industry, it will be understood that compromising a museum's historical integrity for the sake of visitor comfort, anachronistically paving sidewalks for example, can backfire on the institution because "visitors' satisfaction is closely correlated with environmental quality" (Butler 2000, 227).

Another field closely related to living history museums is that of professional storytellers. This industry has its own body of literature from which museum educators and interpreters can garner pertinent information. The author of *The Passionate Fact; Storytelling in Natural History and Cultural Interpretation* eloquently writes that

shared wisdom has evolved out of a participation with storytelling as a cultural, spiritual, and artistic tradition... a distinction that enables the story to be entertaining without becoming mere entertainment. The story is not something meant to be consumed as some aspirin, some antidote to life or some distraction from life. It is life... in the way it interacts with the teller and the audience to create meaning in the present. (Strauss 1996, 2)

While not written by a living history interpreter, this statement sums up his goals. To leave the listener believing that he is not an actor, but a real person in his real life. The ultimate success of a living history interpreter is to find pleasure in the interaction without trivializing the message.

Even though there is a relatively small body of literature devoted to living history museum audience, when the focus is expanded to include neighboring fields, the

pertinent information begins to accumulate. Because of the usefulness of the information that can be gathered from these related fields, documentation from these publications will be found throughout the discussion of the collected data.

Section 2.4: Why Bother to Study the Visitor?

During the course of the literature review, it was found that the justification for the research was strengthened by basic principles that guide other museums and tourist establishments. Several different sources from all facets of the leisure industry reiterated the need to study and understand the visitor.

The purpose of evaluation research is to provide museum administrators information that will help them judge the worth of their museum and guide decisions to increase that worth (Loomis 1987, 5). Museum workers must be aware of their audience and its perception of their institution to ensure the “continued justification of a public service” and to demonstrate a devotion to professional management and improving performance (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 54). Museum administrators can develop and perpetuate misconceptions about their audiences if they do not habitually make efforts to learn their audience’s likes, dislikes, opinions, and needs. These misconceptions can influence program development and institutional priorities leading the museum off the track in fulfilling its mission.

Another reason to study museum audiences is to determine ways to improve the visitor experience.

Effective evaluation of the images people form of museums should produce both positive and negative reactions; and

positive steps to change an unfavorable image can be taken only if critical or negative assessments of museums and their institutional identity are known. (Loomis 1987, 118)

Surveys help guide the improvement of interpretation, visitor services, public relations, etc. and therefore improve the visitor experience (Loomis 1987, 117-54). Many museums tend to rely on audience numbers to define success in achieving its mission; larger audiences equal greater success. However, audience numbers do not indicate success or failure in achieving the mission. “Evaluations of the museum, if they are to reflect the educational mission... must consider if the museum’s programs communicate their messages effectively” (Blatti 1987, 117). This cannot be known without talking and listening to the audience.

Finally, studying the visitor is important because “putting [it] in the simplest and perhaps crassest possible terms, concern for the bottom line and bringing bodies through the gate are the name of the game today” (Ehrlich 1990, 8). There is nothing a museum can do to achieve its educational mission if there is no one to educate. There are countless competitors for the leisure time of Americans. To carve out its fair share of the pie, museums must be willing and capable to reach out “imaginatively and responsively” to constituents (Ehrlich 1990, 9). Visitor studies are the most inspiring component in the development of new methods of reaching out to visitors and potential visitors. They help museum professionals identify untapped audience resources and convince them to visit. Visitor evaluation can help increase audience numbers by discovering obstacles to visitation and ways to either remove or overcome those obstacles.

In summary, the museum that does not conduct or pay attention to visitor evaluations is completely in the dark. It has no guidelines to direct efforts. They have no

idea what visitors think about them, good or bad, and cannot either promote or correct those opinions respectively. The museum that does not talk to its audience has no idea if it is accomplishing its mission and therefore cannot fully justify its status as a public institution. Visitor evaluations are simple, relatively inexpensive, and provide volumes of valuable information that museums can use to justify themselves, improve the experience they offer, and grow their audiences.

Chapter 3: MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

To gain this knowledge about LHM visitors, two research implements were chosen – a visitor survey and an institutional questionnaire. While knowledge about the visitor was the primary goal, it also was recognized that a knowledge of the museums and their staffs was also important. The intent behind both the visitor survey and the institutional questionnaire was that they would compliment one another by adding insight into each factor of museum visitation. The first section of this chapter discusses how information about the visitor was collected. The second section details the manner in which information from the institutional aspect of the study was collected.

Section 3.1: The Visitor Aspect

Of course, the most important aspect of this study is the visitor. Without visitors living history museums would have no purpose. It was essential that this research reflect the opinions and factual data of the visitors it studied as accurately as possible. This section explains how the visitor survey was constructed and administered.

Many of the museums had conducted visitor surveys of their own prior to this study. Each was generous in making this available to the researcher. However, the decision was made to forego the use of information contained in these surveys in favor of

data that were uniformly collected at all sites. This decision should ensure that data presented by this study are as accurate as possible.

A self-administered survey was selected as the best method to obtain data from visitors because it allowed a freedom of spontaneity for the respondents. (Babbie 2001, 267). A “self-administered” survey is one in which the respondent reads and answers the questions privately as opposed to a “researcher-administered” survey in which the researcher reads and records the respondent’s answers aloud. The hope was that visitors would be more candid if they were allowed to complete the survey by themselves. A self-administered survey also would minimize bias which may have been introduced had the surveyor assisted respondents in its completion. Another advantage of a self-administered survey was that it allowed more than one visitor to be surveyed at a time increasing the total number of responses gathered.

One disadvantage to a self-administered survey is that a visitor will not always provide valid data for himself (Bitgood 1986, 9). For example, if asked to estimate the amount of time spent at a particular exhibit, his estimate will usually differ from the actual answer. However, the majority of questions on this survey are either demographical or opinion based, which reduces the potential for error from self-reporting.

Each respondent was advised that his survey responses would remain completely anonymous. This was to increase their willingness to provide honest and candid answers, as well as to comply with the University of Delaware’s Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) policies ensuring the safety of research participants. (A copy of the letter of approval from the HSRB is included in Appendix C, p. 116.)

The Visitor Survey (VS) was intended to provide both qualitative and quantitative data. Depending on the question, visitors had the option to “check” the most appropriate response(s), to fill in their own response, or to indicate their degree of feeling. (See Appendix A, p. 105) The beginning of the VS asked respondents about their past experience with living history institutions, their reasons for visiting, and their expectations. The following section of the survey gathered information about the conditions under which the respondents preferred to visit – the company they preferred, the distance they were willing to travel, and the amount they were willing to pay to visit. The third section of the VS uncovered information regarding the respondents’ attitudes towards special events: events of interest, willingness to pay to participate, etc. The following section gathered information about the respondents activities while not at the museum. This section was followed by a question pertaining to marketing strategies. The next-to-last section dealt with basic demographic data, and the final section of the VS asked respondents to rate the importance of various museum characteristics such as guide maps, gift shops, nature trails, etc.

The survey was pretested at Landis Valley Museum in Lancaster, Pennsylvania before the official surveys were administered. The pretest showed that various characteristics of the survey itself, as well as, the survey practice needed changes. Some questions were altered to help respondents better understand them, and the survey scenario was enhanced to increase the comfort level of the respondents. It was found that the survey administrator needed to be clearly identifiable to visitors, so she was given a bright yellow shirt with the word “SURVEYOR” printed on it. This helped visitors know who the researcher was and why they were being approached by her. In addition a two-

sided stand-up sidewalk sign reading, “VISITOR SURVEYS TODAY – FILL ONE OUT AND RECEIVE A SPECIAL THANK YOU GIFT,” was erected at the surveying site to help visitors understand what was going on from a distance. As the sign text indicates, a “thank you” gift was offered as an incentive to encourage visitors to become respondents. The gift was a post card from the institution, with the addition of family admission passes at one site. A wheeled cart with shelves was added to the survey site to organize the blank and completed surveys, pens, and post cards.

In some test sites there were museum attractions other than the living history aspect. For example, one city’s history center is home to a modern museum building, several garden areas, a historic mansion, as well as the living history site. At other institutions, the entry and exit points were at the same location on the site. In all cases, attempts were made to make the presence of the surveyor most obvious to those exiting either the institution or the living history aspect of the institution.

It was decided that, instead of randomizing the visitors approached by selecting every second, fifth, tenth, and so on visitor, every visitor would be requested to complete the survey. This was necessary to gather as many surveys as possible during the short timeframe allotted – a single Friday, Saturday, and Sunday – at each institution.

Approaching everyone also helped minimize selection bias on the part of the survey administrator. Visitors exiting the museum were preferred because some of the questions on the survey relied on information about that particular visit, i.e. “Did your visit meet your expectations?”

The surveys were administered in the Fall and Spring of the year. The Travel Industry Association of America has conducted research that shows that 24% of all trips

made in 1999 were taken in the Spring; an additional 24% of total trips taken occurred in the Fall. The majority of trips taken in America fall within the Summer months (33%) with only 20% of trips being taken in the Winter months.⁶ The fact that Spring and Fall travel volumes were so even lends credit to the times chosen for the conduct of this research.

Section 3.2: The Institutional Aspect

If the most important aspect of this research is the visitor, the second important aspect is the institution. After all, it is the museum that wants to justify its mission and improve its visitation. To effectively represent the entire field of living history museums, a broad range of institutions needed to be studied. This range should make the results applicable to almost any LHM institution. It is hoped that living history marketers, directors, educators, visitor service coordinators, and others will find this research useful in their daily job tasks.

Four museums were asked to participate in the study according to two basic sets of criteria: budget size and audience size. The two criteria were combined to denote four different types of institutions. The Type A institution would have a small budget and a small audience. The Type B institution would have a small budget and a large audience. The Type C institution would have a large budget and a small audience. Finally, the Type D institution would have both a large budget and a large audience.

⁶ Travel Industry Association of America website, "Domestic Research: Travel Volume and Trends," <http://www.tia.org/Travel/tvt.asp> (accessed November 12, 2000).

To gather this information, a study conducted by Dr. Debra A. Reid, Associate Professor of History at Eastern Illinois University, was used. This study was comprised of an extensive questionnaire sent out to every institutional member of the ALHFAM (Association for Living History, Farms and Agricultural Museums) organization. Information in this study included such items as the size of the institution's audience, its budget, the characteristics of its physical plant, the features of its programming. Living history institutions that matched the criteria for this visitation study were selected from the results of Dr. Reid's work.

The institutional study provided information from which audience and budget levels could be examined. Institutional budgets were divided into a "low" bracket, those under \$1 million, and "high" bracket, those \$1 million and over. "Low attendance" described institutions with 0-75,000 visitors per year. "High attendance" described institutions with 75,001 or more visitors per year.

From this selection of institutions four sites were selected. The selection of institutions was also influenced by a few other factors. Of course, the museum's willingness to allow the research to be conducted on site was vital to its inclusion in the study. The museum also needed to be open during the period in which the surveys were to be administered. Finally, the financial constraints of travel to each of the sites played a role in their selection in the study.

Section 3.2.1: Institutional Profiles

Type A: Small Budget and Small Audience

This state agricultural history museum was founded in 1980 to preserve farming implements and heritage. The institution's annual visitation was reported as 20,000 and budget as in the range of \$500,000. The museum is situated on a main thoroughfare in the state's capitol city. The main museum building holds the museum's collection of antique farming implements as well as changing exhibits. The village is entered by traveling out the rear of the museum and includes such buildings as a schoolhouse, country store, church, train station, and farmhouse.

Type B: Small Budget and Large Audience

This living history farm opened in 2000 as a part of a larger state park that also includes a history museum. The living history farm reported an annual visitation of 200,000 and budget between \$100,000 and \$200,000. The state park in which the farm is located is situated in a rural part of the state with a three-hour drive to the nearest metropolis.

The farm is isolated by several acres of fields and animal enclosures, but still within walking distance of the modern museum building. This institution is also unique in that it was the only one that presented no other buildings than those associated with a farm – the farmhouse, barn, chicken coop, etc. All of the other museums included buildings associated with other trades such as a mercantile or blacksmith shop.

Type C: Large Budget and Small Audience

This living history farm opened in the late 1960s as a part of a larger museum that focuses on the history of the state's capitol city in which it is located. The overall budget of the History Museum as a whole was reported to be in the \$4-5,000,000 range with the living history aspect of the museum having a budget in the \$100,000 range.

This site is unique among the museums at which this study was conducted. It is situated in close proximity to the modern museum building that houses changing exhibits and permanent displays. Several modern gardens surround the farm site, as well a historic mansion dating to the early 20th century. There is no distance between the farm attraction and its neighboring museum attractions. The living history aspect of the museum consists of a farmhouse and its outbuildings, a blacksmith shop, a pioneer log cabin, and heirloom gardens.

Type D: Large Audience and Large Budget

This institution is one of the largest and oldest LHMs in the country. Founded in the 1940s, the museum includes several acres and buildings of all types to represent a small town. The simulated town is isolated from modern buildings. Its reported budget was in excess of \$2.5 million and its visitation is around 400,000 annually. The museum is located in a large town near other tourist attractions.

Section 3.2.2: The Institutional Questionnaire

To gather information from the museums and their staffs, an Institutional Questionnaire (IQ) (see Appendix B, p. 110) was developed. This five-page questionnaire was intended to compliment the visitor survey by asking questions that get a point of view from the museum about various issues that could be compared to visitor responses.

Museum participants asked to complete the IQ prior to the researcher's arrival to conduct the visitor surveys to allow the researcher time to review the questionnaire data before administering the visitor surveys. However, due to the extremely busy nature of all of the museums, this was not possible. The completed questionnaires were received when the researcher arrived to administer the surveys or after the researcher had left the museum. The Type A institution was the only institution that did not return a completed Institutional Questionnaire.

Chapter 4: RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As discussed in previous chapters, living history institutions start from a positive educational and experiential point, however each individual museum may be able to improve its practices by advancing its knowledge of its audience. “Effective evaluation arms the decision-maker with additional information for establishing worth and pays its way either by opening up new possibilities, providing validation for existing ideas, or a combination of both” (Loomis 1987, 6). For example, knowing the activities that a museum’s visitors enjoy can help the museum educator develop programming that will appeal to either a specific audience or a large and diverse audience. A visitor service manager may decide to incorporate dining facilities into the museum in an effort to expand both educational opportunities as well as the revenue base. A director may discover that people are coming to his museum for reasons other than what was expected, or that museum objectives could be better met through different methods. “Knowledge of the general level and structure of patterns of museum... visiting will give a measure against which to assess achievements in individual institutions.” (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 55)

The results of research are typically presented separately from the discussion that relates to them. However, it is felt that this document will be most useful if the results are presented jointly with a discussion about each item. The purpose of presenting the

data and discussion in this manner is to promote a more thorough understanding which may be hindered by having data and discussions in separate chapters.

Section 4.1: Demographic Information

The demographic information garnered by this study relates to the respondent who completed the survey. Comments regarding the accuracy of the data versus what was observed by the researcher are included. In addition, many museum professionals believe that “life styles and leisure time preference” are better indicators of potential museum visitors than basic demographical information (Loomis 1987, 141).

Some museums attempt to identify “target” or “special interest” groups in an effort to develop highly specific programming and marketing strategies directed at them (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 84). Target and special interest groups can be defined as being composed of those visitors who share a set of characteristics as determined by the museum. For example, a museum might select African-American families with young children as a target audience. They will either develop programming intended to appeal to this group or aim marketing strategies at this group to bring them in to an exhibit that may not obviously hold much interest to them. Museums use special interest groups as a source of more than just visitation; they can also be tapped as an important supply of volunteers and financial support (Loomis 1987, 148).

The age of the respondents

Nearly one-quarter of respondents, just over 23%, were in the forty-six to fifty-five years old age bracket. The second largest group, at nearly 20%, was the thirty-six to forty-five years old age bracket. The third largest groups were the fifteen years old or younger and the 56- to 65-year-old age brackets at 13.2% each. The younger age groups, twenty-six to thirty-five years old and sixteen to twenty-five years old each had a lower percent of responses at 12.2% and 5.6% respectively. The older age groups, sixty-six years old and higher had a combined percent of responses at 12.7%.

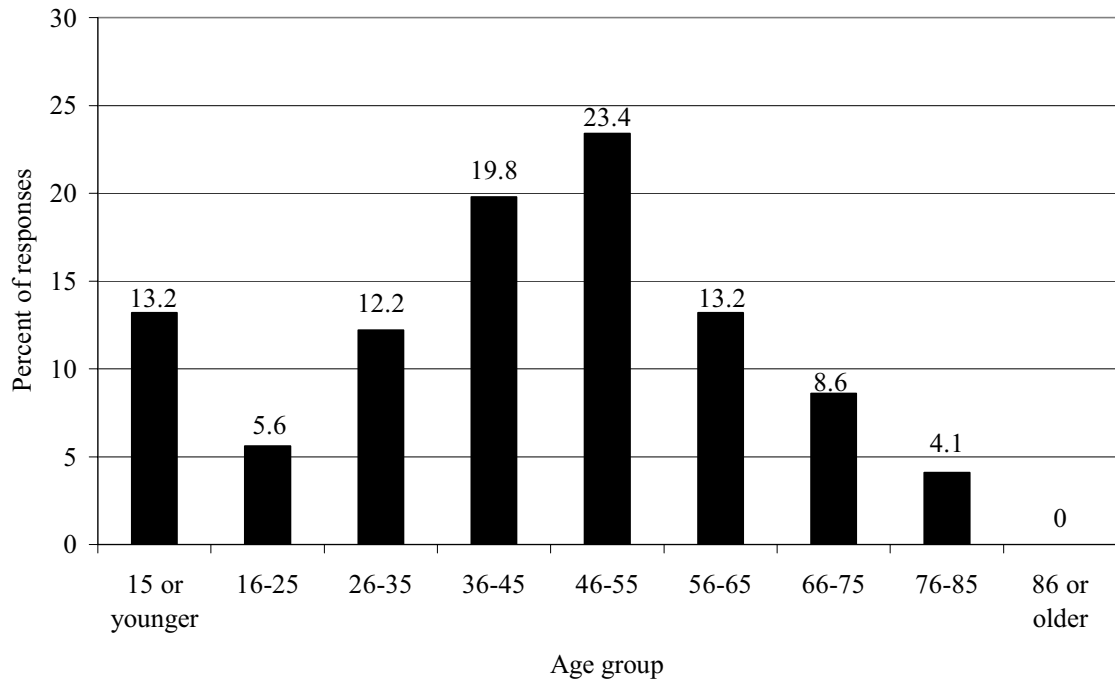


Figure 1: The respondents' age at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

The largest number of visitors to living history institutions seem to fall within the range of forty-six to fifty-five years old. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the average age of visitors to American museums falls between twenty-five and forty-four years. The

difference for LHMs may lie in the fact that they are essentially history museums which may appeal to the sense of nostalgia often more prominent in the older population.

It was surprising to find that the fifty-six to sixty-five age bracket was smaller relative to the other age brackets. It was expected that this would have been one of the larger groups because of the increasing “Baby-Boomer” population. Despite the fact that a relatively low percentage of respondents fell into this age group, it cannot be overlooked as a major facet in the living history audience. The Travel Industry Association of America noted on its website that Baby-Boomers “generated the highest travel volume in the U.S. in 1999” with more than 259 million trips taken.⁷ The senior market, those aged fifty-five and older, spends 80% of all vacation money spent in the United States. This group, in reference to those who travel, typically has more financial freedom than other age groups (Pizam 1999, 413-4).

British researchers acknowledged the rise in members of the Baby-Boomer demographic, but also noted that museum visitation decreases with age. The reason they put forth is that as people age their interests tend to be more home centered. They go on to state that while this does not happen until several years after retirement, it does happen much more quickly with regard to museum visits (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 63). Despite the fact that our population is aging, each age bracket becomes increasingly more healthy and active due to advancements in the medical field. The window of opportunity for museums to appeal to this demographic is widening.

On the other hand, the spike in the fifteen or younger group in this study is supported in *Museums and their Visitors* which states that those sixteen and younger are

⁷ Travel Industry Association of America website, “Domestic Research: Travel Trends,” <http://www.tia.org/Travel/TravelTrends.asp> (accessed November 12, 2000).

growing as a visitation group (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 65). This may be a result of the Echo-Boom, a much-studied rise in birthrates beginning in the early 1980s. As reported in a 2005 episode of *60 Minutes*, the Echo-Boomers were born between 1982 and 1995, and are the children and a “demographic echo” of the Baby-Boomers. They have an annual spending power of \$170 billion which they decide how to use independently of their parents. The Echo-Boomers actually have a tremendous amount of influence on how their parents will spend *their* money.

Living history professionals may be interested in the number of parent/child groups visiting compared to the number of grandparent/grandchild groups visiting. It may be found that more grandparents and grandchildren are making visits to outdoor farm museums together as the Baby-Boomer and Echo-Boomer age groups grow. This could open an interesting opportunity for living history institutions to provide intergenerational programming targeted specifically at these groups.

The gender of the respondents

Female visitors composed 68.4% of respondents while 31.6% of respondents were male.

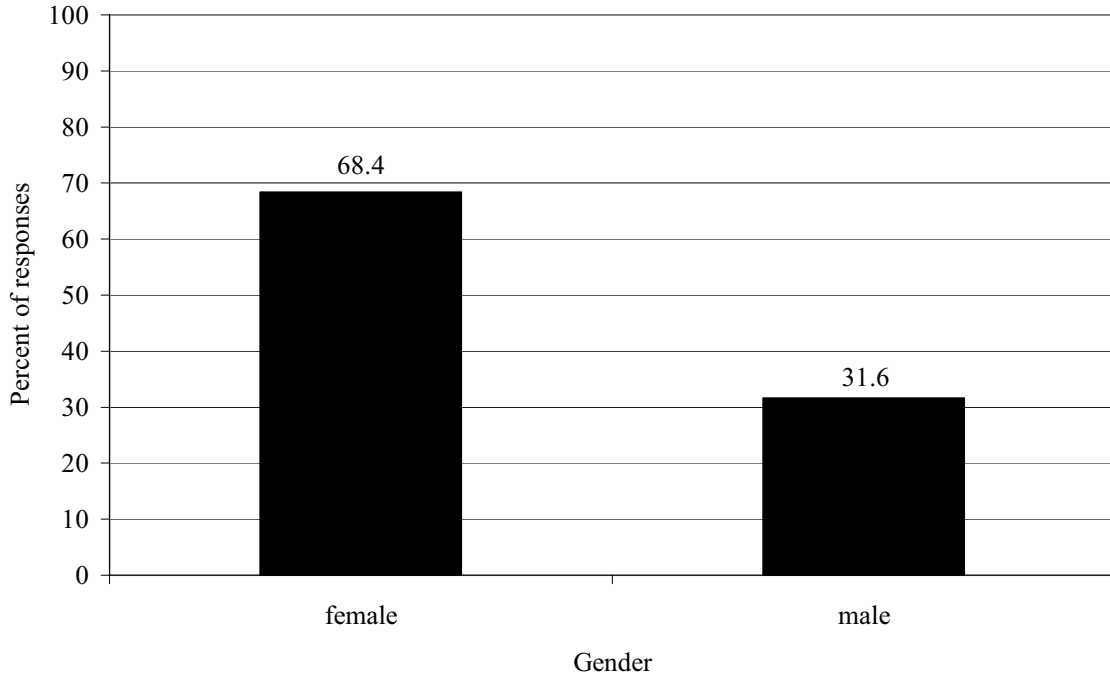


Figure 2: The respondents' gender at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

These data may not be an accurate reflection of the true composition of audiences to living history farms and agriculture museums. It was noticed that oftentimes, the male of the group deferred to the female of the group when requested to complete the survey. However, gender has been shown to make a difference in the planning of a trip or activity.

Pizam says that approximately 66% of traveling families are joint-decision makers; i.e. both the husband and wife collaborate when deciding what to do on vacation (1999, 138). Wife-dominant families comprise 13% of traveling families and tend to

spend less, research potential destinations less, plan ahead less, and expect higher value for the money spent than the husband (Pizam 1999, 144). In other words, women are spur-of-the-moment travelers and tougher customers when it comes to spending their money. The remaining 21% of traveling families are considered to be husband-dominant. These families are characterized by spending more and focusing on outdoor activities more (Pizam 1999, 143).

Meredith Travel Marketing noted different statistics in its March 2005 newsletter. It stated that women are the “key decision makers for 51% of all travel” without specifying whether or not the females referred to were “wives.” The newsletter also noted that women control 80% of all household spending in America. Female travelers have become a major force in the travel industry and as a result have boosted the popularity of spa vacations, and caused expansion in both the “soft-adventure” vacation and specialized “women’s tours” markets.

A recent study by Brand Champs, a consumer behaviorist and brand strategy group that focuses on marketing to women, conducted on behalf of Meredith Travel Marketing seems to contradict Pizam on one major point. It agrees that women consider the value for money spent to be an important factor in the decision to travel. However, the Brand Champs study also noted that a woman’s decision to travel is much more than spur of the moment. It notes that women are spiral-decision makers who spend a great deal of time listening to the experiences of others, examining their own emotions, lifestyle, and finances, researching the vacation beforehand, and evaluating the experience afterward.⁸

⁸ The Association of Travel Marketing Executives website, “Travel Marketing Decisions: Connecting with Women,” http://www.atme.org/pubs/archives/77_1898_11928.cfm (accessed July 16, 2006).

Finally, it should be noted that the type of museum often affects the percentage of men or women who visit it. For example, more men visit science museums while more women visit art museums (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 85). Living history museums benefit from the advantage that “open-air museums attract a broader cross-section of the public than other types of museums” (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 66).

The respondents’ level of education

One quarter of respondents noted that their highest completed level of education was a Bachelor’s degree. Nearly one quarter more of respondents’ highest level of education was a Master’s degree. Nearly 20% had some college education, while 12% had completed high school or vocational school or attained their GED. Recipients of a Doctoral degree numbered 4.6% and those who had no more than eight years of schooling made up 8.2% of those surveyed (many of these were in the fifteen years old or younger age group).

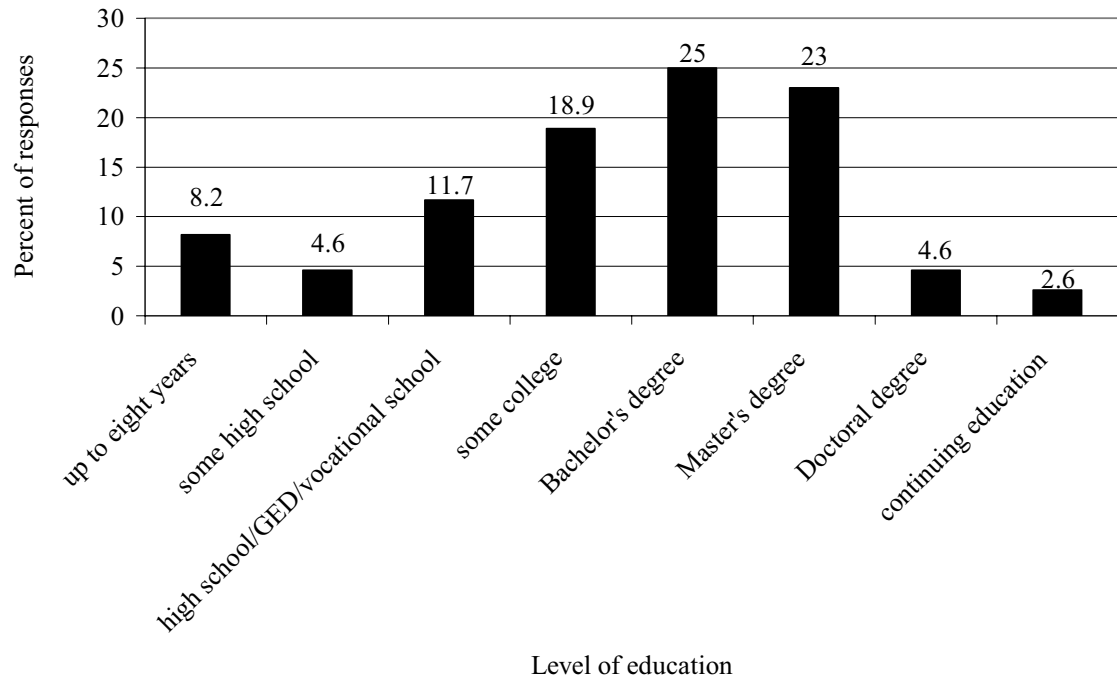


Figure 3: The respondents' level of education at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

The level of education is an extremely important variable in determining whether or not a person is likely to be a museum-goer. The higher the level of education, the more likely a frequent museum visitor (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 65). This statement is supported by the fact that more than one-half of respondents have at least a Bachelor's degree. This finding may lead museum educators to believe that they could be justified by increasing the complexity of the message conveyed by programming or signage. However, this would be a mistake because the desire to intensify the information disseminated to an advanced level would alienate the visitor who may not have attained a higher level of education. This alienation would discourage repeat visits and virtually abolish all hope that the habit of visiting museums may be impressed upon future generations. "The potential museum audience represents a spread of social backgrounds"

(Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 85). On the other hand, considering the high number of visitors with university educations, the advanced information should be readily accessible.

It should be noted that only adults were surveyed. No school groups were included because the demographics that surround this group are so particular they could not be readily analyzed.

The respondents' enrollment in school

Most respondents to the survey were not currently enrolled in school (83.7%).

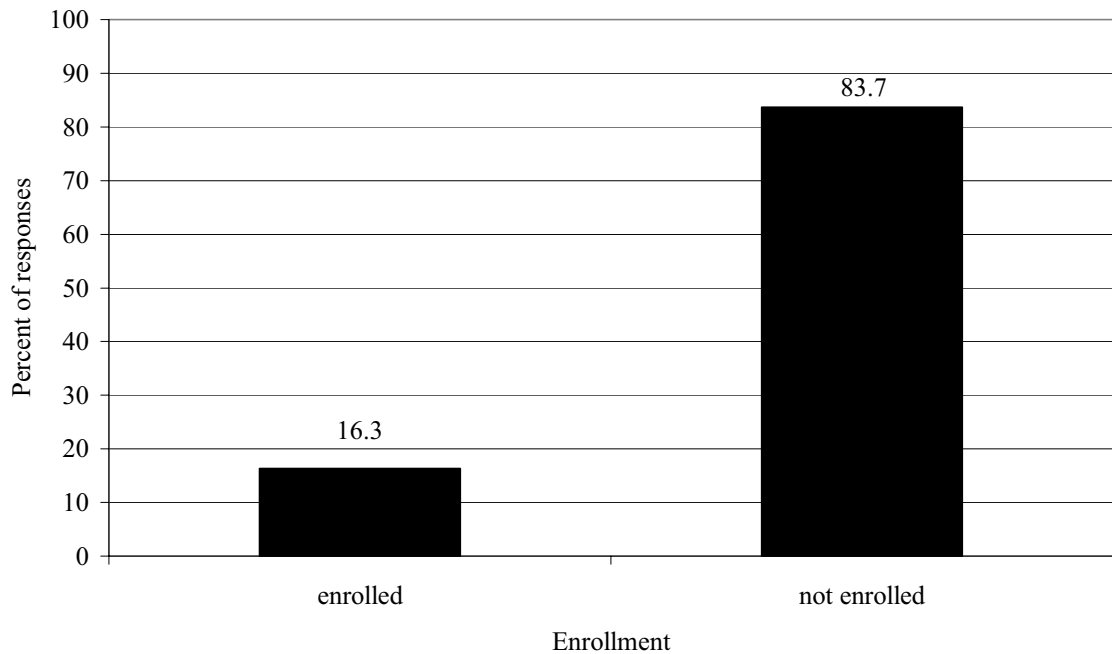


Figure 4: The respondents' current enrollment in school at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

Some of the participants in the study noted that they participated in continuing education. Living history institutions may consider the possibility of lecture series or ongoing classes targeting those people who are interested in the concept of lifelong

learning. It can be assumed that the museum visitor is at least somewhat interested in expanding his knowledge because of the simple fact that he chose to visit the museum. The cutting-edge living history institution may consider the possibility of an alliance with the local school system to offer formalized and accredited classes in history, agriculture, science, etc. for those students wishing to gain credit towards graduation from high school or vocational schools.

The race, or descent, of the respondents

For this question respondents were asked “What is your race?” and given a blank line in which to classify their ethnicity. Upon analysis, responses were grouped together as closely as possible. For example, a response such as “white” was grouped together with responses of “Caucasian.”

Seventy-seven and one-tenths percent of people who completed the survey declined to answer this question. Of the remaining 22.9% who did answer the question, 73.6% were Caucasian, 2% African-American, 0.5% Hispanic-American, 0.5% Asian-American, and 0.5% European.

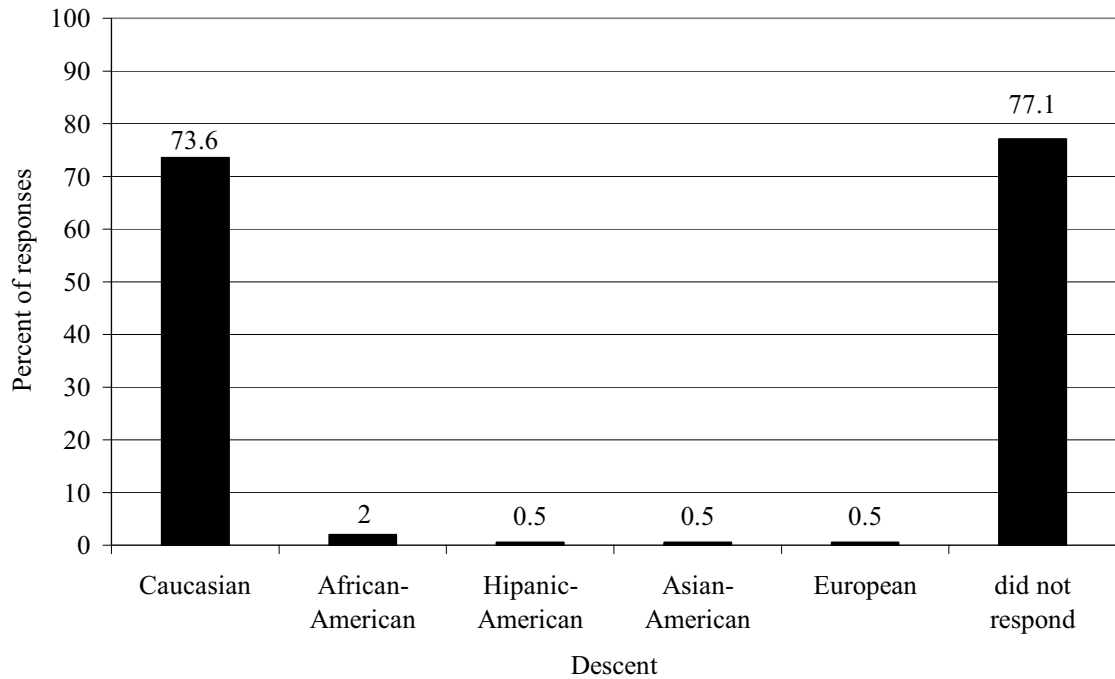


Figure 5: The respondents' race, or descent, at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

The purpose of asking this question, which ran the risk of being (and occasionally was) offensive to respondents, was to gather information about which audiences are underserved in the living history world. A secondary motive was to get an idea of how well race or ethnicity-specific programming would be attended.

The researcher can confidently state through observation that the 77.1% of respondents who declined to answer this question were predominantly Caucasian. This observation combined with the fact that the vast majority of people who did answer this question were Caucasian leads to the assumption that non-Caucasian audiences are missing in museums. While relatively little information regarding minority audiences in museums could be gathered in this study, research conducted by the Travel Industry

Association of America has found that the travel habits of minorities closely follow the habits of the majority traveler.⁹

Living history institutions may wish to make concentrated efforts to diversify their audiences. “The potential museum audience belongs to a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds” (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 85). Programming which reaches out to underserved audiences or marketing endeavors that appeal to specific ethnic groups may be successful in bringing in new audiences. However, the fact that so many visitors refused to respond to an inquiry about their race could be an indication that programming overtly targeted at ethnic groups would not be well accepted.

The Number of times respondents had visited a living history farm museum

Respondents who had visited a living history farm museum six to ten times total 17.3% of all responses. Nearly 26% percent of respondents had visited a living history institution eleven or more times. The number of respondents who had visited a living history farm museum one to five times, up to and including the visit during which they completed the survey, was 56.9%.

⁹ Travel Industry Association of America website, “Domestic Research: Travel Trends,” <http://www.tia.org/Travel/TravelTrends.asp> (accessed November 12, 2000).

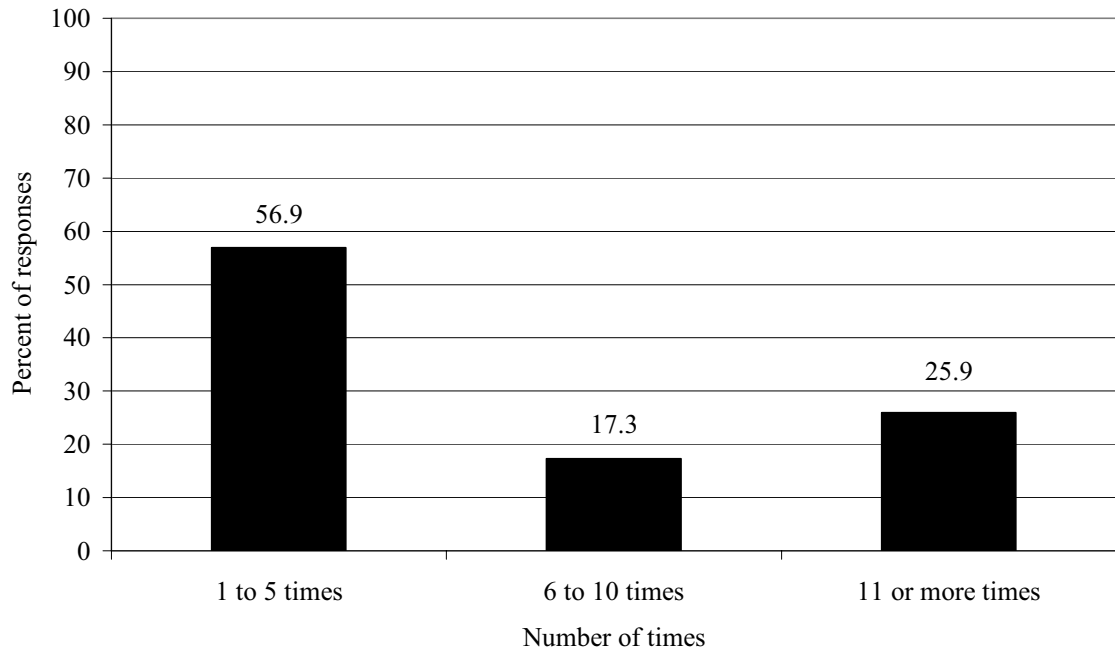


Figure 6: Number of previous times respondents at the four LHMs had visited a living history farm museum.

Discussion:

Most visitors to living history institutions are relatively inexperienced patrons of this type of museum. This finding supports earlier research that found that eight out of ten visitors to a heritage site at a given moment are on their first or second visit (Herbert 1989, 48). This increases the need to orient inexperienced and or new visitors to the mission of the institution and to the basic concept of living history. Some visitors may be unsettled by living history’s interactive interpretation, especially when bombarded with those museum interpreters who are extremely passionate, enthusiastic, theatrical, and devoted to the characters they portray. “Is the visitor supposed to talk like they do?” “Can they take pictures?” “Can they ask about events that occurred after the time period represented?” “Will they have to use an outhouse instead of a modern facility?” These are all valid questions and the answers could be different from one museum to another.

Inexperienced living history visitors must be prepared for what they are going to experience and what is expected of them to forego awkwardness or feelings of inadequacy. Luzader and Spellman discuss the importance of orienting the visitor when they state that “it is unfair to expect the audience to come into the site knowing what living history is and what it is trying to accomplish... if the audience has no idea of the interpretive program’s goals and ideas, you have created poor interpretation” (Luzader 1996, 243).

Every museum should ask of itself, “Do our visitors make return visits, and, if so, how often?” The answer to this question is essential to determining how effectively the museum serves its audience. A high annual visitation means very little if those visitors have no reason or no desire to come back a second or third time. In the effort to fulfill a museum’s potential of being a community center, administrators must place a priority on determining what must be done to change the visitor experience and turn casual guests into regular users.

Visitors who are “moderate users” are the best target for efforts to grow audiences (Loomis 1987, 125 and 135). They are aware of the museum’s existence, familiar with its mission, and comfortable navigating its grounds. Getting visitors to continue coming back can be accomplished by changing presentations to challenge repeat visitors with new information (Loomis 1987, 255). Many living history museums may do this without realizing it. Because of staff and budget constraints, most living history sites will schedule interpreters at a few of its buildings or interpretive posts on a given day. Due to changes in the interpretive programming from day to day, the information available to visitors is constantly changing.

The respondents' satisfaction with his or her visit to the living history farm museum

Less than 2% of respondents perceived their visit did not meet their expectations and about 8% of respondents found their visit to be “a little disappointing.” Thirty-three percent of respondents found their visit to be what they expected it to be. Respondents who found their visit to have exceeded their expectations totaled more than 23%.

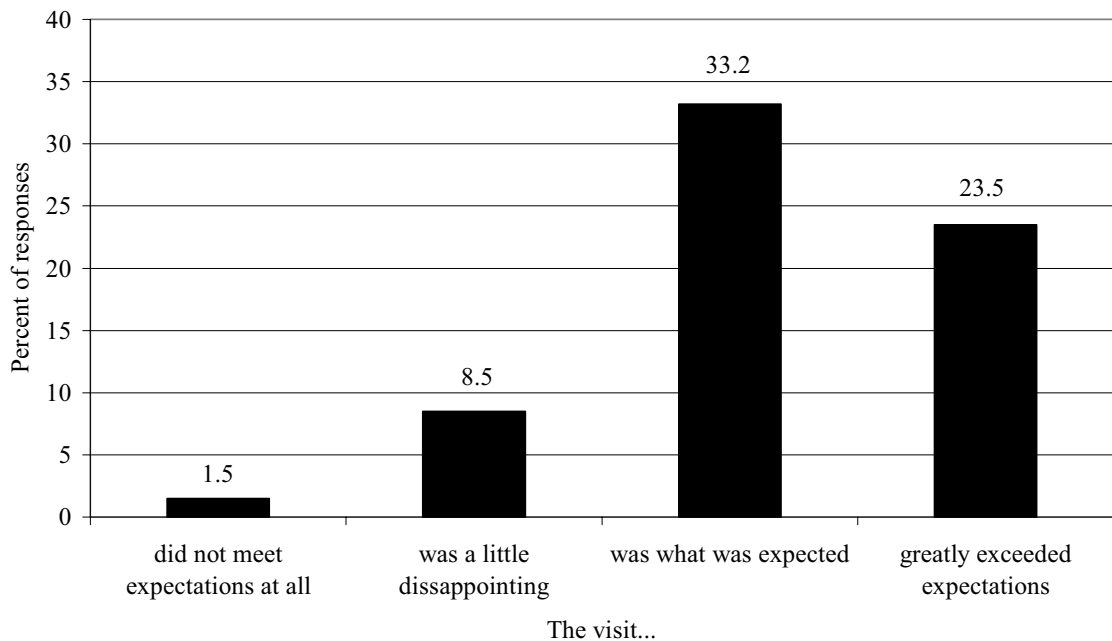


Figure 7: How the respondents at the four LHMs felt the visit met their expectations.

Discussion:

The greatest number of visitors found their visit met their expectations. This may not be a completely accurate finding because most people are emotionally pre-disposed to perceive their visit to be one that satisfies their expectations. The average person does not want to believe that his or her time or money has been wasted on an experience that was not satisfying (Pizam 1999, 279).

A visitor's satisfaction is important for many reasons. The first is the fact that a satisfying visit will encourage repeat visits by the same person or group. Repeating a visit to a particular museum is a way that the visitor can ensure that his expectations will be met in that visit (Pizam 1999, 162); if a visitor enjoyed the visit the first time he can feel certain that he will enjoy it again. The second, and possibly even more important, reason is the fact that word-of-mouth advertising is the most influential and dominant form of advertising (Pizam 1999, 156). Pizam notes that "word-of-mouth can be good or bad and... must be based on the friends' and relatives' previous experience..." (Pizam 1999, 156). He goes on to state that "substandard destinations and poor-quality attractions are not likely to elicit satisfaction from tourists" (Pizam 1999, 268).

When asked to define why they were or were not satisfied with their visit, those who were not satisfied most often listed the absence of an expected museum feature as the reason. For example, visitors who were dissatisfied with their visit to the Type C institution were so because the 20th century historical mansion, another non-living history feature of the city history museum, was under renovation and had been emptied of its furnishings.

Museums and their Visitors brings up the point that "visitors" are not the only group that can be satisfied or dissatisfied:

If judgments are to be made about the public effectiveness of the museum following the measurement of 'visitor' satisfaction (and it is possible that levels of funding may be determined by this), then it will become vital to be alert to 'use' as a broad category, rather than 'visit,' which although extremely important, is a narrower concept. (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 55)

Visitors are not the only people who can be satisfied or dissatisfied with a museum visit. People who use the library or research resources, those who take classes, parents who enroll their children in summer camps, and donors who sponsor a memorial bench can all be considered museum users. Each museum must evaluate its own users to determine how they are interconnected and how the satisfaction of one may affect that of another. This will help administrators decide what obstacles to user/visitor satisfaction should be tackled first in the campaign to improve the museum experience.

The company with whom the respondent visited the living history institution

More than 60% of visitors who completed the survey visited the institution with a group of friends, more than with any other category. A distant second, at approximately 11.2%, was a visit in the company of a friend.

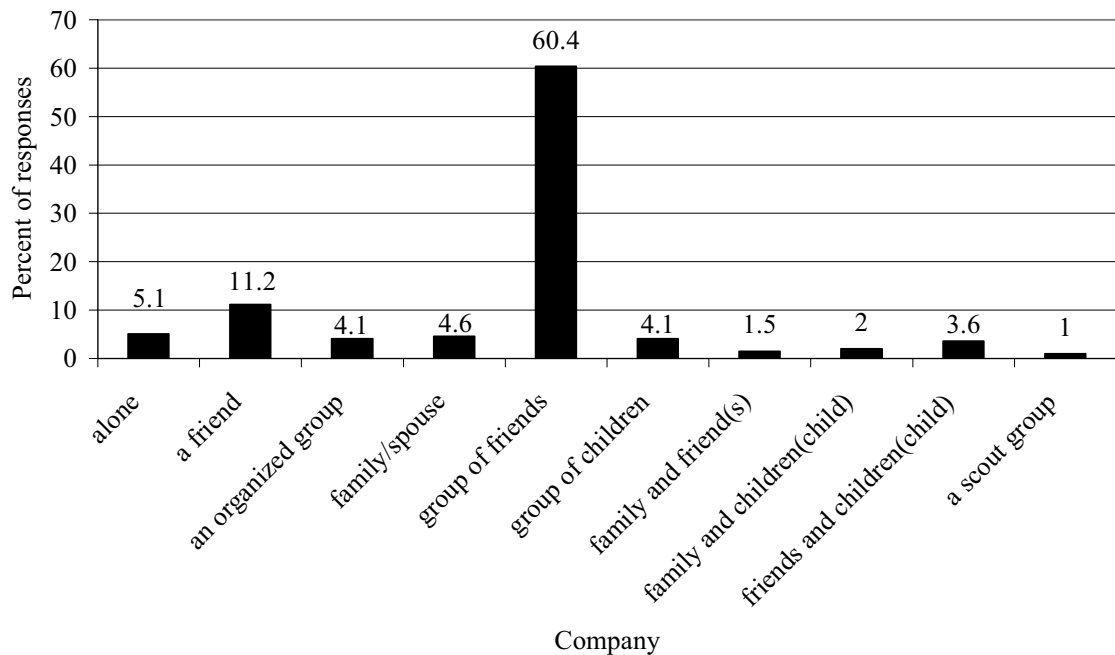


Figure 8: The company with whom the respondents at the four LHMs visited the living history institution.

Discussion:

It was expected that the “family/spouse” category would be the largest, followed perhaps by the “family and friend(s)” category because of all the literary sources that state this to be true of most travelers. “Family groups represent the most important and core visiting unit” (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 101). However, the data collected in this research quite specifically points to visitors with a “group of friends” as the overwhelming majority. Ross Loomis helps explain this to some degree when he writes that “one finding that keeps appearing in both on-site and external surveys is that museum visitation is a highly social event.” He then continues with “most people visit museums as part of a group that may include a friend, a spouse, several family members, or large collections of people...” (Loomis 1987, 123). It seems that outings to living history museums are not restricted to family centered groups, they are more social and will include friends as well.

The family dynamic seen at living history institutions changes throughout the year. Dave Simmons of Old Sturbridge Village has noticed that families with young children on long vacations will visit more in the summer, while ‘empty-nest’ couples will visit for weekend trips in the fall. Considering that the majority of these surveys were conducted in the fall and spring it could be extrapolated that the majority of respondents were empty-nesters traveling with fellow empty-nesters leading to the “friends with friends” results.

Many museums target parents with young children in an effort to induct these children into the museum-going culture. Another reason to target this segment of the population is that parents want teach their children the subject matter of the museum,

programming should be developed with this habit in mind. An interesting side-effect of the child/parent museum visit is that by helping the child to understand, the parent also learns (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 104).

Susan Briggs notes that people visiting friends or relatives who live in the area are a prime target market because they travel in a sizeable group consisting of both the travelers and their hosts, they stay longer, and they spend more money than they would ordinarily spend (Briggs 1997, 9). From the researcher's experience as a movie theater employee during high school this theory holds true. The days after major holidays – Christmas and Thanksgiving – were notoriously busy with families hosting visiting relatives who are all sick of making conversation with each other for days on end.

The distance the respondent was willing to drive to visit a living history institution

More than one-third of respondents, 36.7%, were willing to drive between two and three hours to visit a living history institution. Approximately 28.6% were willing to drive one hour and another 24.5% is willing to drive more than three hours. Just over 10% percent were willing to drive less than one hour.

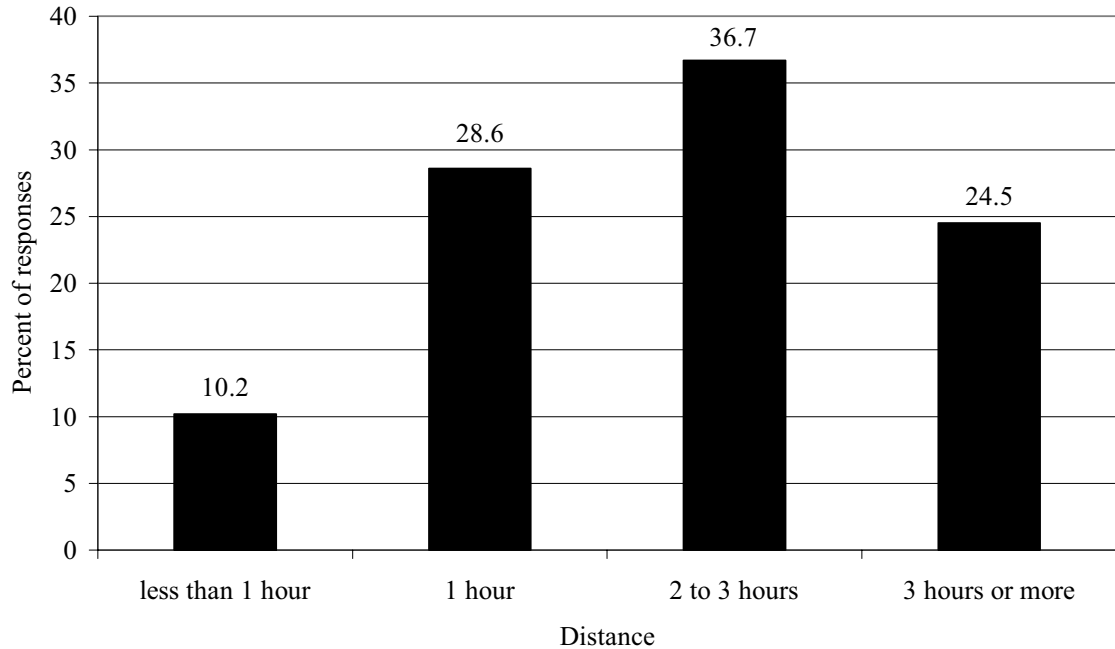


Figure 9: The distance respondents at the four LHMs were willing to drive to visit a living history institution.

Discussion:

It seems as if people are willing to drive a considerable distance to visit a living history institution. However, it is common knowledge that each individual has a different opinion on what is considered a “long way.” Considering that 43% of museums in America are in rural areas,¹⁰ it is encouraging that 90% of visitors are willing to drive at least one hour to reach them. However, the number of competing attractions encountered during the drive affects the distance the recreational visitor will drive (Herbert 1989, 35). The distance a visitor is willing to travel to visit a living history museum is also closely related to the amount of time he plans to spend in the area.

¹⁰ American Association of Museums website, “Museums Working in the Public Interest: Civic Institutions.” <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/publicinterest.cfm> (accessed February 6, 2006).

The length of time the respondent planned to be in the area of the living history institution

Nearly one-half of respondents, 48%, lived in the area of the living history institution; nearly 20% planned to be in the area less than one day; just over 12% planned to be in the area one day; and almost 16% planned to be in the area between two and three days. A combined total of just less than 5% planned to be in the area more than 4 days.

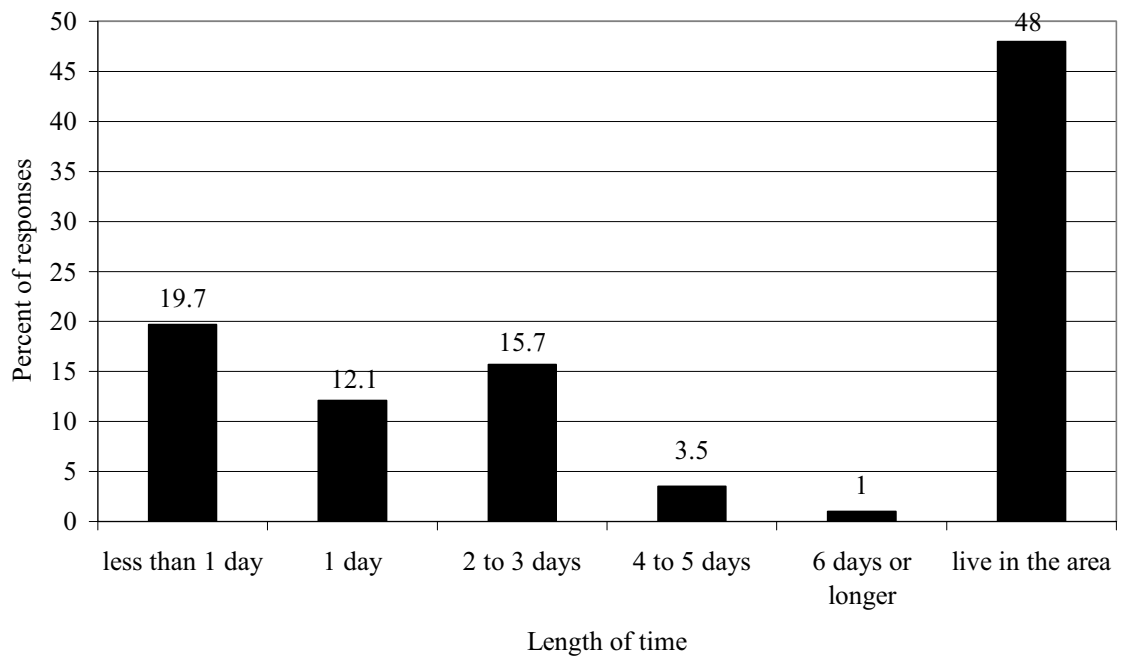


Figure 10: The length of time respondents at the four LHMs planned to be in the area of the living history institution.

Discussion:

Research conducted in 1999 by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) found that the majority of domestic trips taken (38%) had a duration of one to two nights; 45% of trips taken by Americans lasted three nights or longer¹¹. In the case of living

¹¹ Travel Industry Association of America website, "Domestic Research: Trip Characteristics," <http://www.tia.org/Travel/tripChar.asp> (accessed November 12, 2000).

history institutions, the local area residents seem to make up the bulk of the visitor base. However, the term “area” was not defined on the visitor survey. It could be considered that a visitor who believes himself to live in the “area” of the museum does not consider visiting it to be a significant travel event. David Herbert and his collaborators discovered in their research that recreational and leisure activities are mostly informal excursions in the form of day trips to the countryside or to small country towns (Herbert 1989, 90). This characteristic of travelers is perfect for living history institutions because of the appeal they obviously hold for those who live nearby.

The next largest segment, those who plan to be in the area less than a day, are most likely day trippers who live within an easy driving distance. This should have an affect on special events as well as advertising. Multiple day events, such as a lecture series, might be advertised on a regional level, while large, one-day events would be advertised on a more wide-reaching level to attract people for one day or a weekend.

The amount respondents were willing to pay to visit a living history institution

The largest number of respondents, approximately 28%, were willing to pay between \$6 and \$10. Approximately 22% were willing to pay \$11 to \$15. Just over 19% thought that \$16 to \$20 was an appropriate amount to pay. Just less than 19% of respondents were willing to pay a maximum of \$5. Those who were willing to pay the most, \$21 or more, totaled only 5.6%. Some visitors, 5.7%, responded that living history institutions should not charge admission fees.

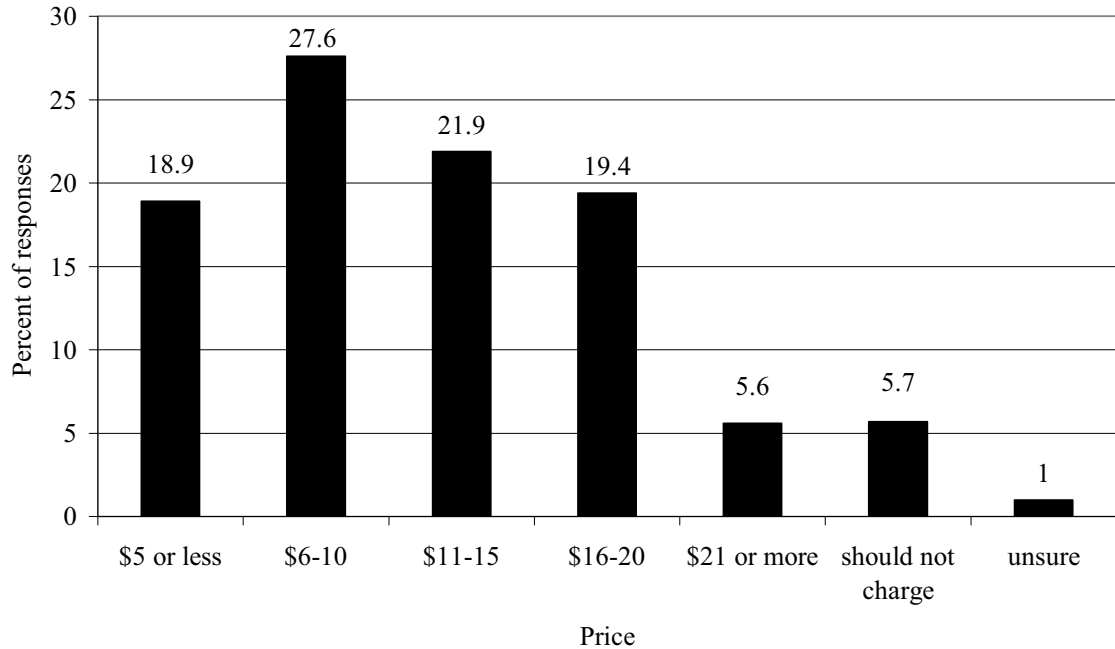


Figure 11: The amount respondents at the four LHMs were willing to pay to visit a living history institution.

Discussion:

The American Association of Museums website includes the fact that the median cost for museum admission in America is \$5 and that more than one-third of American museums have no admission charge at all.¹² There is some disagreement on the AAM website, as another page notes that more than one-half (56.6%) of museums do not charge for admission.¹³ This second AAM webpage also cites that 58.7% of museums who do charge an admission fee have free days. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill’s study notes that the average visit to a museum lasts about one hour, but the visit tends to be longer when paid for through entry charges” (67).

¹² American Association of Museums website, “ABCs of Museums.” <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/abc.cfm> (accessed February 6, 2006).

¹³ American Association of Museums website, “Museums Working in the Public Interest: Civic Institutions.” <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/publicinterest.cfm> (accessed February 6, 2006).

In the book, *Consumer Behavior in Travel and Tourism*, the author notes that consumers make rational decisions according to what activities best suit their goals and budget and are primarily concerned with maximizing the value of their experience. He goes on to state that “in the marketplace customers are normally offered a choice of items varying in price and quality... the higher-priced items are perceived to be of higher quality” (Pizam 1999, 169-71). This poses a quandary for the living history museum: charging a low admission fee devalues the perceived quality of the museum experience. However, charging a higher admission fee may increase the perceived quality, but limit the museum’s accessibility to the public. A living history institution needs to consider the cost of engaging in other popular activities, not just other museums, in the local region and how that institution compares as family entertainment.

The other activities respondents planned to do while in the area

More than two-thirds of respondents, 69.2%, planned to eat out while they were in the area of the living history institution. Those who planned to go shopping while they were in the area numbered just over 40.3%. Many, 32.3%, had no additional plans and noted that they would “just go home.” Fourth and fifth in order of planned activities were to go sightseeing or on a scenic drive (29.4%) and attend a show or special event (28.4%).

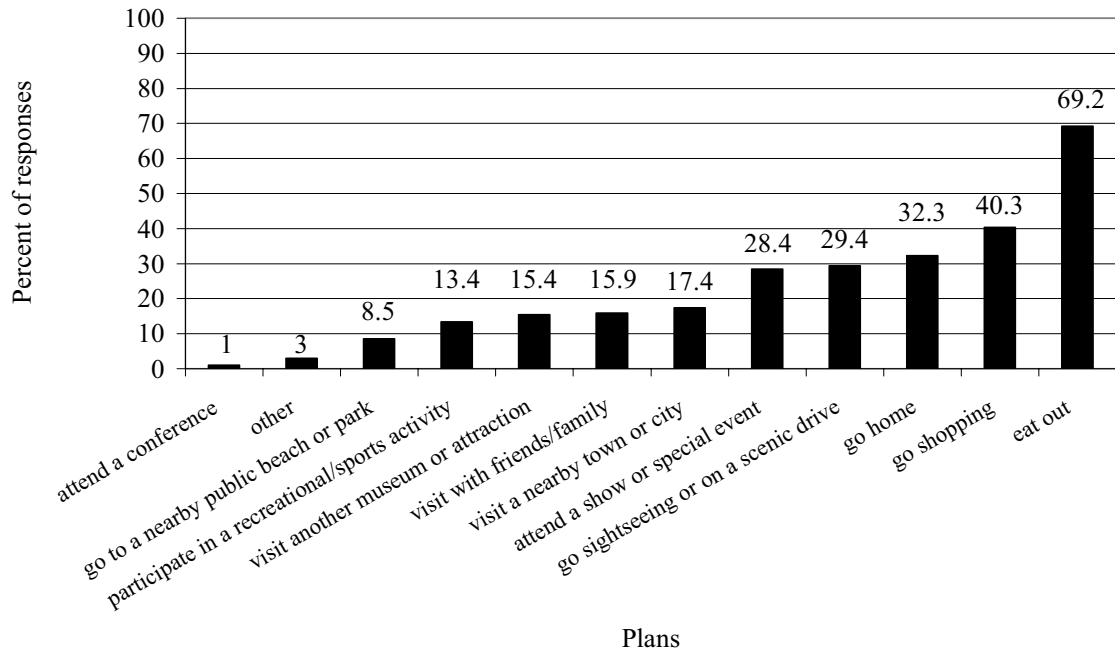


Figure 12: The other activities respondents at the four LHMs planned to do while in the area of the living history institution.

Discussion:

Visitors who participated in the study were given a list of various activities they may have been planning to engage in while they were in the area of the living history institution. They also were offered the option of writing in any activity that was not listed. By far the most popular activity for respondents was eating out. This may encourage institutions to explore the option of providing visitors a place to eat to prolong their experience at the institution. In 2000 Old Sturbridge Village opened a new tavern just outside its visitor center. The addition of the new tavern serves many different uses. It will allow the museum educators to expand programming to include cooking demonstrations at the tavern’s open hearth, musical programming, and more. The tavern also offers visitors who do not wish or do not have time to enter the museum proper the ability to experience a smaller extension of the museum while dining. Obviously, the

new tavern also provides Old Sturbridge Village a new revenue opportunity through the business revenue as well as by being attached to the museum shop to promote the sale of merchandise. In addition, the tavern includes large spaces adequate for rentals to groups of various sizes.

As many people may be able to attest, shopping is a very popular activity in America. For this reason many living history institutions have developed their merchandising efforts to include gift and souvenir shops. These shops may range from tiny establishments that sell not much more than postcards to large entrepreneurial ventures offering the typical gift shop fare, in addition to a wide selection of books, homemade foodstuffs, regional art work, and more.

In a more general sense, being aware of the other activities its visitors plan to do while on vacation will help museums identify promotional opportunities. G. Donald Adams noted that “tourists can be better served when events are planned around other activities in the area that would attract an interested audience” (Adams 1995, 37). For example, planning an historic quilt exhibition at the same time a large quilting convention is in town will generate more visits than launching the exhibit on its own. This seems like common sense, but often museum programs are developed independently of the “outside world” and therefore miss obvious opportunities for cross promotion.

How respondent learned of the living history institution

In this question visitors were given a choice of a list of methods by which people may learn about a living history institution and asked to indicate by which method they learned of that particular site. Nearly half (46%) of the respondents learned of the living

history site by some method other than one listed. More than 32% of respondents learned of the site by word-of-mouth advertising. A distant second and third behind word-of-mouth advertising were learning by brochure and by a newspaper article, 16% and 15% respectively. Of the respondents who chose the “other” category 43.5% had known about the living history site for so long that they could not remember just exactly how they had learned of it.

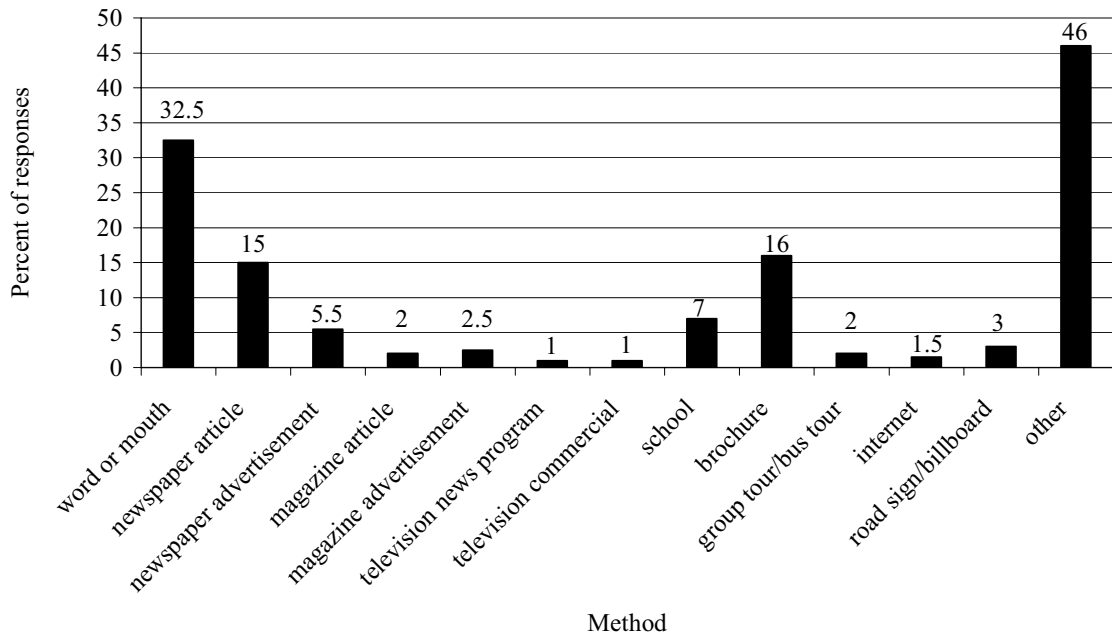


Figure 13: How respondents at the four LHMs learned of the living history institution.

Discussion:

Positive word-of-mouth advertising is the most powerful advantage that a museum can earn. Word-of-mouth advertising is not subject to direct control by museums but has the highest rate of credibility among travelers (Bitgood 1988, 53). It is

one of the most potent forces motivating visitors at museums, while sources of information provided by the marketer – in our case, the museum’s marketing department – is considered to be one of the least motivating (Bitgood 1988, 51). This generality does not seem to hold entirely true to the living history museum industry since the second highest source of information about the institution was a brochure, a highly controllable tool for museum marketers.

Despite the fact that word-of-mouth advertising is so dominant in the travel industry, it is still important to invest in controlled advertising because it creates awareness of the museum in the consumer’s mind and distinguishes it from other attractions (Pizam 1999, 158). The best form of advertisement that a museum can use and control is positive publicity. Besides being free, an endorsement from a news media is perceived by the public as objective and therefore trustworthy (Bitgood 1988, 53). It can create a sense of curiosity about an institution and motivate visits. Advertising moves information about a museum from a passive state in the traveler’s mind to an active one.

4.2: Visitors' Perceptions of the Importance of Museum Amenities

The basic amenities and facilities – such as “seating, toilets... signage, and floor plans” – of museums tend to generate the greatest criticism from visitors (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 67) (Bitgood 1988, 55). Museums of all types grapple with the question of which visitor amenities deserve the most attention from a restrictive budget. Those amenities that may be most important to visitors of one type of museum may be entirely different to those of LHMs. “Needs are seen as the force that arouses motivated behavior and it is assumed that, to understand human motivation it is necessary to discover what needs people have and how they can be fulfilled” (Pizam 1999, 7).

Respondents' feelings about fourteen different museum amenities were surveyed. Each respondent was asked to rate the importance of each item as either “not at all important,” “somewhat important,” or “very important.” The respondents' opinions on each amenity individually is enlightening, but the greatest impact of this data is noticeable when each item is compared to each other. (See Section 5.1)

Locating the Museum Easily

Just less than 60% of respondents rated the importance of locating the museum easily as very important. Half that number (31.8%) believe it to be somewhat important to locate the museum easily and 8.7% did not think it was at all important.

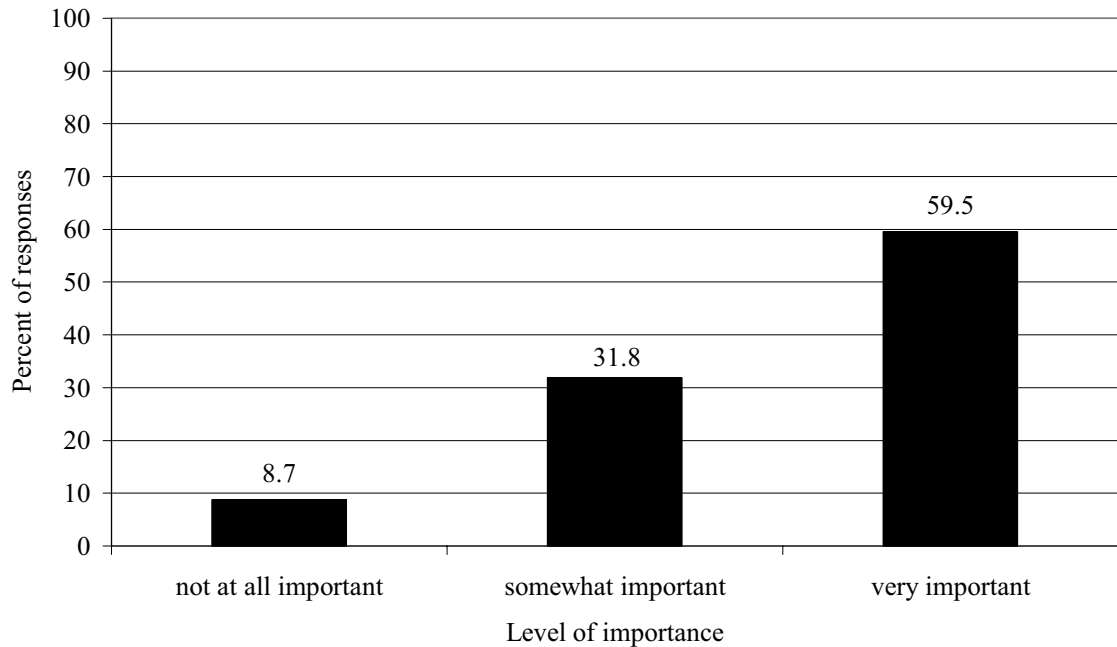


Figure 14: The respondents' perception of the importance of locating the museum easily at the four LHMs .

Discussion:

It is sensible to state that museums should not be overly difficult to locate for visitors. This need relates directly to Abraham Maslow's second tier of basic needs: safety.¹⁴ If a person traveling to a museum becomes lost in an unfamiliar place his feeling of physical safety and security is compromised, limiting his ability to attain higher levels of needs including esteem and self-actualization.¹⁵ No museum should take it for granted that its facility is easy to find. Adequate signage on roads is essential to ensuring that visitors arrive on the property as effortlessly as possible.

¹⁴ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia website, "Maslow's hierarchy of needs," http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs, (accessed March 4, 2006).

¹⁵ Businessballs.com website, "Maslow's hierarchy of needs," <http://businessballs.com/maslow.htm>, (accessed March 4, 2006).

Discounts or coupons for admission

Less than half of the respondents (46.4%) believed that having coupons or discounts on admission was very important. Those who found it somewhat important made up 35.6% of the respondents, while 18% did not believe it to be important at all.

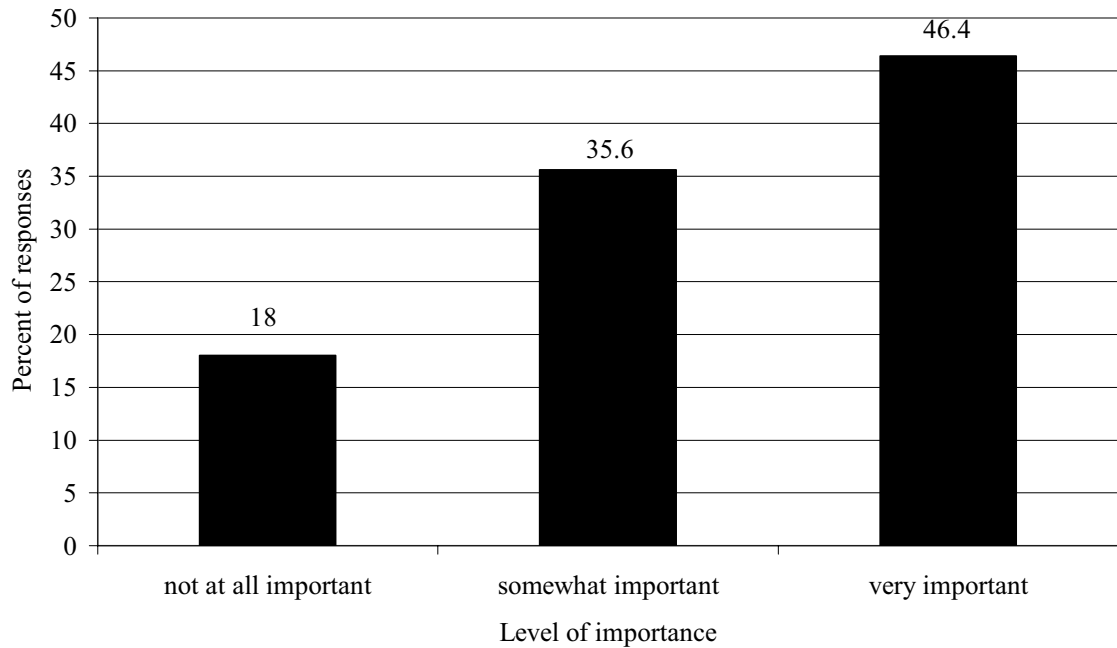


Figure 15: The respondents' perception of the importance of discounts or coupons for admission at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

While most respondents found some level of desirability in the ability to pay less for admission, discounts and coupons did not receive very strong support relative to other museum amenities surveyed. Perhaps it is perceived that coupons and discounts are offered on goods or services that are already overpriced or are an attempt to get visitors to a less-than-optimum site.

The majority of museum visitors feel that more should be done to promote exhibitions and events (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 67), but it is clear that coupons for admission is a relatively low motivator for visitors. Museum marketing departments might do better investing their energy in creating other incentives to encourage visits to the museum.

A website about the museum

Exactly the same number of respondents found it to be very important for a museum to have a website as found it somewhat important (40.1% each). Just less than 20% found it not at all important.

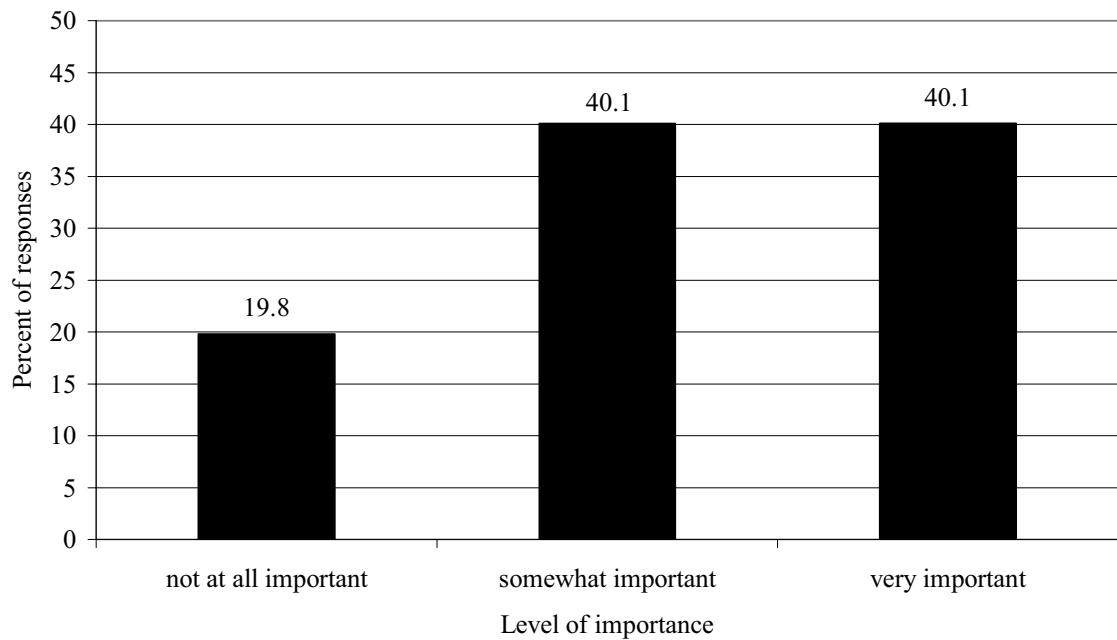


Figure 16: The respondents' perception of the importance of a website about the museum at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

These results are contrary to the researcher's prediction that the importance of a website would be rated much more strongly. This museum characteristic had the fifth lowest "very important" rating of the twenty-five characteristics addressed in the survey (see Chapter Five). The people making the decision to visit museums seem to not rely heavily on the Internet to research their destination. This information could be useful to marketing professionals trying to decide on the most appropriate use of funds to disseminate information about their institution. That being said, the researcher still believes there are many in all demographics who use the Internet to seek such basic information about a destination as open hours, admission prices, special events, or directions.

The Travel Industry Association of America publishes research on Internet use of travelers yearly. In 2004 the association noted that over half the population of America uses the Internet and that the number of web-savvy travelers has increased 256% since 1996. The online traveling population recently became dominated by women rather than men. Another important statistic is that the average income of travelers who use the Internet is decreasing. In other words, as technology and Internet access become more affordable, the market of web-users whose income is less than \$50,000 is growing.¹⁶

The majority of the 67% of online travelers who use the Internet to research travel decisions use specific destination websites, in addition to general sites for booking, reservations, and driving directions. This means that travelers are looking directly at the museum's website in making the decision whether or not to visit. This pre-visit web-

¹⁶ Travel Industry Association of America website, "Executive Summaries – Travelers' use of the Internet, 2004 Edition," http://www.tia.org/researchpubs/executive_summaries_travellers_use.html (accessed July 16, 2006).

search could work to the museum's advantage or disadvantage. If the web-user is contemplating a visit to the museum, but sees nothing particularly compelling on the website they will forego the on-site visit entirely.

An example of this may be evident in the website trends of Landis Valley Museum which was very generous in providing their web tracking data. Web hits on their website (the number of times Internet users visited their website) experienced a sharp increase from August to October of 2005. The number of on-site visits increased accordingly. The number of web hits received in November and December remained relatively high, however the number of visits dropped sharply. Clearly, Internet users were actively interested in the museum in the months of November and December, but were not motivated to make physical trips to the museum. Perhaps the web users were searching for holiday specific programming focusing on Thanksgiving and Christmas, but did not find enough evidence of the existence of such programming on the museum's website to motivate a visit.

Websites are an increasingly vital museum characteristic. Many LHMs are beginning to comprehend this fact and expanding their websites to include information aimed to help students and teachers studying the subject of the museum's focus. Anyone with an hour to spare will find that websites are beginning to include games, advice, lessons, activities, information, and digital access collections that are appealing to many different types of museum users. A museum's ability to establish its website as a resource for students and enthusiasts will perhaps find itself attracting those users to the museum itself for more detailed information and experiences.

Polite museum staff

A large majority of respondents, just over 80%, felt that the presence of polite museum staff was very important. Just over seventeen percent felt that it was somewhat important, and two and one-half percent felt that a polite museum staff was not at all important.

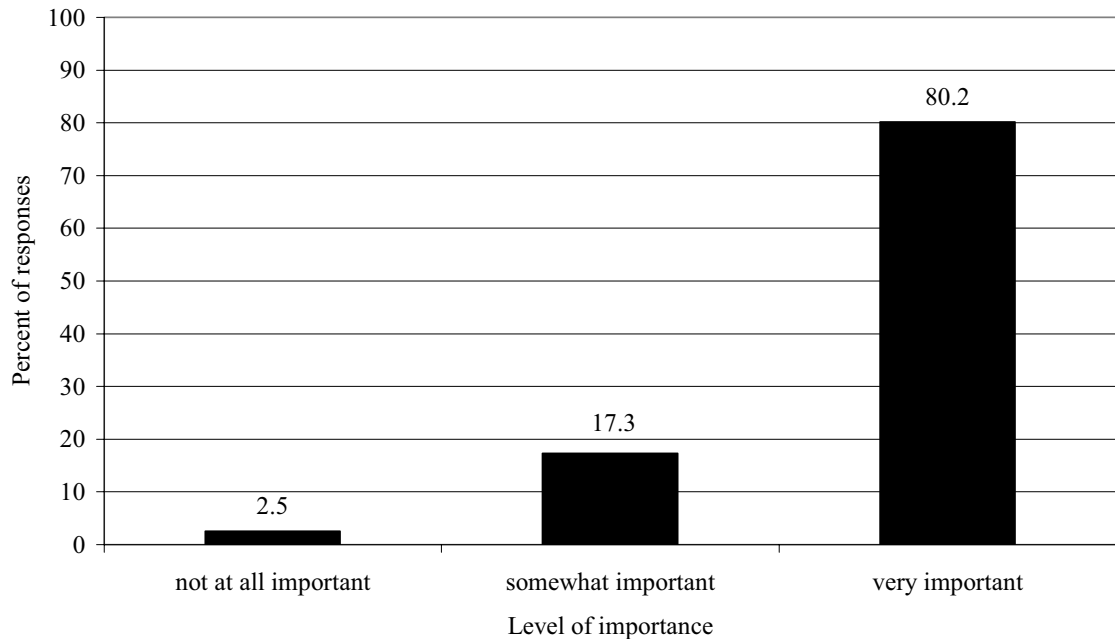


Figure 17: The respondents' perception of the importance of polite museum staff at the LHMs.

Discussion:

“People can be the most welcoming device a museum can provide” (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 97). Traditional museums have a limited number of roles for front-line staff; the security guard may be the only employee a visitor encounters when inside an art museum. The nature of living history museums provide them with ample opportunity to either succeed brilliantly or fail miserably at this challenge. Staff must have the

importance of positive visitor relations engrained before they are even allowed to interact with the public.

Within the tourist experience, there may be moments when the tourist receives a recognition of his or her individuality that complements an experience of the place, a critical incident of the unlooked-for service that “makes the day” – all delivered by staff trained to provide such occasions and empowered by management structures to show initiative because discretion is permitted whereby staff can act without reference to higher management. (Pizam 1999, 269-70)

It seems that in every institution there is at least one employee who is not as polite as a visitor expects. One rude employee or volunteer may not amount to much in institutions that employ hundreds of people, however, because of word-of-mouth advertising, one visitor’s bad experience with a brusque staff member can have disastrous effects on future attendance.

Knowledgeable guides at every site in the museum

A high percentage of respondents found the importance of knowledgeable guides at every site in the museum to be “very important,” over 79%. Those who felt this characteristic to be “somewhat important” numbered 17.3%, and 3.6% of respondents felt that it was not at all important.

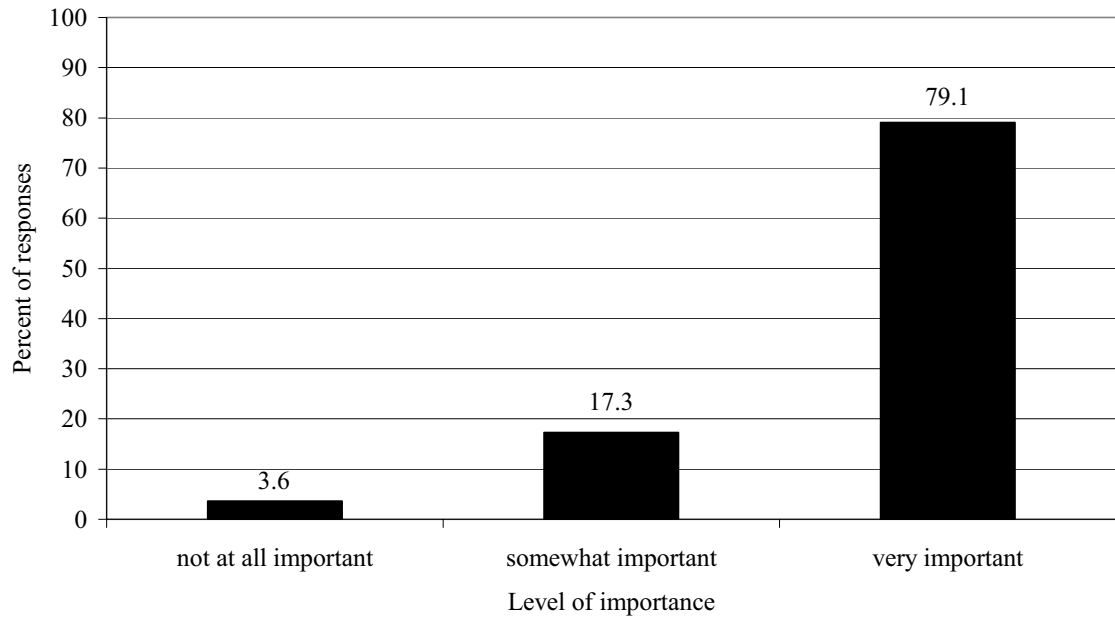


Figure 18: The respondents' perception of the importance of knowledgeable guides at every site in the museum at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

Living history museums have “made the conscious decision to use people rather than machines as communicators... the use of people to communicate directly was regarded as a more cost-effective and efficient method” (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 98). Because the guides and interpreters of a living history museum are the sole means by which the museum communicates with its audience, it is vitally important that each interpreter not only be knowledgeable, but skilled in communicating that knowledge. Luzader and Spellman note that under pressure to provide living history programs to the public, museums present “poorly designed, inadequately researched, inferiorly trained and controlled programs to the public,” which promotes the industry idea that living history is a hobby rather than a serious profession (Luzader 1996, 241-242). Living history museums must concentrate on cultivating interpreters with a high degree of

professionalism, knowledge, and interpretive skill to adequately present their message as well as improving credibility of the profession.

These museums are, more often than not, composed of multiple buildings on the property. First-person interpreters tend to specialize in the interpretation of one or two posts within the museum complex. This makes it difficult for interpreters to remember the holistic experience of the museum visit for the consumer (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 95). The blacksmith who is engrossed with the art of smithing may have a difficult time relating his trade to other trades represented at the museum. An interpreter must be able to expound upon his trade and set it into the context of the museum as a whole. This will give the visitor the most complete understanding of the relevancy of that trade and of the culture to which it belongs.

Learning from signs on exhibits

Just over 5.5% of respondents felt that learning from exhibit signs was not at all important while a forty percent of respondents felt that it was somewhat important. More than half of the respondents, nearly fifty-five percent, felt that signage was very important.

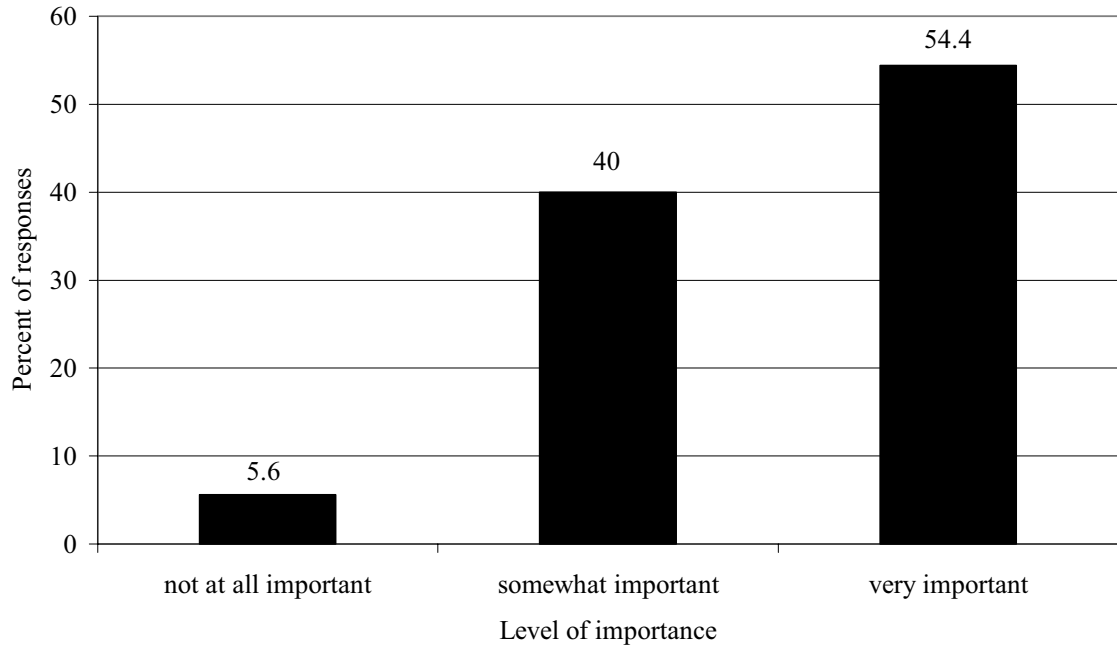


Figure 19: The respondents' perception of the importance of learning from signs on exhibits at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

While the majority of respondents believed that learning from signs on exhibits was very important, the other half of the respondents seemed to place a lesser degree of importance on this museum characteristic. The typical history museum places heavy importance on its signage whereas the living history museum relies more on in-person interpretation.

Non-profit institutions offer wages that are typically 25% below the average wages offered for similar work performed in the for-profit sector.¹⁷ This discrepancy in pay causes many living history institutions to have a difficult time maximizing their in-person interpretation abilities due to a shortage of affordable skilled employees. Because of this decreased ability to utilize in-person interpretation, many living history museums

¹⁷ Monster.com website, "Pros and Cons of Nonprofit Work," <http://change.monster.com/articles/pandg/>, (accessed March 4, 2006).

fall back on signage to provide educational information to their visitors. In most cases the use of signs is intended to be a short-term solution to solve problems that will be alleviated in the near future.

Signs that are too wordy are rarely read by the visitor (Bitgood 1986, 8).

Developing text for museum signage is an extremely difficult art. The amounts of information museum educators wish to convey to the public abound, but the amount the average visitor is willing to process on a leisure visit is comparatively miniscule.

According to the same principles that govern the holding power of signs, in addition to few words, larger words on a sign increase the visitors' willingness to pause and read it. This is fine for the traditional museum, but a historical village dotted with signs with big lettering is hardly convincing.

Unfortunately, low budgets and personnel shortages are ever-present in the living history world and signage is a necessity. Educators at small living history museums dream of the day when new interpretive methods are developed that alleviate the absence of in-person interpretation by offering interpretive methods that do not thwart the living history goal of transporting visitors back in time. Rather, these ideal methods would blend into the scene while still offering clues to help visitors understand more about what they are viewing than what is visually evident.

Public classes on weekends or in the evenings

This is the museum characteristic that shows the widest variety of responses from respondents. Public classes on weekends or evenings was found to be very important by just approximately one-quarter of the respondents. More respondents, 43.3%, believed them to be somewhat important, while nearly 30% found public classes to be not at all important.

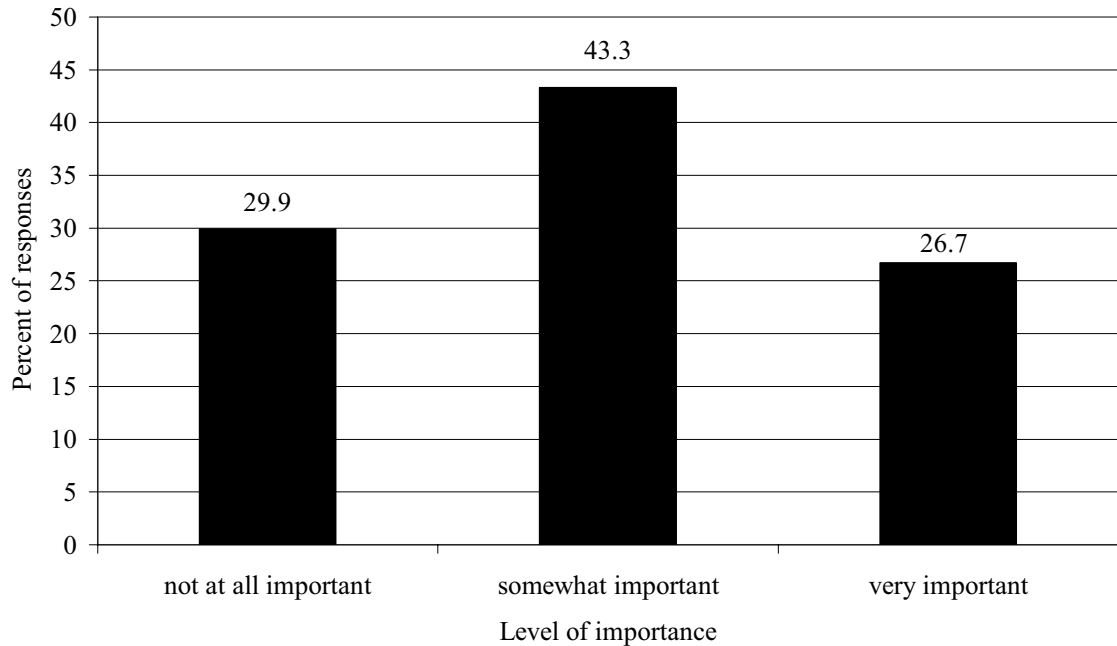


Figure 20: The respondents' perception of the importance of public classes on weekends or in the evenings at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

The question of the importance of classes on weekends or evenings received a lukewarm reception from visitors; it was the museum characteristic that received the fewest votes for “very important.” The leisure time of many visitors is already claimed by children, sports, social obligations, work loads, etc. The museum seeking to carve out

a little more of that leisure time, beyond that already given for the visit itself, is facing a tough task. The programming must be relevant, interesting, entertaining, and valuable in countless other ways to win-out over all the other leisure-time options the public has.

The identification and understanding of special interest and target groups as discussed in Section 4.1 can help program coordinators design programs for and market them to those groups or individuals who will be most receptive to them. In this way museums will not expend money and energy trying to develop classes that will appeal to the masses, and thereby fall short of being interesting enough to compete with pre-established leisure activities.

A guidemap of the museum

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63.3%) rated the importance of having a guidemap of the museum as very important, whereas nearly one-third (28.6%) consider this museum characteristic to be somewhat important. Slightly more than 8% do not believe a guidemap is important at all.

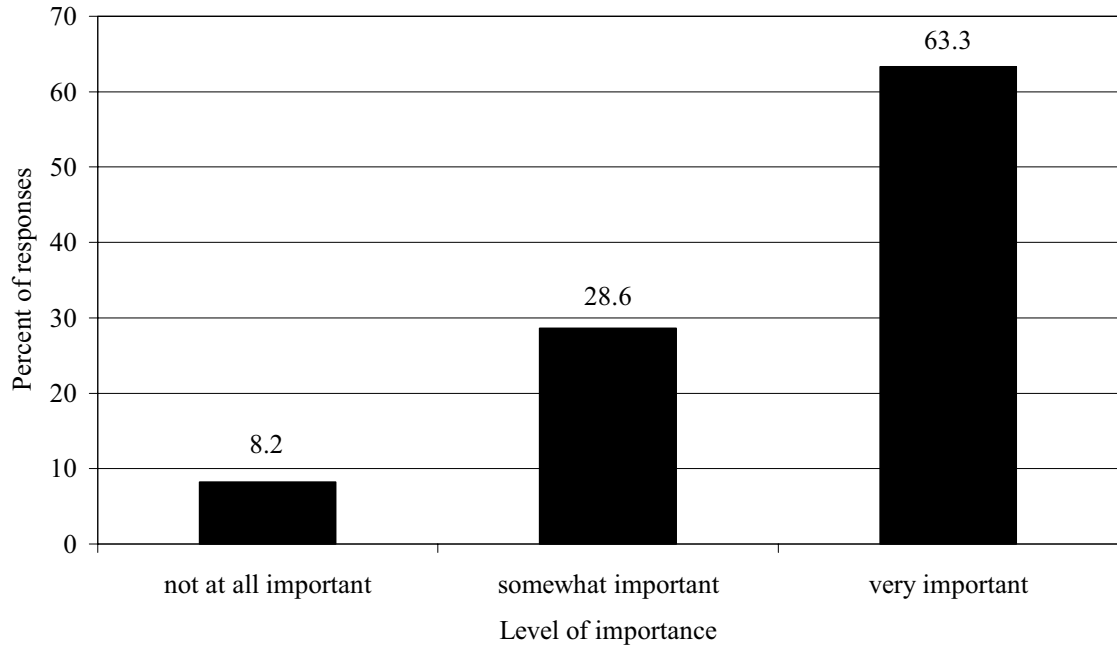


Figure 21: The respondents' perception of the importance of a guidemap of the museum at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

Being oriented in one's surroundings is quite important to the majority of museum going audiences. Anyone who has ever become lost in a strange town because he did not have a map, or had a bad one, can sympathize with a frustrated visitor in search of a restroom. From the absolute beginning of their visit, travelers need to understand the building they are in, the outlying property they are about to explore, and how each building at a museum relates to those around it. Upon entering the museum the visitor needs to "know what comfort facilities there are and what there is to see or do" so that they can find their own way to whatever they choose to do first (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 90). Once this understanding is accomplished the visitor will feel more comfortable and willing to absorb the message of the museum (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 17).

Many museums, especially living history museums, attempt to provide the visitor with the feeling of exploring a new town, city, or house by providing a map of the museum grounds. This is much more preferable to labeling each building on the property: “Blacksmith Shop,” “Chicken Coop,” or “Outhouse,” which would certainly orient the visitors to their surroundings, but break the illusion of traveling back in time. Though the guidemap is a preferable orientation tool, it often falls short of complete usefulness to LHM visitors. They may find it preferable to have a map that shows them not only where they are, but *when* they are, especially in museums that portray multiple time periods.

Nature and scenic trails

Nearly 56% of respondents believed that nature and scenic trails are very important. Fewer people, 38%, believed these trails to be somewhat important, whereas, about 6% believed nature and scenic trails to not be important at all.

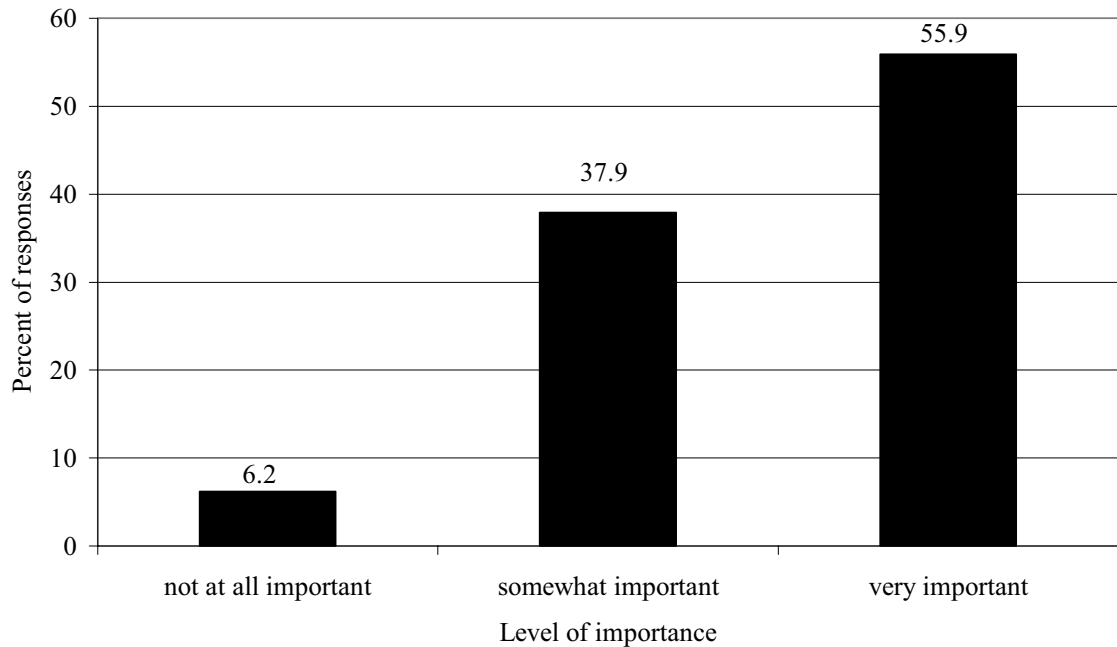


Figure 22: The respondents' perception of the importance of nature and scenic trails at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

It speaks strongly about the mindset of the visitors that 94% attached some kind of importance to a characteristic outside of the central museum's mission. Perhaps, because most living history museums are also outdoor museums, they are mentally lumped in a group with parks, forests, and other outdoor institutions whose missions more explicitly include nature and scenic trails. Visitors come to outdoor history museums expecting to walk. Americans are increasingly health conscious and choose to include physical activity in their leisure plans. More than one-fourth of U.S. travelers took advantage of opportunities to exercise while on vacation in 1999.¹⁸ Keeping in mind that the majority of museums are rural and that most living history institutions have

¹⁸ Travel Industry Association of America website, "Domestic Research: Travel Trends," <http://www.tia.org/Travel/TravelTrends.asp> (accessed November 12, 2000).

the advantage of multiple acres of property (Reid 2001), this may be an undervalued offering.

Most museums are perceived as cold and intimidating (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 16). Taking advantage of incorporating nature and scenic trails as a museum offering, perhaps tweaking it into a “historical walking trail,” will go far in warming up the perception of visitors and non-visitors to the institution.

Easy paths on which to walk

Sixty-seven and one-half percent of respondents rated having easy paths to walk on as very important. Less than one-quarter of respondents (23.4%) found this to be a somewhat important characteristic. Just over 9% of respondents did not think this was important.

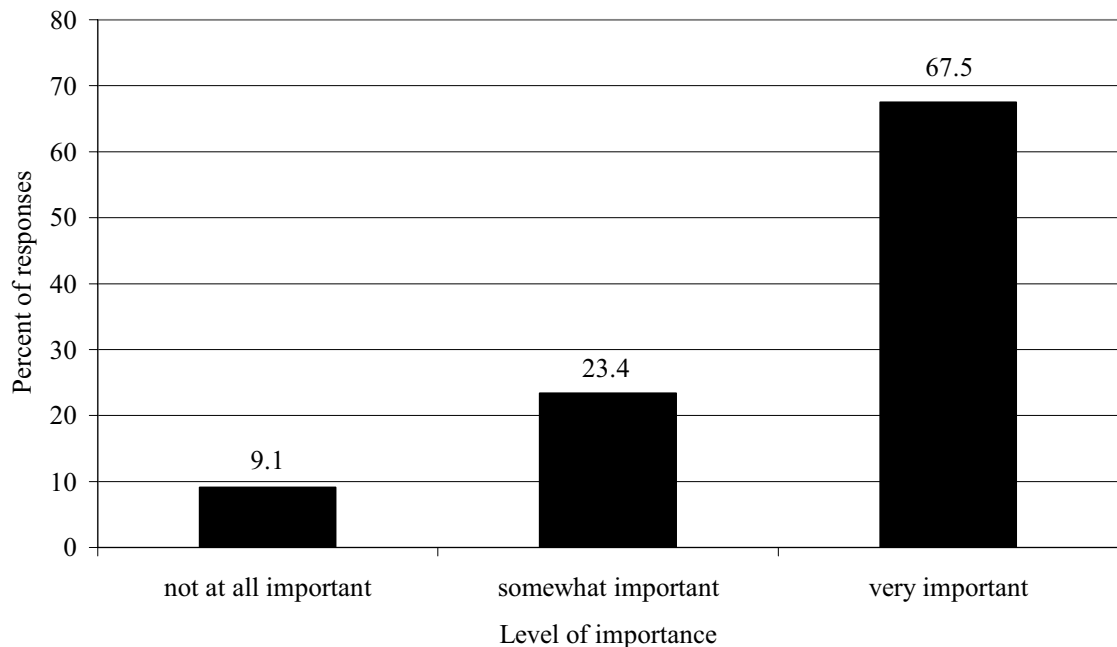


Figure 23: The respondents' perception of the importance of easy paths to walk on at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

The number of people who responded that good paths are very important is almost the exact same as the number of people who stated that having a place to sit and rest is very important. It could be concluded that the limited mobility of guests affects their impression of what is very important. Limited mobility can refer to guests who have difficulty walking, guests in wheelchairs or guests pushing strollers. In all cases smooth paths are important for visitor comfort.

Ameliorating uneven paths can pose a problem for living history museums. “The goals of preservation and use do not always coincide” (Butler 2000, 227). Historically accurate pathways would not necessarily be convenient for guests with limited mobility. An additional problem is historically appropriate pathway material can be expensive to install and maintain. Finally, in most living history museums, the pathways must handle diverse types of traffic; pedestrians, trucks, strollers, wheelchairs, wagons, horses, and oxen are all likely users for walkways in a LHM, making it difficult to choose the perfect pathway material.

A Restaurant or Snack and Beverage Machines

Nearly one-quarter of respondents found the presence of a restaurant or snack/beverage machine to be not at all important. The greatest number of respondents, 39.5% found this characteristic to be somewhat important. Slightly fewer, 36.4% found this to be very important.

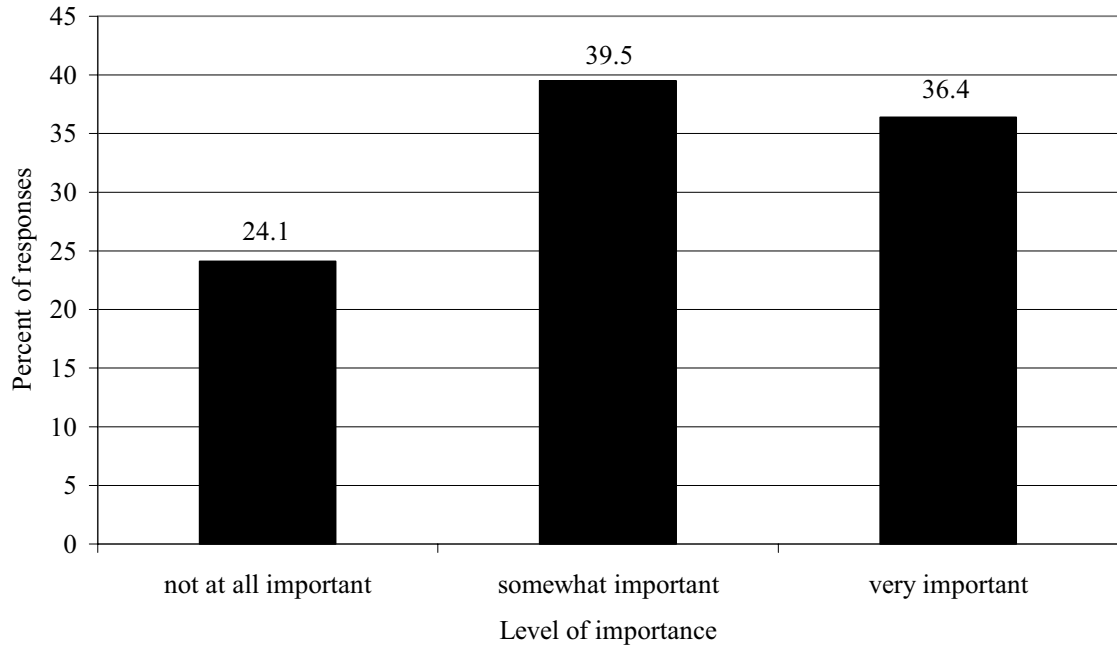


Figure 24: The respondents' perception of the importance of a restaurant or snack and beverage machines at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

From the response to this question it seems as if visitors are not nearly as interested in eating or drinking while they are at the museum as they are in partaking in other museum characteristics. As a result of this response, living history museums may place a low importance on providing these amenities. The AAM website reinforces this concept by noting that museum visitors spend an average of only \$0.73 per visit on food service.¹⁹

However, this response directly opposes another response. When asked, “What other activities do you plan to do while in the area of the living history museum,” (see p.

¹⁹ American Association of Museums website, “ABCs of Museums.” <http://www.aamus.org/aboutmuseums/abc.cfm> (accessed February 6, 2006).

47) the vast majority of respondents (nearly 70%) noted that they plan to eat out while they are in the area. The visitors may not be interested in eating while they are in the museum, but they are definitely interested in eating at some point during their visit.

Perhaps the visitors are reluctant to accept the idea of modern food amenities invading the living history atmosphere of the museum; especially in the case of electric soda or snack machines. Perhaps they equate museum fare with unappealing airplane food or cafeteria food. If these surveys had been conducted in the height of a summer heat wave instead of the late fall and early spring, responses probably would have been different.

There are several living history museums that have successfully achieved providing inexpensive food opportunities without disrupting the sense of escape into the past that all LHMs attempt to create. For example, Conner Prairie Museum in Fishers, Indiana has included a full-sized restaurant, leased and operated by an outside company that provides both affordable lunches and snacks and pricier dinner options. Colonial Williamsburg includes several pubs and restaurants throughout its property that offer food options at typical tourist attraction prices. Smaller institutions often include drink and snack machines in their visitor centers, thereby avoiding blatant anachronisms inside the living history museum setting.

A gift, souvenir, or museum shop

Just over 42% of respondents believed that the opportunity to make purchases is very important. About thirty-six percent find it to be somewhat important and not quite 22% find it not at all important.

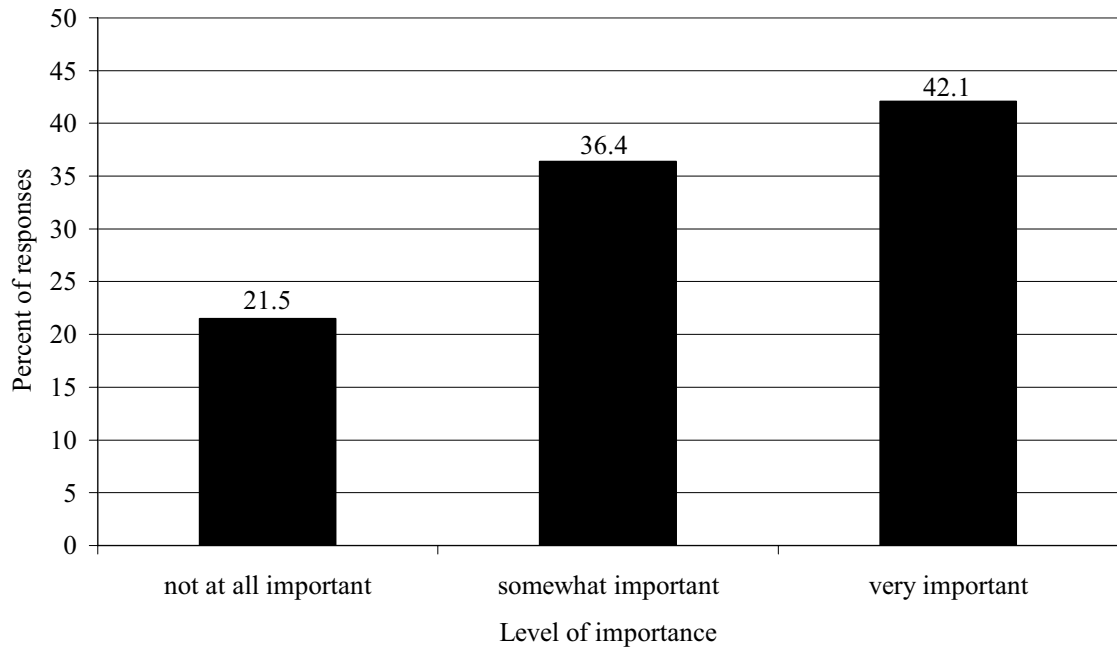


Figure 25: The respondents' perception of the importance of a gift, souvenir, or museum shop at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

The desire to be, or at least to be perceived as, less materialistic may have affected the results of this survey question. Museum visitors spend an average of \$1.72 per person per visit.²⁰ When asked what else they planned to do while they were in the area, 40% of visitors mentioned that they will go shopping. This may not be a strong motivator for museums to enter the retail gift shop business. It is extremely important that each museum examine its own audience to determine whether or not a retail outlet will be a profitable expedition or a drain on the bottom line.

²⁰ American Association of Museums website, "ABCs of Museums." <http://www.aamus.org/aboutmuseums/abc.cfm> (accessed February 6, 2006).

Clean and ample restrooms

Nearly 80% of respondents believed that the availability of clean and ample restrooms was very important. Not quite 17% thought this feature to be somewhat important and 3.6% found it to be not at all important.

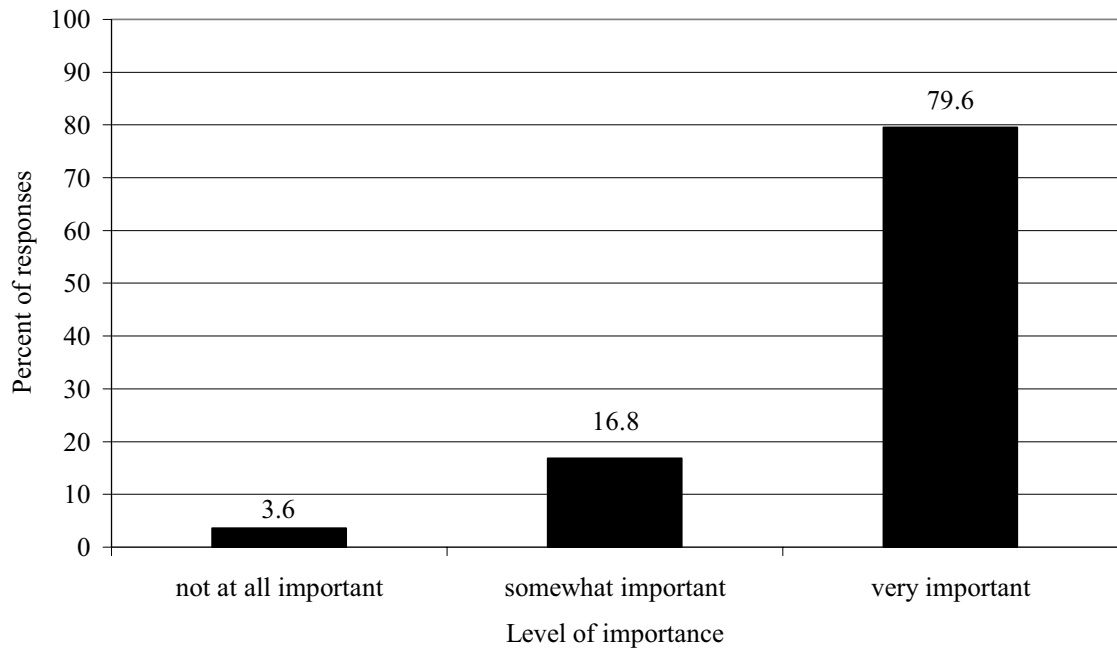


Figure 26: The respondents' perception of the importance of clean and ample restrooms at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

Compared to responses to questions about other museum features, it seems that an adequate number of well maintained restrooms is quite high on the priority list for visitors. This is most likely not new information for any museum professional who has been taught Maslow's hierarchy of human needs²¹ and knows that the first and most basic need is physiological – if a human's body is neglected, the mind cannot effectively concern itself with anything else (Pizam 1999, 8). The difficulty that may be associated

²¹ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia website, "Maslow's hierarchy of needs," http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs (accessed March 4, 2006).

with this important museum feature could be the decision between installing or updating restroom facilities or funding programming. Bathrooms are not glamorous, but they are absolutely necessary.

Places to sit and rest

Two-thirds of respondents believed that a place to sit and rest is a very important museum characteristic. Less than 30% found seating to be only somewhat important. Just over 5% believe that this feature is not at all important.

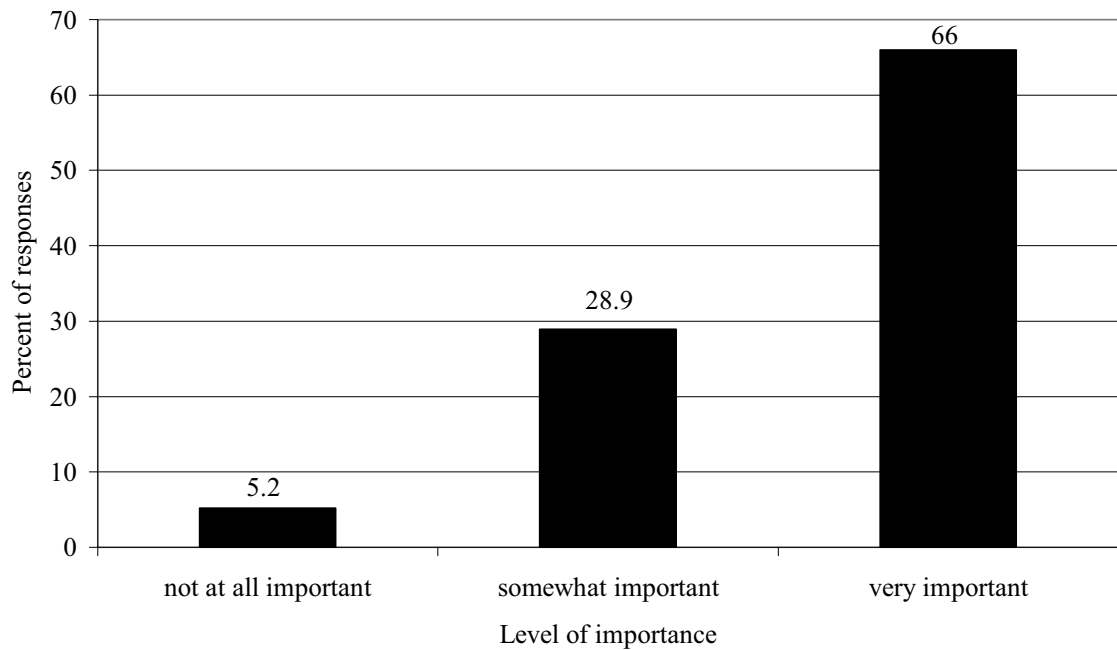


Figure 27: The respondents' perception of the importance of places to sit and rest at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

While not as resounding as the visitor-rated importance of restroom facilities, the importance of places to sit is still one of the more highly rated museum characteristics in this survey. As discussed in an earlier chapter, the multi-generational audience, the

Baby-boomers with their Echo-boomer grandchildren, is a growing market for all tourist attractions. As the Baby-boomers increase in age and their grandchildren increase in energy (and leave strollers behind) the importance of museum seating will continue to grow.

Besides increasing visitor satisfaction, alleviating fatigue is to the museum educator's advantage as well. The attracting and holding power of museum exhibits decreases as the visitor's fatigue increases (Bitgood 1986, 7). Allowing the visitor pleasant places to rest will re-energize him, boost his willingness to explore exhibits and learn from interpreters.

4.3: Visitors' Perceptions of the Importance of Various Characteristics of LHMs

In this chapter the respondents' opinions regarding characteristics more specific to living history museums are examined. The questions surveyed were intended to discover how visitors feel about interaction with interpreters, participation in interpretive activities, and other opportunities made available to them at living history sites.

Watching costumed craftspeople at work

Most visitors (69.6%) considered "watching costumed craftspeople at work" to be very important. Just over one-quarter of respondents considered this characteristic to be somewhat important. Less than 5% of respondents considered this characteristic to not be at all important.

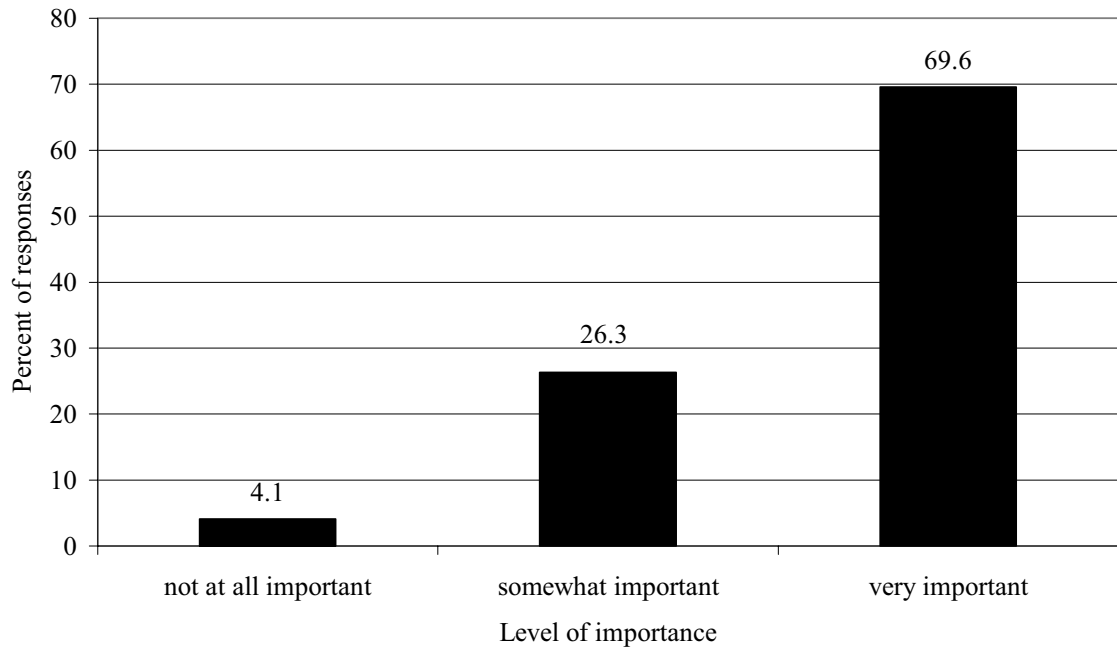


Figure 28: The respondents' perception of the importance of watching costumed craftpeople at work at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

It seems reasonable that watching costumed craftspeople at work would be rated as very important by the majority of living history museum visitors. The portrayal of historical crafts and tasks by knowledgeable first-person interpreters is the basis on which living history farms and agriculture museums operate. “Demonstration and living history programs ranked as the most valuable interpretive methods” (Knudson 1998, 162). Live interpretation and demonstration helps make a museum more exciting, especially to segments of the population that are not regular museum-goers (Loomis 1987, 254-5).

The bane of the museum profession – the “cheap thrill” – can be used to grab and hold an audience’s attention effectively and tastefully through demonstration. A perfect example of this is the program held several years ago at Conner Prairie Museum in Fisher, Indiana. This full day program was designed and marketed to middle-schools as a

special one-day offering. The program featured the process of taking a hog from butchering to sausage just as it would have been done in an 1830s Indiana frontier village. While the gross-out factor was high, the butchering and meat processing was presented as authentically, respectfully, and academically as possible with remarkable success. The students, it should be mentioned, were reported to have shown remarkable maturity and interest in the presentation and can be assumed to have learned volumes about what life was like for Indiana pioneers.

Many living history institutions waver between a purely collections museum and a full living interpretation museum. The reasons behind this may be varied, but most predominately are the lack of affordable, skilled craftspeople/interpreters. Knowing the importance visitors place on the value of watching costumed craftspeople working may give living history professionals heart in pursuing funding to increase this attribute at their own institutions.

Talking to someone who seems to come from a different time (first-person interpretation)

Most respondents believed the characteristic of talking to someone who seems to come from a different time to be very important (60.8%). Just over one-quarter of respondents found this characteristic to be somewhat important. Finally, 13.4% found this characteristic to not be at all important.

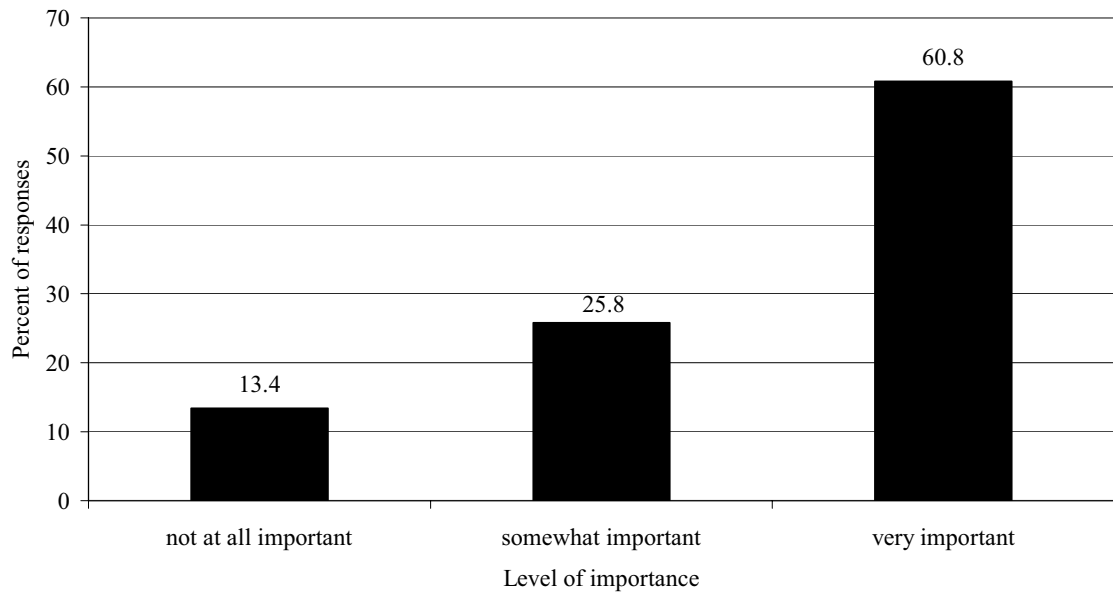


Figure 29: The respondents' perception of the importance of talking to someone who seems to come from a different time at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

“First person interpretation” is used to describe a type of interpretation in which docents interpret the subject of the museum by assuming the character of a person from the time the museum represents – dressing, speaking, and performing everyday tasks just as a person from history would do. First person interpretation is utilized at 38% of “heritage sites” (Beck 1998, 1998 86). It may be noticed; however, that somewhat fewer respondents believed that speaking to someone doing first person interpretation was very important (approx. 61%) relative to “watching costumed craftspeople” (approx. 70%) (see p. 76).

First person interpretation is essential to make a museum's historical buildings come alive with the stories, anecdotes, facts, and characters.

Architecture and furnishings are much; we admire and draw conclusions from them, but we must find the art to keep them from seeming to have been frozen at a moment of time when nobody was at home. (Tilden 1967, 69)

An antique chair becomes “my favorite chair that my sons broke when they were chasing each other through the house on a rainy day last summer.” The chair is instantly put into the context its room, house, and family. The listener instantly and intuitively makes a personal connection to the chair and its family by drawing on similar experiences. First person interpretation presents the “closest tactile conception we have of our past” (Beck 1998, 87).

Most museums concentrate on presenting an abundance of factual data. The very best living history museums recognize the need to train their interpreters in the art of storytelling or engaging interpretation.

“Most historic sites and museums inundate their new interpreters with information about the site and its collections, but rarely are these facts used to weave an interpretation in such an artistic way as to ignite the imagination of the guest. (Trampsch 1998, 13).

Those museums who invest the effort to provide training in effective interpretive techniques will discover that the return in visitor satisfaction and repeat visits will far outweigh the cost.

The historical accuracy of costuming

Most people, nearly 59%, found the historical accuracy of the costumes of the interpreters to be “very important.” One-third of respondents considered it to be somewhat important and the remaining 7.2% did not consider it to be at all important.

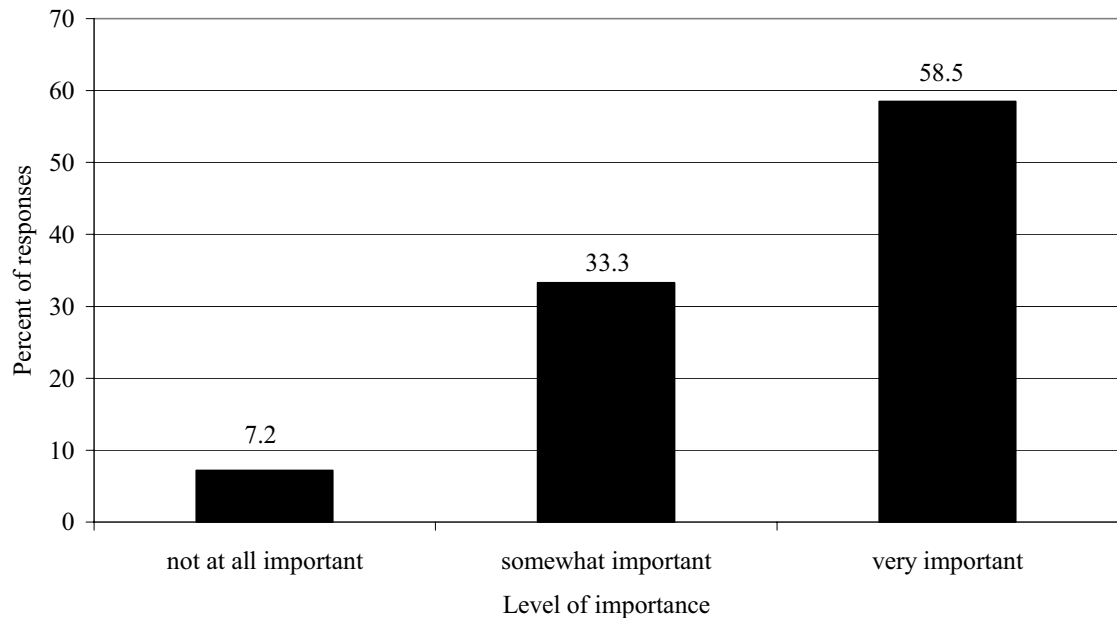


Figure 30: The respondents' perception of the importance of the historical accuracy of the costumes at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

Just as visitors consider it important to watch living history interpreters at work, the accuracy of the clothing that the interpreters wear is of likewise importance. Many living history institutions have a difficult time providing accurate costuming for their interpreters. The costumes must be rugged enough to withstand day-to-day farm work, be able to fit more than one person, and be warm in winter and cool in summer. Developing a historically accurate wardrobe to accommodate a staff of any size is an expensive and formidable challenge.

“Although living history demonstrations were the most enjoyable kind of interpretive program at a western U.S. wildlife park, they were also among the worst when authenticity was lacking” (Ham 1992, 163-4). John Luzader and Jerri Spellman reiterates this sentiment when they state that “...as with any interpretation; poor interpretation is worse than no interpretation. Many interpreters, sites, programs, and agencies believe that putting on ‘old’ clothes and speaking in an ‘olde’ way constitutes living history” (Luzader 1996, 241). Despite the difficulties in building a historically accurate wardrobe, it is worth it to build credibility and maintain visitor satisfaction.

Seeing authentic antique items

More than three-quarters of respondents believed that seeing authentic antique items is very important. It was found that twenty percent found this to be somewhat important and less than five percent believed that it is not at all important.

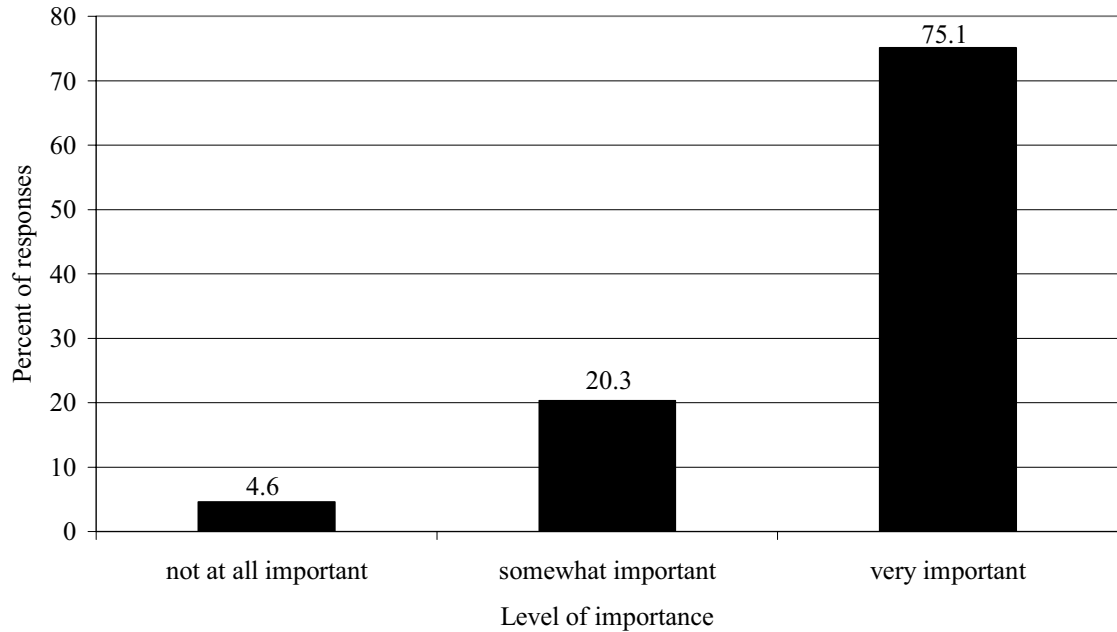


Figure 31: The respondents' perception of the importance of seeing authentic antique items at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

The relatively high importance of presenting authentic antique items seems obvious for history museums. “Americans rank authentic artifacts in history museums and historic sites most significant in creating a strong connection to the past.”²² Many LHMs include a modern museum building, in addition to historic buildings, to house their artifact collections. The typical museum visitor expects this and is comfortable with it.

To expand the educational power of those artifacts, Living History Museums use them as they would have been used in the past. This subjects the artifacts to daily wear and tear, compromises their integrity and is out of the question for fragile, important, or rare items. To effectively interpret the objects and their time period many LHMs choose

²² American Association of Museums website, “Museums Working in the Public Interest: Civic Institutions.” <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/publicinterest.cfm> (accessed February 6, 2006).

to use reproduction items. It is believed that most visitors would not make a cognitive distinction between an authentic and reproduction items when they are actively used by interpreters.

Handling and using reproductions items

Over 16% of respondents believed that handling and using reproduction items themselves was not at all important to them. The other 83.6% of respondents are nearly equally divided between believing that the opportunity to touch and use reproduction historical items is either somewhat important (42.1%) or very important (41.5%).

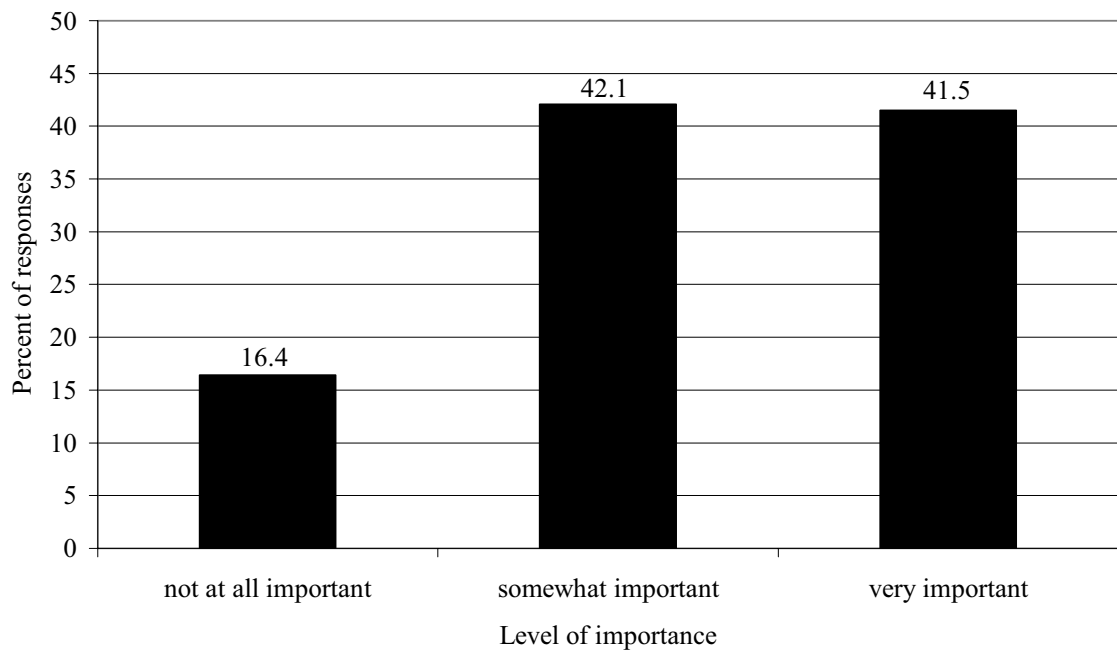


Figure 32: The respondents' perception of the importance of handling and using reproduction items at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

As discussed earlier, visitors place high importance on watching costumed craftspeople and seeing artifacts, but a relatively low importance on handling the items themselves. Museum literature observes the opposite in visitors. “People love to handle objects... [That] is one of the unique opportunities that museums can offer to all visitors” (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 109).

Why then was the importance of handling reproduction artifacts comparatively rated so low in this survey? “Interactive exhibits were regarded as being the most popular type of exhibit, especially among younger respondents while older people tended to prefer what they know, static exhibits” (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 67). Looking back at the age represented by this survey, nearly half of respondents were over forty-six, which leads to the conclusion that this more mature audience is more comfortable with static exhibits or watching demonstrations instead of hands-on interactivity.

Giving the visitors the opportunity to observe, a thing being done, then pick up the object and try it for themselves may have another effect: one of active discovery, rather than listening to a lecture in costume. One interpreter noted that the act of letting the visitor participate in the tour – such as turning the key in a lock – has

the effect of pulling my group closer to me all the rest of the tour. Though the participation was immediately that of only one person, the rest of the group somehow felt that they were helping to do it. (Tilden 1967, 72)

In a sense we might say that by letting visitors handle historical items they move beyond the advantages of first person interpretation to something that might be called self

interpretation. The connections made to an object or task are heightened from mere empathy to visceral sympathy.

Seeing and interacting with animals; Seeing, touching, and interacting with plants

Nearly one-half of respondents believed that the importance of the opportunity to see and interact with animals at a living history museum was very important (43.2%).

About a third (34.4%) of respondents believed this museum characteristic to be somewhat important and not quite 22% rated it as not at all important.

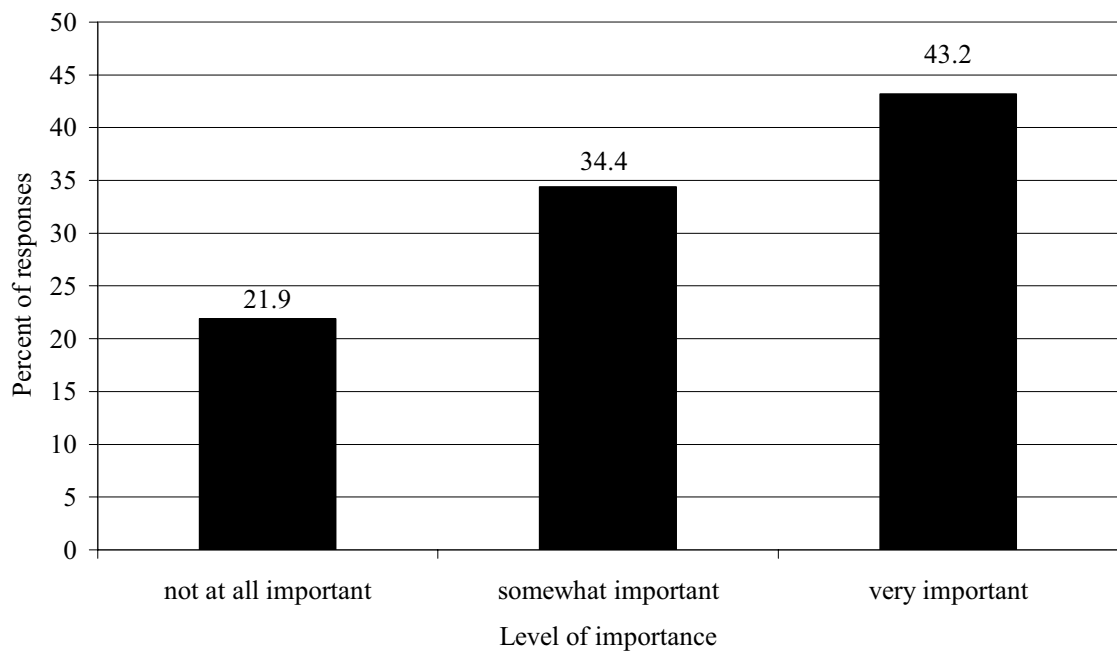


Figure 33: The respondents' perception of the importance of seeing and interacting with animals at the four LHMs.

Almost half of the respondents (44.3%) believed that seeing, touching, and interacting with plants is somewhat important. Less than one-third (31.8%) of respondents believe plants are a very important living history museum characteristic as opposed to 24% who believe they are not at all important.

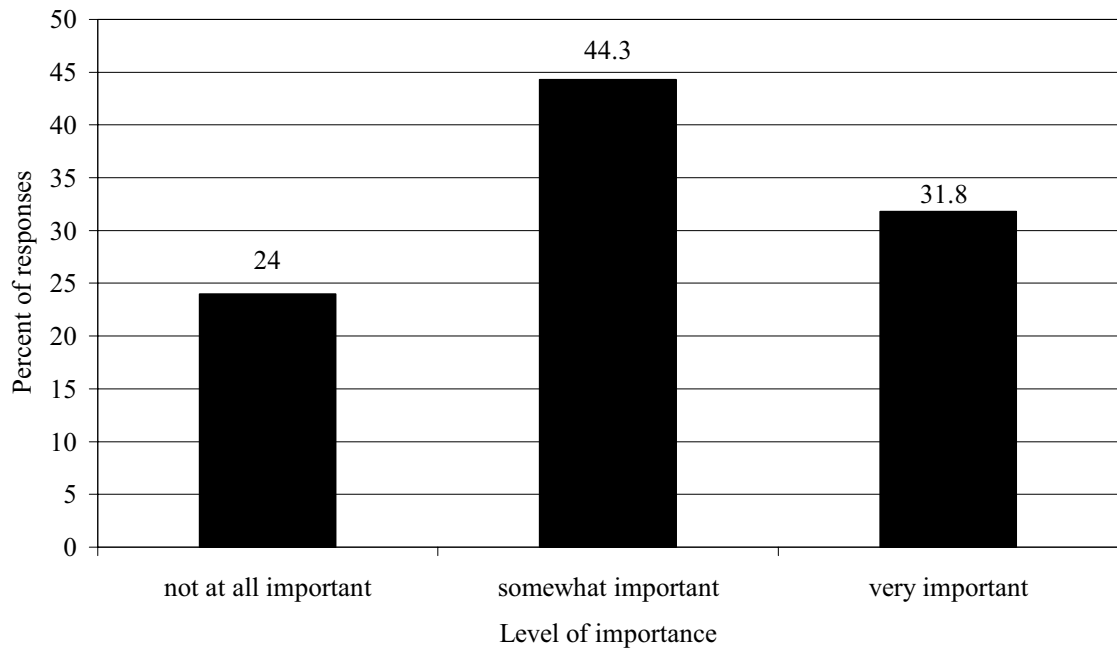


Figure 34: The respondents' perception of the importance of seeing, touching, and interacting with plants at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

Many LHM visitors become frustrated when they are denied the opportunity to see farming activities. The farms are often kept to the edges of the recreated village (Knudson 1998, 22 and 161). This arrangement is accurate since farms really would have existed on the outskirts of villages. But the farm's remote orientation may sometimes relegate it to those interpretive posts that are left empty when staffing is short.

Because of the expense of acquiring and difficulty of caring for the larger farm animals – horses, oxen, or cattle – their presence at a museum may be completely absent.

Museums that do not currently prioritize the display of larger farm animals should try to make changes. Research in zoos has shown that the larger the animal, the greater holding power it has for visitors (Bitgood 1986, 3).

Even though plants are living things like the animals, their importance does not receive the same recognition. One may presume that the reason is that plants are not animated; a visitor cannot induce a reaction in a plant by petting it. In the future the “eco-psychology revolution” may give heirloom plants their moment in the limelight as the controversy over genetically modified organisms heightens (Tisdell 1998, 3). The Travel Industry Association of America found that one-fifth of Americans “went on a garden tour, visited a botanical garden, attended a gardening show or festival, or participated in some other garden-related activity in the past five years.”²³ Creative museum managers may find that there is an untapped visitor base in garden tourists.

Watching re-enactments

Nearly 60% of visitors believed that watching re-enactments is very important. Just less than 35% believed it to be somewhat important and 7.7% thought it to be not important at all.

²³ Travel Industry Association of America website, “Domestic Research: Travel Trends,” <http://www.tia.org/Travel/TravelTrends.asp> (accessed November 12, 2000).

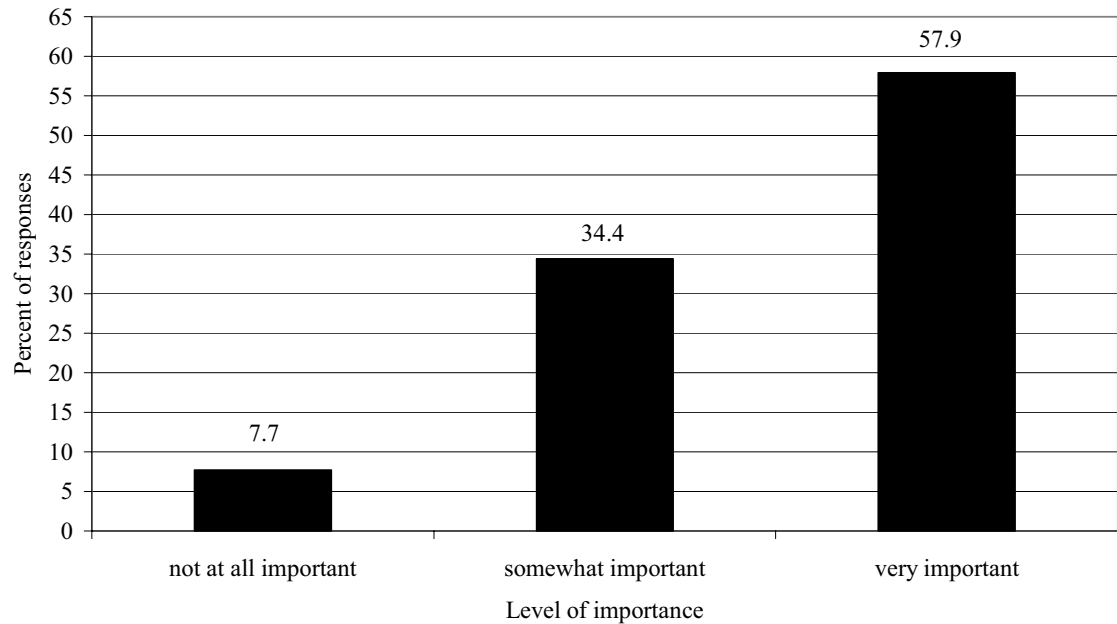


Figure 35: The respondents' perception of the importance of watching re-enactments at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

Steven Bitgood's first principle of exhibit design states that an exhibit's "holding power (its ability to attract and hold a visitor's attention) is directly related to motion" (Bitgood 1986, 2). A closely related museum characteristic polled in this survey, "watching costumed craftspeople at work" was rated as very important by approximately 10% more respondents than rated this characteristic as very important. It can be assumed that visitors are less interested in watching theatrical re-enactments of events and more interested in casual demonstrations.

This may relate to the visitor's ability to guide the information received by watching craftspeople at work by asking questions about what interests them. In a re-enactment this is not possible. Events must take place according to historical data or a

script. Information is doled out by a narrator and the visitor often cannot interrupt with questions.

Participating in re-enactments

The response to this question mirrors the results of the previous question regarding the importance of watching reenactments. More than 40% of the respondents believed that participating in living history reenactments was not at all important. Nearly 32% of respondents found this activity to be somewhat important. Just over one-quarter (26.7%) believed reenactment participation to be very important.

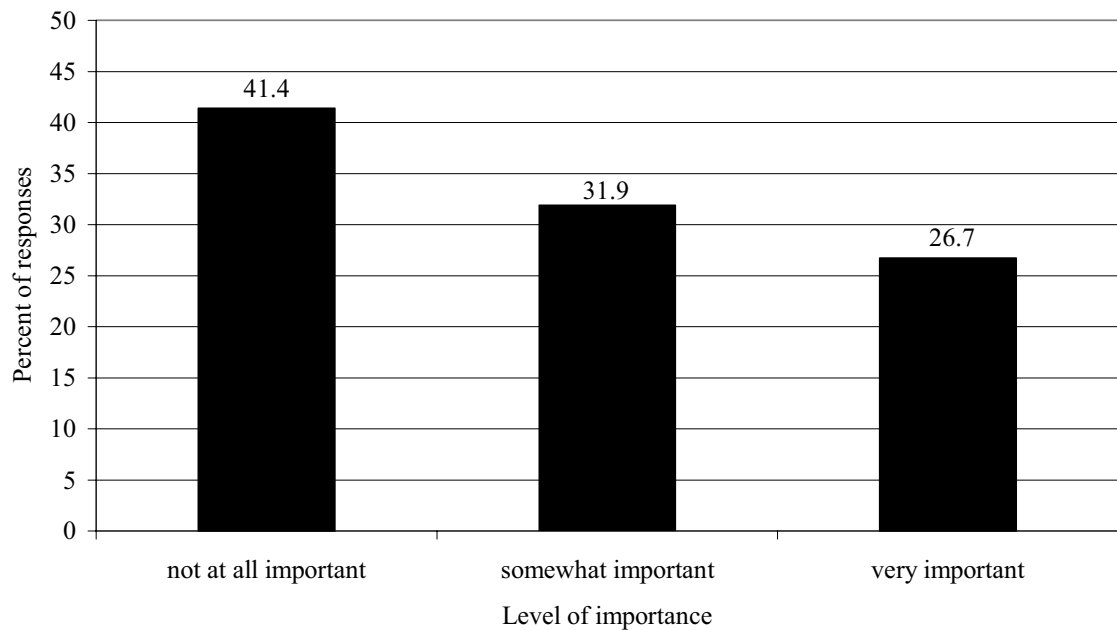


Figure 36: The respondents' perception of the importance of participating in re-enactments themselves at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

Visitors do not seem to be comfortable with the prospect of participating in living history reenactments. Living history museums, however, should not give up on interactive learning. Richard Ehrlich's third rule for developing good programs, as related at the 11th Museum Studies Conference, is to "develop programs which engage the active involvement of visitors in the learning process" (Ehrlich 1990, 13-4). Stephen Bitgood reinforces this lesson with his third principle of good exhibit design, visitor participation increases holding power (Bitgood 1986, 4). Visitors' reluctance to accept invitations to participate in reenactments may make it seem like an ineffective method of interpretation. Museums should endeavor to create techniques that will minimize visitor hesitation to participate, thereby increasing the efficacy of this important interpretive tool.

The respondents' participation in, willingness to participate in, and willingness to pay to participate in a special event

Nearly 60% of respondents did not participate in a special event the day of the survey. The remaining 41.8% had participated in a special event. The term "special event" was not defined on the survey.

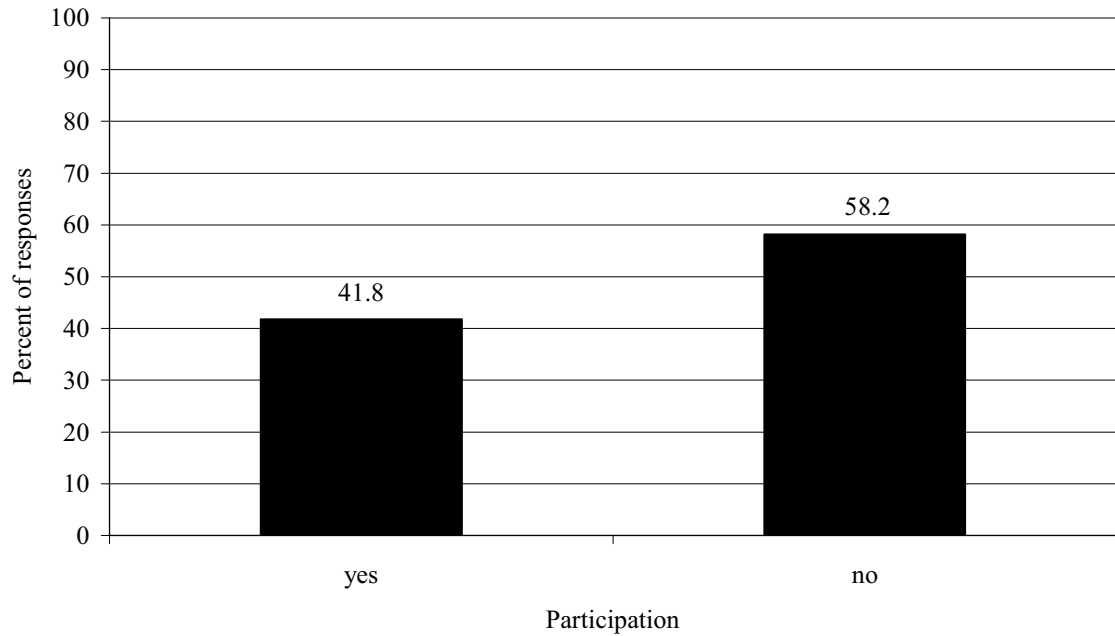


Figure 37: The respondents' participation in a special event the day of the survey at the four LHMs.

Most respondents, 58.2%, had not participated in a special event the day they completed the survey. However, 87.8% of all respondents were willing to participate in a special event in the future.

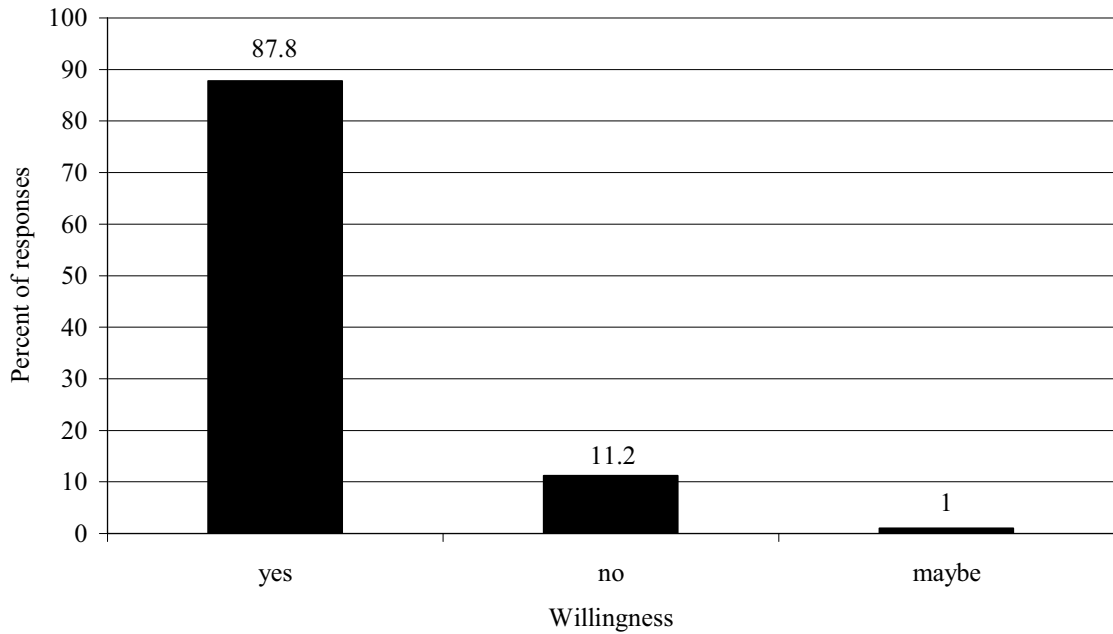


Figure 38: The respondents' willingness to participate in a special event in the future at the four LHMs.

Most respondents, nearly 75%, were willing to pay extra to participate in a special event. Some visitors, 1.6%, were unsure of whether they would be willing to pay extra or not. These people indicated that the nature of the special event would determine whether or not they were willing to pay extra to participate.

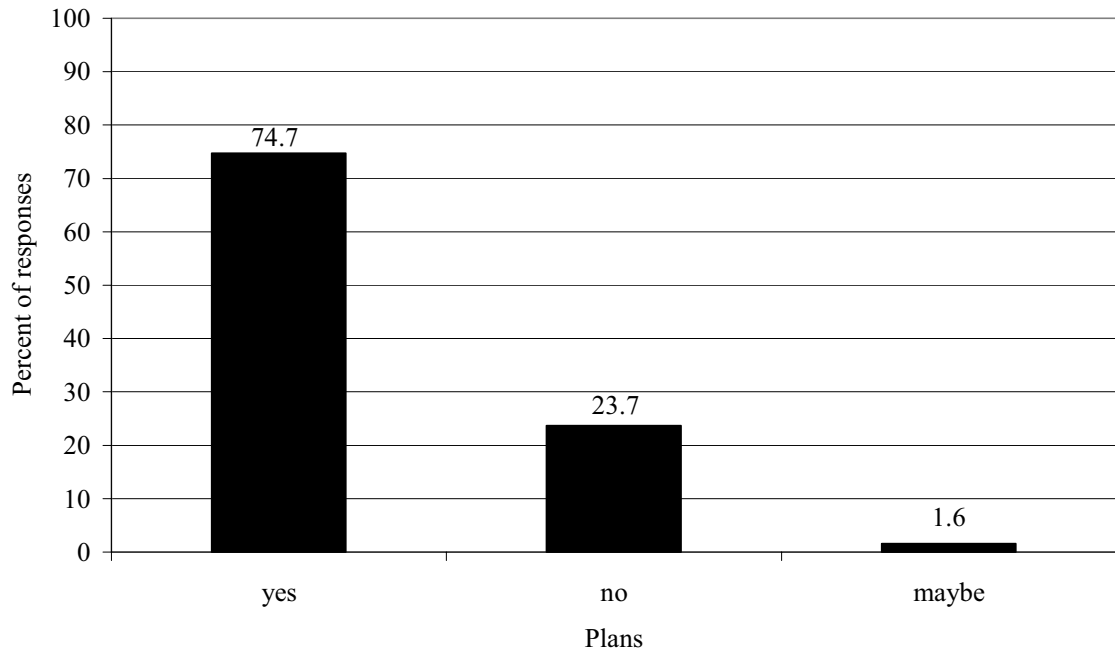


Figure 39: The respondents' willingness to pay extra to participate in a special event in the future at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

Special events seem to appeal to most visitors; having the opportunity to participate in or attend them could increase visitor satisfaction. Research conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America found that one-fifth of Americans “attended a festival while on a trip away from home in the past year” with 22% of them attending an “ethnic, folk or heritage festival.” Other types of festivals frequented by American travelers included music festival, county and state fairs, parades, food and religious festivals.²⁴

Launching “mega-events,” festivals or fairs, is one technique museums use to reposition their image or repair a bad reputation (Pizam 1999, 214). Of course, that is assuming the mega-event is planned and executed successfully. Special events also serve

²⁴ Travel Industry Association of America website, “Domestic Research: Travel Trends,” <http://www.tia.org/Travel/TravelTrends.asp> (accessed November 12, 2000).

to focus media attention on the museum that hosts them and brings important resources, such as corporate sponsorship, to the institution (Pizam 1999, 214). Special events provide a reason for occasional visitors or non-visitors to come to the museum, exposing them to the institution's message and encouraging them to think of the museum more often when deciding their leisure time activities (Loomis 1987, 129 and 255).

The fact that most visitors were willing to pay to attend a special event is an indication that living history institutions do not need to absorb the entire cost of hosting the events themselves. The average cost of serving a museum visitor is \$21.²⁵ As seen in Section 4.1, 87.8% of visitors to living history museums are willing to pay no more than \$20 admission. This leaves the museum to make up the difference between gate receipt and the cost of operation through other venues. Besides government funding, corporate sponsorship, and food/gift shop revenue, income from special events can be a major boost to the museum's bottom line.

Learning

This characteristic of a museum visit received the second highest number of respondents listing it as very important (81.3%) of the all the twenty-five museum characteristics included in the survey (see p. 102). Just over 17% decided it was somewhat important to learn and 1.6% thought it was not important to learn at an LHM.

²⁵ American Association of Museums website, "ABCs of Museums." <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/abc.cfm>

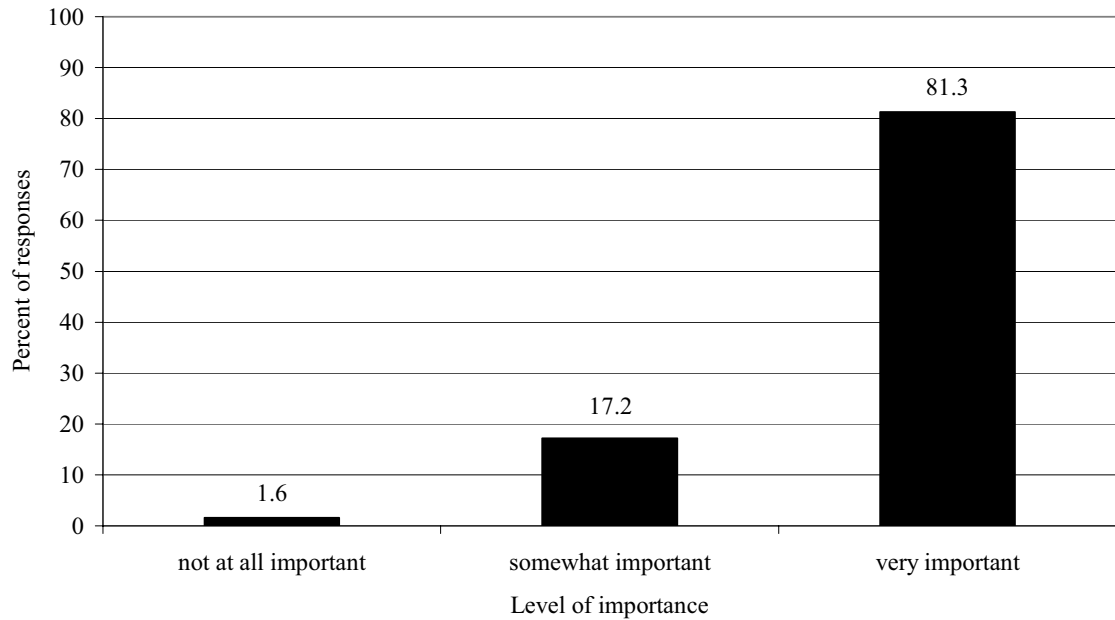


Figure 40: The respondents' perception of the importance of learning at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

It seems obvious that people expect to learn something when they attend a museum of any sort, living history or otherwise. People are starting to want something more from leisure trips (Herbert 1989, 90); the educational enrichment offered by visits to historic sites adds value to the typical vacation which leaves the traveler feeling better about himself. The Travel Industry Association of America found in a 1999 study that one-fifth of American adults took educational trips to “learn or improve a skill, sport or hobby” within the previous three years.²⁶

While the number of travelers interested in self-improvement is growing, the vast majority of the travel and tourism industry still emphasizes pleasure (Tisdell 1998, 132). Most of the population believes that nothing “useful or relevant” can be learned at

²⁶ Travel Industry Association of America website, “Domestic Research: Travel Trends,” <http://www.tia.org/Travel/TravelTrends.asp> (accessed November 12, 2000).

museums (Loomis 1987, 121), makes it difficult for LHMs to market their educational missions. This combined with the fact that many museums have yet to refine their missions into short simple effective statements makes it extremely difficult for visitors to comprehend their message. “Learning objectives for sites are generally too ambitious; they overlook the fact that most visitors are simply passing through on vacation, not staying for a degree” (Tramposch 1998, 13).

Having fun

The importance of “having fun” during a museum visit received the highest number of respondents of all the museum characteristics included in the survey with 87.2% rating it as very important (see p. 102). It was somewhat important to 11.3% and not important at all to 1.5%.

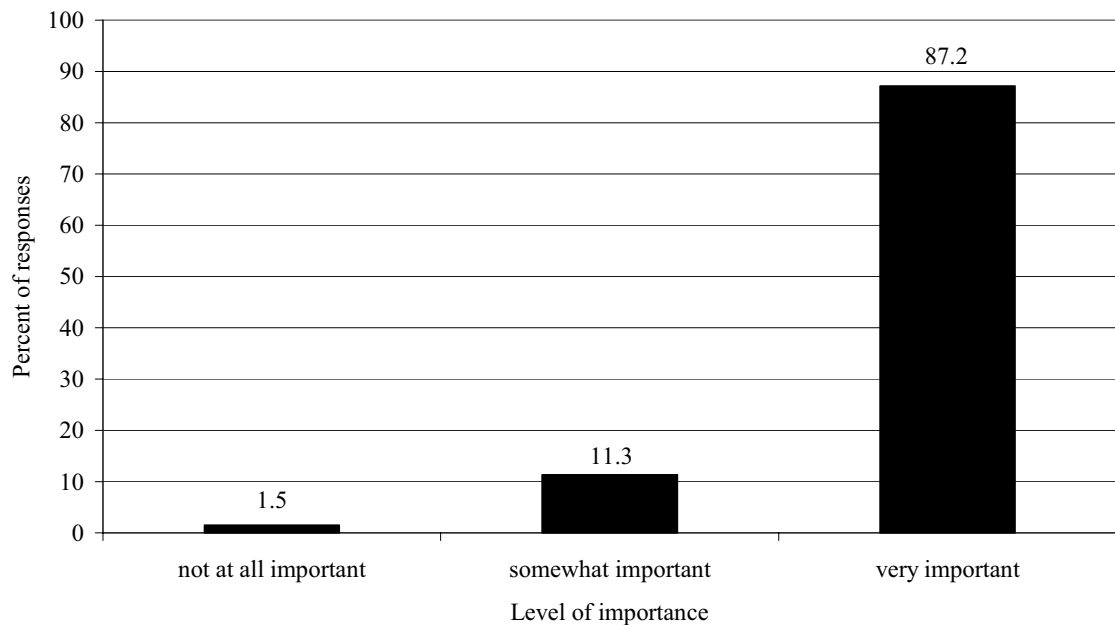


Figure 41: The respondents' perception of the importance of having fun at the four LHMs.

Discussion:

Nearly 6% more people rated having fun as very important compared to learning. Visits to museums, after all, are a subset of the leisure industry (Herbert 1989, 2). The only people who are forced to go to living history museums are students on field trips, everyone else makes a conscious decision to go, or not go, based on their leisure time priorities. It makes perfect sense that the number one incentive to visit a living history museum will be the opportunity for enjoyment.

Having fun, entertainment, is essential to providing a satisfactory visitor experience. Curators bridle at facing the risk of trivializing their message by sacrificing scholarship for commercialism (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 113). Learning is at the core of a living history museum's mission, but the entertainment quality of a visit to that museum is key to luring visitors through the door to hear the message.

Chapter 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1: Percentage of Respondents Who Rated the Characteristics as “Very Important”

Each of the survey items listed in the previous sections present good and useful information for museum administrators. What helps draw the most telling conclusions, however, is the chart below (see p. 102) which compares all of the museum characteristics to each other. In doing this a hierarchy of importance emerges. The museum characteristic that received the highest number of respondents rating it as “very important” was the opportunity to have fun (87.2%), followed closely by learning (81.3%). The third most important feature to survey participants was the existence of polite museum staff (80.2%), followed by clean and ample restrooms (79.6%), knowledgeable guides (79.1%), and seeing authentic antique items (75.1%).

The museum features that had the fewest number of respondents rate them as “very important” included having public classes on evenings or weekends, participating in re-enactments (both at 26.7%), and seeing, touching, and interacting with plants (31.8%).

It could be generally concluded that the five most important things on which living history museums can concentrate to ensure visitor satisfaction are the basics: entertainment, education, staff customer service, facilities, and staff expertise. Opportunities such as seeing plants, public classes, and participating in reenactments

ranked lowest among the visitors surveyed. This fact may lead one to conclude that lowly rated characteristics do not deserve administrative attention. However, even the two lowest-ranked features garnered ratings of “very important” from more than one-quarter of visitors.

5.2: The Living History Museum Visitor Profile

Through this study it was shown that visitors to living history museums are dominantly female, between the ages of 36 and 55, and highly educated. Most living history museum visitors are white, but also extremely sensitive to questions about race. They are relatively inexperienced with living history museums and tend to visit in a group of friends. They are willing to drive at least one hour to visit a site, but usually live in the area of the museum. They are influenced by word-of-mouth advertising when making decisions about travel and they are not willing to pay more than \$20 admission. Finally, living history museum visitors enjoy shopping and eating out on the days that they visit.

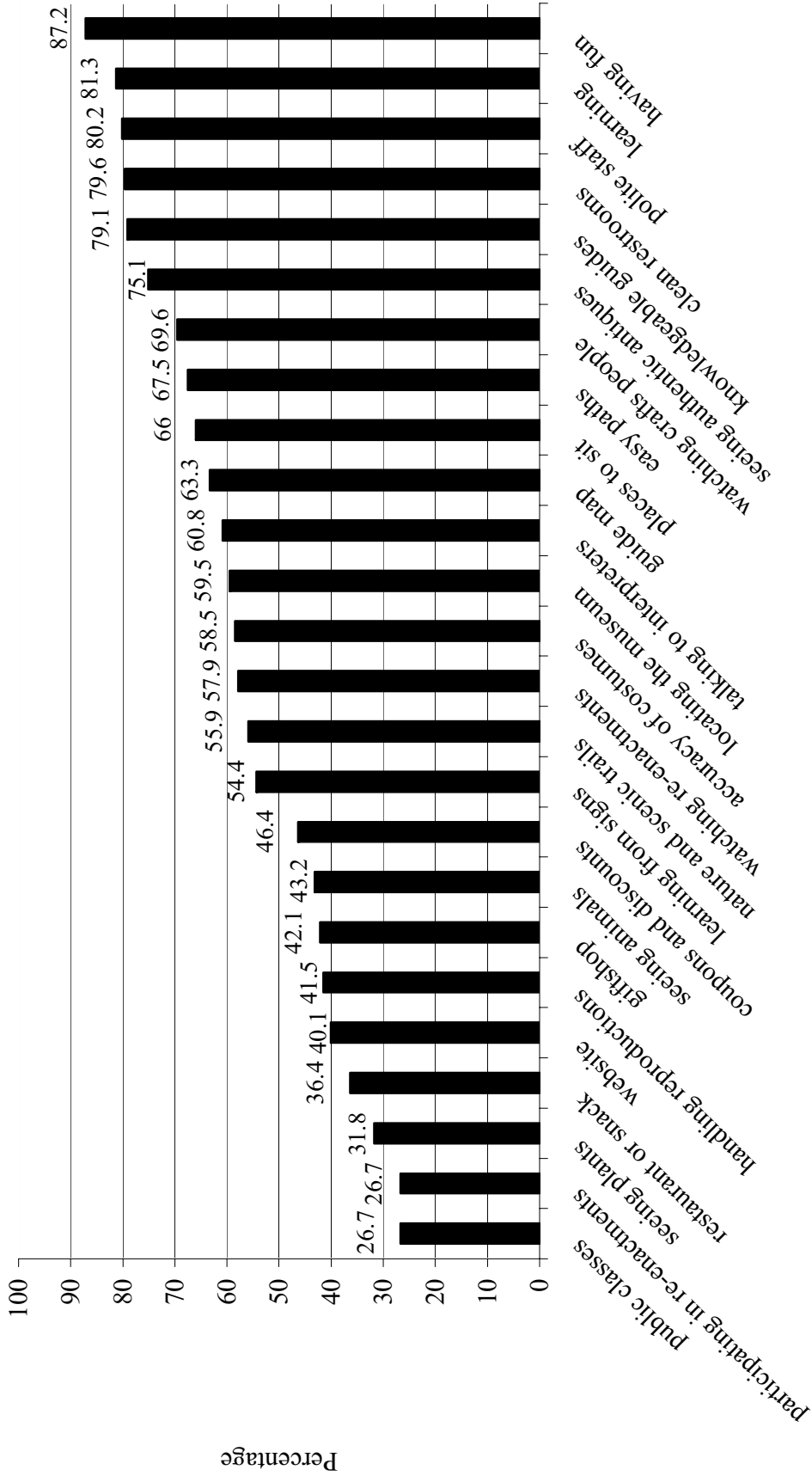
The typical living history museum visitor also seems to prefer passive engagement rather than active engagement during museum activities. Looking at three different examples from the chart on page 102, we can see how visitors seem to make distinctions between the two modes of engagement.

In the first example, more people rated “seeing authentic antique items” as very important than did “handling reproduction items.” This is not to say that, if given the choice between the two, they would automatically avoid the reproduction items in favor of viewing antiques. However, they may feel a certain amount of timidity in handling

these objects. On the other hand, they may become upset if they do not have the opportunity to see authentic antiques which are so often associated with history museums of any type.

The second example compares the opportunity to watch costumed craftspeople to talking to someone who seems to come from a different time. Once again, fewer visitors felt that it was very important to have the opportunity for a higher level of engagement during their visit. It seems as if they would prefer to simply watch an interpreter than talk to one. This could be construed as quite an obstacle because one of the major ingredients in living history success is first person interpretation. So much more information is passed on through the stories behind an action. How can we help visitors feel comfortable in asking questions? How can we engage them in conversations that are not rehearsed shtick, but rather, easy chit chat chock full edu-tidbits. The secret must lie in the recruitment and careful training of talented interpreters.

A final example of visitors gravitating towards lower-energy engagement is the comparison between watching re-enactments and participating in re-enactments. Less than half as many respondents rated participating in re-enactments as very important as did merely watching them. Once again, the respondent does not seem to be comfortable enough to take his visit to the next level and physically experience the living history museum. To a certain extent, this will probably always be true. The question is, how do museum professionals structure programming, train guides and interpreters, and prime visitors to encourage them to get the most out of the museum? Museum staff must become skilled at assessing a visitor's comfort level and then tailoring his or her interpretive approach to increase the enjoyment and educational value of the encounter.



Characteristics

Figure 42: The percentage of respondents at the four LHMs who rated the characteristics as "Very Important"

5.3: Recommendations for Future Research

Further studies be conducted to answer the following questions:

- How are ages/affiliations represented in group visits? In other words are grandparent/grandchild (“WWII Generation” and “Echo Boomers”) groups an important segment of the audience? Are empty-nesters making visits without the presence of children and grandchildren?
- What are the opinions, expectations, and perceptions of members of the American population who do not visit living history museums? Why are African-Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities so underrepresented in the current museum audience? Are there any changes that can be made to move non-users into regular users?
- How are different audiences served by museum websites? How is website use affected by age, race, or gender?
- How can living history museums overcome the obstacles of low pay and irregular work hours to attract and keep skilled interpretive staff? What innovative methods in use by other living history museums, traditional museums, and other institutions are applicable?
- What psychological obstacles inhibit visitors from actively participating in reenactments or other forms of “hands-on” interpretation?
- What special events are effective in attracting non-visitors and occasional visitors to the museum?
- Why are visitors so disinterested in plants at living history institutions? What can be done to increase their interest?

APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Visitor Survey

Dear Visitor,

You are being asked to participate in a study of living history museum audiences. The information you provide today will help museums in the United States and around the world improve their abilities to serve the public and provide quality experiences for their visitors.

The completion of this survey is voluntary and should take about ten minutes of your time. Any answers or comments you provide will never be associated with you personally and your identity will remain confidential. If you do not wish to participate in the survey please return the clipboard and survey to the surveyor who gave it to you. You will experience no negative consequences from the University of Delaware or the Longwood Graduate Program if you choose not to complete the survey.

After you complete the survey and return it you will then receive a special gift to show our appreciation for your valuable help with the study.

Sincere thanks,



Melissa Butler
Longwood Graduate Program
University of Delaware
126 Townsend Hall
Newark, DE 19717-1303



How many times have you visited a living history museum in the past?

- 1-5 times
- 6-10 times
- 11 or more times

Please tell us why you decided to visit this living history museum today?

Did your visit meet your expectations?

- my visit did not meet my expectations at all
- my visit was a little disappointing
- my visit was what I thought it would be
- my visit was better than I thought it would be
- my visit greatly exceeded my expectations

Why or why not?

Today you are visiting...

(Please check only those that apply.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> by yourself | <input type="checkbox"/> with your family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> with a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> with a group of friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> with a child | <input type="checkbox"/> with a group of children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> with an organized group | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

In the future, how far would you be willing to drive to visit a living history museum?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than one hour | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 hour | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 hours or more |

How much would you be willing to pay to visit a living history museum?

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 or less | <input type="checkbox"/> \$16-20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$6-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$21 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$11-15 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I think living history museums should not charge admission | |

Did you participate in a special event today? Yes No

In the future would you like to visit a living history museum to participate in a special event or activity?

- Yes No

What types of special events or activities would interest you (e.g. battle re-enactments, craft shows, or special classes)?

Would you be willing to pay extra to attend a special event or activity? Yes No

How long do you expect your visit in this area to be?

- less than one day 4-5 days
 one day 6 days or longer
 2-3 days I live in the area

What else might you do today or while you are in the area? (Please check only those you are most likely to do.)

- visit another museum or tourist attraction,
which one? _____
- go sightseeing or go on a scenic drive
- participate in a recreational or sports activity
- tennis
- golf
- hiking
- biking
- mountain climbing
- adventure sport (e.g. white water rafting, hot air ballooning, skydiving,
 etc.),
 what sport? _____
- other _____
- go out to eat
- visit a nearby town or city
- go to a nearby public beach or park
- attend a show or special event
- play opera
- concert movie
- sports game other _____
- visit with friends or family who aren't with you now
- go shopping
- attend a conference
- I live here, so I will just go home
- other _____

**How did you first learn about the living history museum you are visiting today?
(Please check only one.)**

- word of mouth
- newspaper article
- newspaper advertisement
- school
- a brochure
 - where did you get the brochure?
 - a Welcome Center
 - a hotel
 - a bed and breakfast
 - a travel agency
 - another museum
 - a gas station
 - a restaurant
 - a shopping center or store
- other _____
- magazine advertisement
- magazine article
- television commercial
- television news program
- organized tour group/bus tour
- the internet
- road sign/billboard
- other _____

What is your age group?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 or younger | <input type="checkbox"/> 56-65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 66-75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 76-85 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 36-45 | <input type="checkbox"/> 85 or older |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 46-55 | |

What is your sex? Female Male **What is your race?** _____

What is your highest completed level of education?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Up to eight years | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some high school | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school/GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational school | <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college | |

Are you currently enrolled in school? Yes No

The museum you are visiting today may or may not have these following features, but please tell us how important they are, or would be, to you.

1 = not at all important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = very important

<u>Watching costumed craftspeople at work</u>	1	2	3
<u>Talking to someone who seems to come from a different time</u>	1	2	3
<u>The historical accuracy of the costumes</u>	1	2	3
<u>Knowledgeable guides at every site in the museum</u>	1	2	3
<u>Learning from signs on exhibits</u>	1	2	3
<u>Polite museum staff</u>	1	2	3
<u>Public classes on weekends or in the evenings</u>	1	2	3

1 = not at all important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = very important

<u>Seeing authentic antique items</u>	1	2	3
<u>Handling and using reproduction items yourself</u>	1	2	3
<u>Watching re-enactments</u>	1	2	3
<u>Participating in re-enactments yourself</u>	1	2	3
<u>Seeing and interacting with animals</u>	1	2	3
<u>Seeing, touching, and interacting with plants</u>	1	2	3
<u>A guide map of the museum</u>	1	2	3
<u>Easy paths to walk on</u>	1	2	3
<u>Nature and scenic trails</u>	1	2	3

1 = not at all important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = very important

<u>A restaurant or snack and beverage machines</u>	1	2	3
<u>A gift, souvenir, or museum shop</u>	1	2	3
<u>Clean and ample restrooms</u>	1	2	3
<u>Places to sit and rest</u>	1	2	3
<u>Locating the museum easily</u>	1	2	3
<u>Discounts or coupons for admission</u>	1	2	3
<u>A website about the museum</u>	1	2	3
<u>Learning</u>	1	2	3
<u>Having fun</u>	1	2	3

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

Appendix B: The Institutional Questionnaire

INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION:

What is your institution's mission?

Why do people visit your institution?

How is your institution governed?

- Private individual
- Private organization
- City government
- County/Parish government
- State government
- Federal government
- Private and governmental combination
- Other _____

What is your institution's annual operating budget? _____

Please estimate how the budget is allocated among the following:

- Marketing \$ _____
- Visitor Services \$ _____
- Special Programs, events, activities \$ _____
- Public Relations \$ _____
- Other (please list) _____ \$ _____
- _____ \$ _____
- _____ \$ _____

What are your institution's major sources of funding and approximately what percentage of the total operating budget does each provide?

- General admissions _____ %
- Special event admissions _____ %
- City government _____ %
- County government _____ %
- State government _____ %
- Federal government _____ %
- Friends group _____ %
- Capital campaign _____ %
- Other (please list) _____ %
- _____ %
- _____ %
- _____ %

VISITATION:

What is your institution's annual visitation? _____

Please check groups that are your institution's major audiences, then estimate the percentage of the institution's total visitation that group makes up.

_____ Families	_____ %
_____ School groups	_____ %
_____ Organized tours	_____ %
_____ Individuals	_____ %
_____ Senior citizens	_____ %
_____ Special, catered events	_____ %
_____ Other _____	_____ %
_____ Other _____	_____ %
_____ Other _____	_____ %

In your opinion, more visitors attend your site:

_____ alone	_____ with their family
_____ with a friend	_____ with a group of friends
_____ with a child	_____ with a group of children
_____ with an organized group	_____ other _____

In your opinion, how far does your institution's typical visitor travel to reach your site?

_____ less than one hour	_____ 2-3 hours
_____ 1 hour	_____ 3 hours or more

How much time do you estimate your institution's visitors spend in the area?

_____ less than one day	_____ 4-5 days
_____ one day	_____ 6 days or longer
_____ 2-3 days	_____ they are typically permanent residents of the area

In your opinion, what is the most common age group of your institution's visitors?

_____ 15 or younger	_____ 56-65
_____ 16-25	_____ 66-75
_____ 26-35	_____ 76-85
_____ 36-45	_____ 85 or older
_____ 46-55	

In your opinion, the majority of your institution's visitation is:

_____ male _____ female _____ about 50% each

In your opinion, the majority of your institution's visitation is what race? _____

In your opinion, what is the highest level of education of the majority of your institution's visitors?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Up to eight years | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some high school | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school/GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational school | <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college | |

In your opinion, what else do your institution's visitors do while they are in the area?

- visit another museum or tourist attraction, which one? _____
- go sightseeing or go on a scenic drive
- participate in a recreational or sports activity
 - tennis
 - golf
 - hiking
 - biking
 - mountain climbing
 - adventure sport (e.g. white water rafting, hot air ballooning, skydiving, etc.), what sport? _____
 - other _____
- go out to eat
- visit a nearby town or city
- go to a nearby public beach or park
- attend a show or special event
 - play opera
 - concert movie
 - sports game other _____
- visit with friends or family who aren't with you now
- go shopping
- attend a conference
- they are typically permanent residents of the area, so will just go home
- other _____

What admission rates does your institution charge?

- Individuals
- Families
- Students
- Children (Ages _____ through _____)
- Infants (Ages _____ through _____)
- Seniors (Age _____ and above)
- Groups
- AAA
- Other _____
- Other _____

Does your institution evaluate its visitors? ___ Yes ___ No

How often does your institution conduct evaluations? _____

ADVERTISEMENT:

What advertisement media does your institution use?

- Paid newspaper ads
 - Paid magazine ads
 - Paid television ads
 - Brochures (if possible, please enclose a copy)
Where are the brochures distributed?
 - Welcome Centers
 - hotels
 - bed and breakfasts
 - travel agencies
 - other museums
 - gas stations
 - restaurants
 - shopping centers or store
 - other _____
 - Internet website
 - Road signs/ billboards
 - School handouts
 - Active public relations activities
 - Other _____
-

In what regions does your institution advertise?

- Locally
- In the city or town
- Throughout the county or parish
- Statewide
- Throughout the institution's national region (Northeast, Mid-West, etc.)
- Across the nation
- Internationally

Does your institution currently, or has it in the past, used an independent advertising agency?

- Yes No

SPECIAL PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Does your institution offer special programs, events, and/or activities? ___ Yes ___ No

Approximately what percentage of your institution's total visitation results from special programs, events, and/or activities? _____%

Does your institution charge an extra admission or participation fee for special events?

- Yes No Only for certain events

Does your institution print brochures or other advertisements that list and or describe the special programs, events, and/or activities it offers? Yes No
 (If it is possible, please enclose a copy of this publication.)

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS:

Are there other attractions in your institution's area with whom your institution competes for visitors? Yes No

On a scale of 1 = not very much, 2 = some, 3 = very much, how seriously do they draw visitors away from your institution?

<input type="checkbox"/> Other museums	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Public parks or beaches	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Amusement parks	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping centers	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Theaters or cinemas	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Sports events	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	1	2	3

Are there other attractions in your institution's area that attract visitors to your institution?
 Yes No

On a scale of 1 = not very many, 2 = some, 3 = very many, how many visitors do the other attractions help bring to your institution?

<input type="checkbox"/> Other museums	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Public parks or beaches	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Amusement parks	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping centers	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Theaters or cinemas	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Sports events	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	1	2	3

Please check any travel related organizations your institution works with and rate its helpfulness in attracting visitors to your site (1 = not at all helpful, 2 = somewhat helpful, 3 = very helpful):

<input type="checkbox"/> Travel agencies	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Bus tour companies	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Airlines	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Rental car companies	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> AAA	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> State tourist bureau	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel organizations	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	1	2	3

VISITOR SERVICES:

The following is a list of various museum services or features. We understand that your institution may or may not have or provide all of these features, but we would like to gain a general understanding of how important they are to your institution. Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 3, how much of a priority they have for your museum. We are not asking that you rate how well your institution provides or accomplishes these features, just how important they are.

1 = not at all important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = very important

<u>Having costumed craftspeople in the museum</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Using first-person interpretation</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Having historically accurate costumes</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Staffing all sites within the museum at all times</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Using interpretive signage in exhibits</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Employing polite museum staff members</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Offering evening or weekend classes</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

1 = not at all important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = very important

<u>Displaying antique items</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Providing reproduction items the visitors can touch</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Organizing re-enactments</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Allowing visitors to participate in re-enactments</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Giving visitors the opportunity to see and interact with animals</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Giving visitors the opportunity to touch and interact with plants</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Providing a guide map of the museum</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Providing easy walking paths</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Providing nature and scenic trails</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

1 = not at all important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = very important

<u>Providing a restaurant or snack and beverage machines</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Providing a gift, souvenir, or museum shop</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Providing clean and ample restrooms</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Providing a place to sit and rest</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Making the museum easy to locate</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Offering discounts or coupons for admission</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Maintaining a website</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Providing an educational experience</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Providing a fun experience</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix C: Human Studies Review Board Letter of Exemption



OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST
FOR RESEARCH

210 HULLIHEN HALL
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
NEWARK, DELAWARE 19716-1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

July 27, 2001

Ms. Melissa Butler
The Longwood Graduate Program
Campus

Dear Ms. Butler:

Subject: Human subjects approval for "Improving Visitation at Living History Farms and Agriculture Museums"

The above-referenced proposal, which you submitted for human subjects approval, will qualify as research exempt from full Human Subjects Review Board review under the following category:

Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless (1) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and (2) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that under university and federal policy, all research, even if exempt, shall be conducted in accordance with the Belmont Report, copies of which are available from this office or on our website under history and background of human subjects policy. Changes in this project must be approved in advance by the Human Subjects Review Board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard D. Holsten".

Richard D. Holsten
Associate Provost for Research for
T. W. Fraser Russell
Acting Vice Provost for Research

/md
cc: Dr. James Swasey

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbey, D.S. and Duncan F. Cameron. *The Museum Visitor: I – Survey Design*. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1959.
- Adams, G. Donald. “Cultural Tourism,” *Museum News*, November/December 1995, 32-37.
- Alderson, William T. and Shirley Payne Low. *Interpretation of Historic Sites*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1985.
- Babbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research – 9th edition*. Belmont: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, 2001.
- Beck, Larry and Ted Cable. *Interpretation for the 21st Century: Fifteen Guiding Principles for Interpreting Nature and Culture*. Champaign: Sagamore, 1998.
- Bicknell, Sandra and Graham Farmelo, eds. *Museum Visitor Studies in the 90s*. London: Science Museum, 1993.
- Bitgood, Stephen, et al. *Understanding Your Visitors: Ten Factors That Influence Their Behaviour*. Jacksonville: Jacksonville State University, 1986.
- Bitgood, Stephen, James J. Roper, Jr., and Arlene Benefield, eds. *Visitor Studies, 1988: Theory, Research, and Practice: Proceedings of the First Annual Visitor Studies Conference*. Jacksonville: Center for Social Design, c. 1988.
- Blatti, Jo ed. *Past Meets Present; essays about interpretation and public audiences*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987.
- Bonquet, Mary and Michael Winter, eds. *From Their Labours Rest? Conflict and Practice in Rural Tourism*. Brookfield: Avebury, 1987.
- Briggs, Susan. *Successful Tourism Marketing; A Practical Handbook*. London: Kogan Page, 1997.
- Butler, Richard W. and Stephen W. Boyd, eds. *Tourism and National Parks: Issues and Implications*. New York: Wiley, 2000.

Ehrlich, Richard L. "Simple Rules for Developing Good Programs." (lecture, 11th Museum Studies Conference, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, 1990). Taken from *Audience Development: Remaining Faithful to the Mission: the proceedings of the Eleventh Museum Studies Conference*. Newark: University of Delaware, 1992.

Grogg, Ann Hofstra, ed. *Museums Count: A Report by the American Association of Museums*. Washington D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1994.

Ham, Sam H. *Environmental Interpretation: A Practical Guide for People with Big Ideas and Small Budgets*. Golden: North American Press, 1992.

Herbert, David T., Richard C. Prentice, and Colin J. Thomas. *Heritage Sites: Strategies for Marketing and Development*. Brookfield: Avebury, 1989.

Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. *Museums and their Visitors*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Knudson, Douglas M., Ted T. Cable, and Larry Beck. *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources*. State College: Venture Publishing, Inc., 1995.

Loomis, Ross J. *Museum Visitor Evaluation: New Tool for Management*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1987.

Luzader, John C.F. and Jerri Spellman. "Living History: Hobby or Profession?" in *A Sense of Place...A Sense of Space*, ed. Richard W. Koopman. Unknown city of publication: National Association for Interpretation, 1996.

Meredith Travel Marketing electronic newsletter, "Travel Insights and Connections," March 2005.

Pizam, Abraham and Yoel Mansfeld, eds. *Consumer Behavior in Travel and Tourism*. Binghamton: The Haworth Hospitality Press, 1999.

Reid, Dr. Debra A. "ALHFAM Guidebook Survey" (currently unpublished Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, 2000-2001).

Strauss, Susan. *The Passionate Fact; Storytelling in Natural History and Cultural Interpretation*. Golden: North American Press, 1996.

Tilden, Freeman. *Interpreting Our Heritage: Revised Edition*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1967.

Tisdell, Clement A. and Kartik C. Roy, eds. *Tourism and Development; Economic, Social, Political and Environmental Issues*. Commack: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 1998.

Tramosch, William. "Mickey and the Muses," *History News*, Winter 1998, 10-15.

Wilson, Jerry R. *Word-of-Mouth Marketing*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1991.