

Teaching History with Museums

Strategies for K–12 Social Studies

Second Edition

**Alan S. Marcus,
Jeremy D. Stoddard, and
Walter W. Woodward**



Teaching History with Museums

Teaching History with Museums, Second Edition provides an introduction and overview of the rich pedagogical power of museums and historic sites. With a collection of practical strategies and case studies, the authors provide educators with the tools needed to create successful learning experiences for students. The cases are designed to be adapted to any classroom, encouraging students to consider museums as historical accounts to be examined, questioned, and discussed.

Key updates to this revised edition and chapter features include:

- *New* Chapter 9 captures the importance of art museums when teaching about the past.
- *Updated* Chapter 10 addresses issues of technology, focused on visitors' experiences in both physical and virtual museums.
- *New* coverage of smaller, lesser known museums to allow readers to adapt cases to any of their own local sites.
- Specific pre-visit, during visit, and post-visit activities for students at each museum.
- Case reflections analyzing pitfalls and possibilities that can be applied more broadly to similar museums.
- A listing of resources unique to the museum and history content for each chapter.

With this valuable textbook, educators will learn how to promote instruction in support of rigorous inquiry into the past and the goals of democratic values of tolerance and citizenship in the present.

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*To Beatrix Lucinda, Abigail Grace, and Zoe Jay—
The Future.—Walter*

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PART I

Introduction and Framework for Using Museums to Teach History

CHAPTER 1

Introduction



Figure 1.1 Visitors board a recreated stage coach in front of the Bullard Tavern at Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA.

Museums offer some of the most promising opportunities for students to actively engage in studying the past. For example, at Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, students can experience the sights, sounds, and activities of an 1830s New England town. The town includes a working saw mill, tin shop, blacksmith shop, farm, and much more. Visitors are transported back in time through their experiences in this recreated village, and can dip candles, dye yarn, travel in a stage coach, cook over an open fire, play nineteenth-century games, and strut with the roosters and chickens. Old Sturbridge Village recreates the past in a powerful way.

Just outside of St. Louis, in Collinsville, Illinois, the Cahokia Mounds provide the opportunity to explore what is believed to be the remains of the largest prehistoric native civilization north of Mexico. The Cahokia Mounds, a National Historic Landmark and UNESCO World Heritage Site, are 2,200 acres of the archaeological remains of the main component of the ancient settlement. Students can stand on the ground where over 120 mounds were constructed and where in AD 1250 a city larger than London during the same period once stood. Here students can experience the power of walking on the grounds of an historic site.

Meanwhile, in Miami, Florida, students can participate in an interactive exhibit that uses objects from the museum's collections to tell selected stories from Miami's past. Objects range from a Seminole dugout canoe to the Miami Heat logo. The goal of the museum as a whole is to be: "the premier cultural institution committed to gathering, preserving and celebrating Miami's history through exhibitions, city tours, education, research, collections and publications" (History Miami, 2016). At History Miami students can make a personal connection with the past.

Further west, Colorado's memorial to acknowledge Civil War volunteers and the Sand Creek Massacre is located in Denver. Here students can consider the way the Civil War is part of the collective memory in the West and analyze how the monument represents the time period in which it was created (in 1909). Plaques and chiseled stone on the statue list the names of soldiers from Colorado killed in the Civil War, proclaim that Colorado had the highest rate of volunteers of any state in the Union, discuss the discovery of gold, and explore the controversy surrounding an attack by Union soldiers in 1864 on a village of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, known as the Sand Creek Massacre. Students can learn from engaging with and critically analyzing the history presented by the memorial, in particular about how the brutal attack on American Indian women and children is portrayed, as well as from learning about the history of the memorial's creation.

In Los Angeles, California, the Autry National Center uses artifacts as the mechanism to create a narrative about life in the West in the late 1880s. The exhibits tell a multicultural story about the development of the West through the artifacts of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups. This narrative offers the potential for students to develop historical empathy by understanding the perspectives of many groups that contributed to the development of the West. In addition, the narratives told and artifacts displayed allow students to more broadly evaluate the authoritative, yet subjective, role of museums in interpreting the past.

In Boston, Massachusetts, school groups walk the red paint and brick line of the Freedom Trail to study the American Revolution with potential stops such as the U.S.S. Constitution, Bunker Hill, Paul Revere's Home, and the Old State House—site of the Boston Massacre. Students feel the power of

place as they stand on the location of events critical to understanding the American Colonists' struggle for independence from Great Britain. The Freedom Trail is also a jackpot for the study of how geography influenced history—for example, the strategic importance of Bunker Hill as a way to defend the city, the importance of Boston Harbor, etc.

Finally, among the numerous opportunities to study the past at museums in Washington, D.C., the National Museum of African American History and Culture opened its doors in September 2016. The museum's first exhibits provide opportunities for visitors to explore African American life, history, and culture. Among its 36,000 artifacts, the museum engages visitors through the power and persuasion of visual images with a focus on the Civil Rights Movement. Engagement with these images promotes students' abilities to bolster their skills at analyzing visual historical evidence and encourages students to consider the significance of the Civil Rights Movement for the African American community, as well as within the larger context of U.S. history.

The examples above are only a small sample of the rich possibilities that museums offer for history education. The resources and context of museums are a tremendous resource for K-12 teachers to utilize in promoting a sophisticated understanding of the past and the development of habits of mind in ways that are not easily duplicated in the classroom. Their physical space, artifacts, professional staff, special programs, online resources, and other features create opportunities for students to deepen understanding of specific content, and to develop historical thinking and critical literacy skills. These museum resources and the experiences provided at museums complement the school curriculum (Lenoir & Laforest, 1986) and make studying history more vivid, engaging, and relevant.

Leaving the school to visit a museum can allow students to engage with an amalgamation of artifacts, ambience, narratives, and other recreations of the past as well as the geography of historic sites (Nespor, 2000). This combination of experiences during a visit to a museum may be particularly powerful for developing historical empathy. They can also challenge students' understanding of the past through engaging them in difficult or traumatic historical events or issues (Rose, 2016). In addition, students may be more inspired to try critical thinking about primary sources or larger interpretations of history when they are confronted by both in museums. Museums also create the potential to interrogate historical interpretations by looking critically at how individual museums choose to present and interpret the past—what narratives they construct about our past and tell us about the present. However, the potential contribution of museums to the history education of students is largely dependent on the practices of teachers and museum staff.

The objective of this book is to provide educators—including teachers, teacher educators, museum educators, and parents of home-schooled

students—with both a conceptual model linking museum visits to learning about the past, and a collection of practical strategies illustrated through cases focused on different “types” of museum. (We use the term “museums” to include artifact and display-based museums, local history museums, historic forts, house museums, living history museums, memorials, monuments, and other heritage sites.) The cases provide detailed models of using museums and museum resources to develop students’ understanding of the past. They are designed to complement the excellent activities already enacted by many educators by augmenting a repertoire of skills for implementing effective lessons for before, during, and after museum visits. The cases are also created to address the benefits and hurdles involved in using museums to teach history. We hope one result will be to provide the tools to more critically examine museums as sources of historical knowledge and as teaching resources. Each case is constructed to be adapted and tailored to specific contexts in ways that will make students think deeply about museums, not just as authoritative entities or as a day off from real learning, but as providing historical accounts and interpretations to be examined, questioned, and discussed.

The authors are former K-12 classroom teachers and museum educators who now work as educational researchers, teacher educators, and historians. Our own teaching and our experiences working with K-12 teachers brings to mind two key questions: (1) How can museum visits enhance students’ understanding of the past? And (2) what do teachers and museum educators need to know and be able to do to effectively incorporate museum visits into their curriculum? The examples described in the chapters that follow will explore these issues in depth. The remaining sections of this chapter provide background behind these important questions, develop a rationale for the use of museums as part of history education, and preview the cases.

MUSEUMS AND HISTORY EDUCATION

History museums are located in every state, every major city, and in many small towns. From urban centers to rural towns, these museums cover a wide range of events, people, groups, and themes in United States and world history. Even for students without easy physical access to a large comprehensive museum, there are widely available local museums, historic homes, historic forts, monuments, and memorials that offer meaningful learning experiences. More recently, museum resources and experiences have become available online to various degrees. These online resources—digital extensions of the museums’ offerings—tender potential learning experiences different from other forms of digital content precisely because of their museum connection. Few other disciplines have such a readily available and rich set of resources designed to support student learning

and also the staff to collaborate with teachers to formulate these learning experiences.

More specifically, there are three types of resources available at most history museums: physical resources, human resources, and online resources. The physical resources include buildings and other physical structures, artifacts, and exhibitions. The human resources are museum employees who are trained authorities in artifact collection, exhibit creation, history, and education. The virtual resources include archives, online exhibits, databases, simulations, lesson plans, field-trip planning information, and more (Leftwich, 2006).

The physical resources of museums provide opportunities not available in the classroom to see, touch, feel, and experience the past. The human resources can support teachers in creating exciting and meaningful learning experiences at the museum and in the classroom. The online and other outreach resources are easily accessible for use as pre- and post-trip resources as well as when a field trip is not feasible. They offer potentially valuable connections between museums and history classrooms (Sheppard, 2007), but because online resources are a relatively recent development, all their advantages and shortcomings are not completely known. The cases in this book will examine all three types of resources for museums.

The goal is that the cases in this book will motivate teachers to design more effective museum visits and provide teachers and museum educators with the skills to create successful learning experiences for students. The limited data available suggest that history teachers plan a limited number of field trips. Marcus, Grenier, & Levine (2009) found that secondary history teachers believed that history museums should be an important part of the history curriculum, but many were unable to overcome the logistical and pedagogical barriers they faced to actually take students to museums—and many were dissatisfied with the number of trips they took each year. The lack of school visits to history museums is particularly glaring at the secondary level. Marcus, Grenier, & Levine report that museum educators are particularly distressed with the number of secondary visitors. Museum staff said the overwhelming majority of their school visitors are elementary students—in some cases, as much as 95 percent of all school visitors.

There are many practical concerns and other issues that hinder museum visits. Teachers must overcome logistical hurdles such as district paperwork, bus transportation, parent permission, and coordinating scheduling at school and with the museum. Financial considerations are a huge concern for teachers, districts, and parents. Many teachers experience a lack of administrative support for field trips, particularly to history museums, since history is not formally assessed by the No Child Left Behind education law and many states do not test social studies' decreasing incentive to spend resources on social studies education. Teachers are limited by geographical constraints,

strengths and weaknesses of museum staff, and what is currently on display at a museum. Another curricular issue is timing and being able to align a field trip with the curriculum; this is often a very difficult task, especially in places where winter field trips are infrequent and trips are planned more for when it is warm than for when a topic is being covered. Finally, some teachers may not be confident in their ability to meaningfully connect the curriculum with a visit to a history museum.

Unfortunately, despite calls to include museums along with schools as “laboratories” for pre-service history teachers (Baron, Woyshner, & Haberkern, 2014), few teachers report receiving any formal training in museum education during their pre-service program or through in-service professional development (Marcus, Grenier, & Levine, 2009). While most teachers are pedagogical experts and many possess an excellent background in history content, their knowledge of how to successfully incorporate museum visits into their instruction is more limited. Kisiel (2003) says we should consider teachers “well-intentioned novices” when it comes to planning museum visits, because their approaches to museum visits are comparable to inexperienced teachers in the classroom. We will explore these barriers to museum visits more extensively in Chapter 2 and elsewhere in the book.

WHY USE MUSEUMS?

Museums should be an integral part of K-12 history education because: (1) they provide unique learning experiences that can enhance students’ historical knowledge and skills; (2) they are sites of history learning throughout students’ adult lives; (3) they are often uncontested as authoritative arbiters of historical knowledge; and (4) they serve a function as public historical sites that both influence, and are influenced by, society. The end result of effective museum visits is that students can become more knowledgeable and engaged citizens.

First, museums afford the chance to learn about history in ways not available elsewhere. They break the cycle of textbook- and lecture-oriented instruction that focuses on memorization of facts, and instead create access to deeper historical understanding. History educators and historians emphasize the importance of developing historical understanding including students’ ability: (1) to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate historical evidence (Wineburg, 2001); (2) to increase historical empathy—particularly to recognize the perspectives of others (Barton & Levstik, 2004); (3) to examine and interrogate historical narratives (Barton & Levstik, 2004); (4) to know, practice, and advance other historical thinking skills such as asking questions, understanding cause and effect, and determining historical agency (Seixas, 1996); (5) to make connections between the past and today (Seixas, 1996);

(6) to recognize and account for presentism (viewing and judging the past through contemporary values and beliefs) (Wineburg, 2001); and (7) to be able to participate in dialogue and decisions about controversial issues or difficult histories (Hess, 2009; Rose, 2016; Stoddard, Marcus, & Hicks, 2017). Museums support these facets of historical understanding through the physical space they design, the artifacts they preserve and present, the expertise of professional staff, and the special programs and online resources they offer. For example, the Mark Twain House in Hartford, Connecticut, promotes the discussion of the controversies over slavery and the social inequalities of the Gilded Age, while the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., provides incredible opportunities for the development of historical empathy through powerful images and artifacts of the Holocaust. Chapter 2 more fully addresses the relationship between museums and the enrichment of historical understanding.

Second, most students will not take history classes or participate in formal history instruction beyond their K-12 experience. Loewen (1999) suggests that only one in six Americans ever takes a course in U.S. history after graduating from high school. However, they are much more likely to visit history museums as adults. Thus, these students will experience historical narratives and learning about the past in a multitude of museum venues as adults (Boyd, 1999). As reported by Falk & Dierking (1997), between four and six of every ten people visit a museum at least once per year, making museum visits a very popular leisure activity outside of the home. In addition, Rosenzweig (2000) reported that 57 percent of Americans in a national survey visited a museum within the past 12 months and that Americans' level of connectedness to museums was higher than that reported for celebrating a holiday, reading a book about the past, or studying history in school. And, in 2006, almost 150 million American adults visited at least one museum (out of all types of museums) and another eight million visited at least one museum online (Griffiths & King, 2008). The same study calculates that there were a total of 701 million physical visits to museums in the United States by adults in 2006 (Griffiths & King, 2008). Therefore, if students participate in field trips to museums that incorporate meaningful learning experiences, there is a greater potential for museums to meaningfully influence their lifelong learning of history and the continued development of historical thinking skills.

Third, museums are perceived by students, teachers and the general public as reliable, authoritative, and authentic. Falk & Dierking (2000) report that museums are identified by many people as "reliable, authentic, and comprehensible" (p. 2). Museums are also perceived as very trustworthy sources of historic information—more trustworthy sources than college history professors, high school teachers, and nonfiction books (Rosenzweig, 2000). And Marstine (2006) reports that United States museums are perceived as the most

objective and trustworthy of any educational institution—87 percent of respondents rated museums as trustworthy (67 percent said books are trustworthy, 50 percent said television news is trustworthy). Marcus, Grenier, & Levine (2009) found that teachers hold similar views about museums. The teachers report high levels of trust for the way that history museums present the past—a trust that may influence how they develop programs for museum visits and a trust they may pass along to their students.

This trust in museums emerges in part from the fact that many museums are the repositories of authentic objects, images, and documents from the past. The power of the “real” in instilling simultaneously a sense of awe about, and a connection to, the past cannot be underestimated. At the same time, it challenges teachers to help students distinguish between the “truth” of artifacts, and the more contingent interpretations drawn from those artifacts.

The trust of museums extends to their online resources. A study by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (Griffiths & King, 2008) found that libraries and museums are the most trusted sources of online information among adults regardless of age, education level, race, or ethnicity, and are more trustworthy than online information from the government, commercial websites, and private websites. Thus, the beliefs about the trustworthiness of museums and museum artifacts and narratives transfers to all aspects of museum resources because of the way that young people and the public view museums as institutions.

However, museums are like any source of historical knowledge. The story of the past on which they focus is influenced by many factors, including subjective decisions by museum staff, financial considerations, and outside social and political pressures, among others. For example, in today’s economy, museums often need to combine entertaining elements with traditional museum exhibits, thus exporting history and culture for consumers (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Handler & Gable (1997) have documented this clash between the history and entertainment functions at Colonial Williamsburg, where the entertainment elements (e.g. amusement park, hotels, restaurants) help to finance the history components (historic village, interpreters, visitor education programs), but also influence how the story of the past is told. Museums “are not neutral spaces that speak with one institutional, authoritative voice. Museums are about individuals making subjective choices” (Marstine, 2006, p. 2). Museums select the narratives they desire to tell, often limit the perspectives revealed within a narrative, and can reflect the society within which they exist, sometimes more than the time period within which a narrative exists. The demystification of museums does not make them less accurate or less useful to visit, but instead bestows a wonderful opportunity for students to explore how museums present a subjective and selective past and how history is “made.” Students can learn that all history is an interpretation of past events and people, and is laced with

subjectivity, interpretation, hypotheses, and particular narratives (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). Even more problematic is that museums often present history without the supporting documents and research conventions (e.g. footnotes, bibliography) of more traditional history sources, creating problems similar to the textbooks and films so often used in classrooms. Thus, museums are themselves historical sources that need to be critically analyzed and evaluated (Trofanenko, 2006). We can encourage students to see the value in learning from museums while also challenging students to confront museums' objective and all-knowing aura.

Monuments and memorials present the same dilemmas and the same opportunities as more traditional museums. However, they are by nature less comprehensive and more likely focused on a single event and/or person. Monuments function most often to memorialize, commemorate, and celebrate, not necessarily to present an extensive or multifaceted view of the past. Their purposes tend to favor positive narratives and omit controversial or negative stories about the past—they “don’t just tell stories about the past; they also tell visitors what to think about the stories they tell” (Loewen, 1999, p. 22). Markers, monuments, and preserved historic sites are often locally initiated projects that provide a favorable story about the local community and often use some public funds (Loewen, 1999). Monuments tell the stories of two eras—the one they commemorate and the one in which they were created (Loewen, 1999). One example of the dilemmas of memorials has played out over the past 15 years as memorials and monuments are built to



Figure 1.2 The FDR (Franklin D. Roosevelt) Memorial in Washington, D.C.

remember the events of September 11, 2001. These include numerous local memorials in towns throughout the New York area, in Pennsylvania, and in the Washington, D.C., area, as well as for the national 9/11 museum and memorial at the site of the destroyed Twin Towers. Conflicts arose between various stakeholders, including the families of those who worked in the towers, the families of police and firefighters, the City of New York, the State of New York, the Federal Government, the organizations that raised funds to pay for the project, and others (Marcus, 2007). These groups debated the purposes the museum and memorial should serve as well as the museum and memorial's aesthetic qualities. Teaching with memorials is the focus of Chapter 8.

Fourth, museums are public spaces of historical narratives that are shaped by society while also influencing society. Museums help students develop ideas, beliefs, and attitudes about public spaces (Nespor, 2000), and also about their own right and ability to enter into civic engagement. We are highly conscious that museums, often the first large institutions that students encounter outside the classroom, play a powerful role in shaping students' conceptions of their possibilities as civic actors and help frame students' views of the role cultural institutions can play in their own lives. As such, the formal and informal educational experiences students receive at museums serve two roles: first as occasions of learning; second as invitations to active citizenship.

Incorporation of museums into the K-12 curriculum can demystify the history presented at museums and enhance students' historical thinking skills, thus supporting future adults' inclinations to participate in society as engaged citizens. For over a hundred years, promoting citizenship has been a fundamental goal of K-12 social studies classrooms and of education more generally (Ross, 1997). Promoting citizenship is still a principal rationale for the social studies classroom (Barton & Levstik, 2004). Museum visits and the use of other museum resources can significantly contribute to the goals of preparing citizens for life in a democracy. Barton and Levstik (2004) propose three goals for preparing citizens through history education: promoting reasoned judgment, promoting an expanded view of humanity, and deliberating over the common good. Museum resources can support these three goals. Promoting reasoned judgment requires students to "reach their own conclusions about the causes of historical events, their consequences, and their significance" (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 37). By having students analyze and interpret museum artifacts as well as museums' historical narratives they can help students to develop reasoned judgment. Advancing an expanded view of humanity includes "taking us beyond the narrow confines of our present circumstances and confronting us with the cares, concerns, and ways of thinking of people different than ourselves" (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 37). Students are presented with multiple

perspectives within and across museums, and museums offer potentially powerful ways to develop historical empathy, thus expanding students' understanding of the concerns and ways of thinking about people in the past.

Finally, asking students to discuss or deliberate issues that “promote consideration of the common good” (p. 39), as Barton and Levstik suggest, could focus around issues of justice in the past and today. The content covered by many museums and memorials focuses on issues of social justice (e.g. slavery, the Holocaust). However, museums may often avoid tackling controversial issues. By having students understand and critique these omissions they will be better able to consider the common good.

Others have taken these difficult historical issues head on and are presenting visitors with the perspectives of enslaved peoples, or indigenous victims of genocide, and other topics often avoided by official history curriculum, let alone museums that often balance history with the need to attract visitors. Rose (2016) discusses her experiences helping to interpret and engage student visitors in slave quarters at the historical plantations where she has worked—and the challenge presented by wanting students to engage in difficult histories while also allowing them a safe space to engage in the emotions that can often accompany these visits. Similarly, the Mark Twain House discussed in Chapter 6 houses an adjacent museum exhibit that often focuses on topics related to race in America, including an exhibit of racist artifacts from past and present U.S. presidential campaigns. However, as Segall and Trofenenko (2014) found in their analysis of the National Museum of the American Indian, without thoughtful public pedagogy designed into exhibits, the goal of engaging visitors in difficult histories may be ineffective if museums do not consider who the visitors are and the views and experiences they may bring with them. In addition to engaging visitors to the museum in marginalized or difficult histories and issues, some institutions are also attempting to fulfill this mission more directly in schools. For example, the Newseum's Religious Freedom Center is equipping teachers and schools to thoughtfully teach First Amendment principals. Directly addressing and deliberating controversial and difficult issues from the past and present is a constructive way to develop critical democratic citizens (Hess, 2009; Rose, 2016).

HOW CAN MUSEUMS BE USED?

The overall premise of this book is to promote visits to museums as a mechanism to increase students' specific content knowledge about the past in conjunction with developing their historical thinking skills, and to do so in a way that inspires and motivates students. As discussed earlier, we focus on issues of historical empathy, interrogation of historical evidence,

evaluating historical narratives, connecting the past to today, and other aspects of historical thinking. While there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to effective museum visits, there are several important issues to take into account, including pre- and post-trip activities, unique pedagogical features of museums, teacher–museum staff collaboration, and the nature of museums as human-created, and thus subjective, organizations.

First, pre- and post-visit activities are an important component of successful museum visits. Though these activities exacerbate the time pressures that already plague K-12 history education, they are crucial for student learning. Pre-visit activities can preview content, prepare students for the museum's context, and set up on-site activities. Pre-visit activities help to focus students and establish learning objectives. Post-visit activities allow students to process their experiences at the museum, allow teachers to assess student learning, and connect the museum visit to the course curriculum.

There are also unique pedagogical considerations for museum visits. Museum visits should complement—not supplement—classroom resources. They are a different type of learning experience that is not a substitute, but an enhancement. Museums are often designed to be less formal centers for learning than classrooms. The interaction between students, teachers, and historical materials presents unique opportunities and challenges. In many cases there is more free choice (Falk, 2001) for students and less control of content and messages by the teacher. Free choice for students can often be valuable and support meaningful learning objectives, while traditional classroom “seat work” such as filling out worksheets can have the effect of dampening motivation (Griffin, 2004). One of the challenges for teachers is how to keep students focused while allowing students some free choice to choose and shape learning experiences. Assessing student learning as part of a field trip to a museum can also pose a challenge. Should field-trip experiences be graded? How do you hold students accountable for their learning during a museum visit?

Another critical issue is teacher–museum staff collaboration. This collaboration is a key characteristic of successful museum visits for students (Marcus, 2008). Traditionally, museums were viewed as the “teachers”, and the visitors were the learners (Skramstad, 1999). However, both school teachers and museum staff are important stakeholders who can learn from each other and support each other's work. Teachers can rely on the expertise of museum staff for content issues, but also in terms of how museums function and how a particular museum might meet a teacher's learning objectives. Museum staff can do outreach with teachers to understand the context from which students are coming and to connect museum resources and activities directly to a school's curriculum. Unfortunately, many museum visits are only loosely linked to school-based curriculum (Griffin and Symington, 1997). At times there exists a divide between teachers and

museum staff—a boundary that needs to be “crossed from both sides” (Griffin, 2004, p. 65).

Finally, museums are unique organizations. They are not neutral spaces, but tell subjective stories created by individuals (Marstine, 2006). Museums should be approached with the same respect, but also with the same critical eye, as we would approach any historical source. Educators have long been critical of textbooks (e.g. Loewen, 1999) and of films (e.g. Marcus, Metzger, Paxton, & Stoddard, 2010) used in history education, but have not taken the same attitude to museums (Trofanenko, 2006). If we continue to view museums as completely authoritative and museum objects as “unmediated anchors to the past” (Marstine, 2006, p. 2), we fail to account for the subjective nature of museums and fail to take advantage of the opportunities that museums provide to enliven the study of history. This means that we need to reposition museum visits from being viewed by students as a day off to being seen as a rigorous scholarly activity.

WHAT'S TO COME IN THIS BOOK

This book presents and discusses strategies for incorporating museums—artifact and display museums, local history museums, living history museums, historic forts, historic homes, and monuments—into K-12 lessons in order to enhance students’ historical knowledge and skills. The strategies are organized into cases that focus on a particular type of museum (e.g. historic house, living history museum, etc.). Each case explores important issues related to the educational potential and difficulties of using each type of museum, and then presents specific strategies for student visits and other uses of museum resources. The book is divided into two parts. Part I (Chapters 1 and 2) provides an overview of key issues inherent in using museums within the K-12 social studies curriculum. A framework for the book is established, museums are scrutinized as interpreters of historical knowledge, and practical considerations are addressed. Part II contains eight case chapters, each of which focuses on a different type of museum or historic site, and there are three appendices with overall suggestions for teaching with museums and lists of resources.

This is a curriculum book designed for working teachers, teachers-in-training, teacher educators, museum educators, and parents homeschooling their children. Our goal is to provide compelling and comprehensive strategies for the successful incorporation of museums into the K-12 history curriculum. We created each case to be stimulating, informative, and replicable. The cases presented are not perfect and will require adaptation to specific contexts, but we hope that they make the work of teachers using museums easier and more productive.

Part I: Introduction and Framework for Using Museums to Teach History

In this introductory chapter we provide a rationale for why museums are important resources for social studies teachers, and explore ideas for ways that museums can be incorporated effectively to teach history and, specifically, to develop students' historical understanding.

Chapter 2 establishes a theoretical framework for the use of museums as part of the social studies curriculum, with explicit practical implications, and it explores the dilemmas raised by museum education. Chapter 2 addresses the history of the role of museums in society and of shifting missions and methods. The chapter then grounds our cases in the work of history educators and historians by exploring how museums provide opportunities for students to develop historical empathy, practice historical analytic and interpretive skills, make connections between the past and the present, and explore issues of historical significance, historical narrative, and historical agency.

Part II: Case Studies of Using Museums to Teach History

Part II presents eight cases of effective learning strategies and activities for various types of museums, as well as concluding appendices with overall suggestions for teaching with museums, a list of museums in this book, and a list of resources.

Artifact and Display-based Museums

Artifact and display museums provide wonderful resources for teachers to help students develop historical thinking skills. Students can evaluate which artifacts museums use, how they use the artifacts to tell a selective story about the past, and how representations of culture and collective memory or post-memory are constructed through exhibits that include media interactive exhibits and experiences. They can also compare the stories and historical narratives from museums with those found in their textbooks or other historical sources. In addition, these museums often present opportunities for students to develop historical empathy, examine issues of historical agency, and assess questions of historical significance.

The case in Chapter 3 examines the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C. The USHMM opened in 1993 as a museum and memorial honoring victims of the Holocaust during World War II. In addition, its goals include "to confront hatred, promote human dignity, and prevent genocide" (USHMM, 2011). The museum provides an excellent case for exploring the use of artifacts to develop historical narratives and for developing historical empathy. As the museum is designed to evoke powerful emotions and raise powerful questions about the Holocaust,

it provides rich opportunities for examining the various perspectives, including victims, perpetrators, and liberators.

Local History Museums

Local history museums can have many of the same design characteristics as the artifact and display museums, but also provide a number of other attributes and resources. Local history museums often have close connections to historical societies and archives, provide strong formal and community educational programs, present a broad array of topics through their exhibits, and provide spaces for community discussions of issues from the past and present. Local history museums include state, city, or regional history and heritage institutions. The topics included in local museums often comprise the social and cultural history of the region, as well as the perspectives of indigenous peoples as well as those who migrated later, the economic and political history of the region, and lesser known histories of groups or individuals who were involved in significant issues or events.

The subject of Chapter 4 is the Minnesota History Center (MHC) in St. Paul, Minnesota. Although housed in a traditional brick-and-mortar structure, the MHC was designed to be interactive, and engage visitors in experiencing the social and cultural history of Minnesota and the perspectives of diverse Minnesotans. The exhibits focus primarily on the twentieth century, and are built around powerful oral histories and the experiences of Minnesotans in events ranging from a paratrooper's involvement in the Normandy invasion during World War II to a family's narrow escape from a destructive tornado. The museum's interactive exhibits are the focus of this case as we explore how museums use oral histories and the histories of historic houses, and the waves of immigrant residents to explore perspectives from the past.

Historic Forts

Historic forts recreate the feel of the past and help students to develop historical empathy, take into account the role of geography in history, explore issues of conflict and communication, and evaluate and critique historical narratives. Historic forts can provide a uniquely authentic experience that can rarely be replicated in the classroom.

Chapter 5 presents strategies for supporting student learning at historic forts. This case explores two forts—the Fort at No. 4 in New Hampshire and Fort Ticonderoga in upstate New York. Both forts played important roles in the French and Indian War, and Fort Ticonderoga also was a major site of conflict during the American Revolution. Both forts are excellent examples of historic sites where students can study the importance of geography, the nature of conflict and surrounding issues, and examine competing historical narratives. As a reconstruction, the Fort at No. 4 offers students wide-open

access to all areas of the site, as well as a broad range of experiential activities. Fort Ticonderoga uses student role-playing, image analysis, and first-person interpretation by re-enactors to help students understand the complex history of the site, and to gain empathy for the men and women who served and fought at Fort Ticonderoga in the eighteenth century.

Historic House Museums

House museums and related small-scale, single-focus historic properties offer insight into specific time periods as well as change over time. Often focused on specific people, historic homes allow students to physically step back in time, examining how people lived, worked, and played, thus drawing important comparisons between the past and today, examining evidence of social history and daily life, developing historical empathy, and evaluating the use of artifacts. For the case in Chapter 6, we explore the Mark Twain House in Hartford, Connecticut, and the Johnson County Historical Society properties in Coralville, Iowa.

The Mark Twain House was home to Samuel Clemens (author of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*) and his family for 17 years in the late 1800s. The restored Victorian home allows visitors to learn about the author and his family, as well as to experience life for the well-to-do in Hartford, Connecticut, in the late nineteenth century. It also allows visitors to consider the lives and employment conditions of the African Americans and immigrant servants employed in the Twain house. The Johnson County Historical Society maintains three historic house sites: the 1876 Coralville schoolhouse; Plum Grove, the 1844 residence of Iowa territorial governor Robert Lucas and his wife Friendly; and the 1855 Johnson County Poor Farm/Asylum. Visitors learn about Iowa history, particularly in the context of national narratives of Westward Expansion and immigration during the nineteenth century.

This case will discuss how the historic homes at these two sites provide a gateway into understanding the time period they represent as experienced by a variety of people of differing perspectives. In particular, the Twain home contrasts the different experiences of the members of the extended Twain household to explore issues of class, immigration, status and racism during the Gilded Age. The Johnson County Historical Society properties aspire to help visitors understand how early Iowa settlers lived, how their lifestyles reflected broader national transformations, and how their lifestyles differed from that of contemporary Iowans.

Living History Museums

Living history museums attempt to recreate an account of the past through rebuilt or renovated historic buildings and role-playing staff recreating historic activities. Living history museums are particularly effective for developing

historical empathy, thinking about change over time, connecting the past and the present, analyzing historical evidence, and evaluating how heritage sites create historical narratives. Chapter 7 details effective strategies for studying the past at living history museums. The focus of this case is three living history museums from early America: Colonial Williamsburg, the Jamestown Settlement, and Yorktown, all located in the Historic Triangle of Virginia. All three are home to hands-on living history museums that provide opportunities to explore the lives and experiences of the ordinary and famous people who resided there during early colonial America and the American Revolution. Each of these museums provides a form of the recreated and interpreted past mixed with historic buildings, sites, and archaeological and historical artifacts. In addition to providing young students with the opportunities to experience life in the colonies and a glimpse into what famous events may have looked like, these sites also offer opportunities for older students to examine how history is reconstructed and interpreted using the methods of historians, historical interpreters, and archaeologists.

Memorials and Monuments

Through careful examination of monuments and memorials students can study the perspectives included and left out of the story told about the past and how a monument or memorial supports or contradicts national historical narratives. In addition, monuments and memorials can tell us as much about the time period during which they were designed and built as they do about the events and people they commemorate. Chapter 8 considers how memorials and monuments provide excellent resources for students to scrutinize narratives about the past. The case study for this chapter will concentrate on 9/11 memorials in Connecticut, home to 153 victims of the 9/11 attacks.

Since the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, numerous monuments and memorials have been planned and erected in New York City and the surrounding area, as well as around the nation. The case examines how these monuments and memorials remember the past, as well as discussing the unique features of studying monuments and memorials for such a recent event.

Art Museums

Art museums are another wonderful resource for learning about the past. They can represent local, regional, and national narratives, provide stimulating visual and other aesthetic representations of the past, and offer opportunities for students to evaluate sources and practice inquiry skills. Incorporating art and art museums into the history curriculum can focus on just one or two pieces of art or an entire collection. However, unlike the other museums

discussed through the book, art museums are not exclusively or explicitly focused on historical content or context. Chapter 9 discusses a case of two teachers bringing students to the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, and how these teachers navigate which art to use during the visit as well as helping students to practice both objective description and subjective interpretation of art.

Virtual Museums, Mobile Technologies, and Augmented Reality

In addition to physical buildings, materials, and museum staff, museums now rely heavily on developing a virtual presence in and out of their physical museum to further their mission. Chapter 10 explores the emergence of virtual museums and field trips, the use of mobile technologies in museum education programs, and the use of augmented reality at historic sites to engage visitors more deeply in a past that may have been left out or may not be as easy to see.

Museums websites have existed for decades, but more recent advances in 3D and Web-based designs now provide more engaging experiences with virtual galleries, museums, and historical sites than previously static Web pages. They also provide access to artifacts and museum-based experiences for students who are unable to visit a museum, particularly through a museum's location in another part of the country or world. Chapter 10 examines how online resources and virtual field trips can be used in conjunction with a museum visit or as a stand-alone activity to increase students' understanding of the past. In this chapter we discuss how virtual resources may be used toward the history education goals outlined in the previous chapters above. We feature several virtual museum sites in particular, including the KwaZulu Cultural Museum's virtual tour site, resources provided by Google Earth (e.g. Stonehenge) and Google's Cultural Institute, and a virtual fieldtrip developed by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA)/Memorial Hall Museum about the 1704 raid on Deerfield, Massachusetts. The PVMA/Memorial Hall Museum's virtual field trip, for example, provides multiple historical perspectives about the French and Indian raid on the English settlement of Deerfield, Massachusetts, in 1704, and its aftermath. This highly interactive website provides a model that can be used in preparation for a field trip, or in place of a field trip. The site can be explored to consider understanding multiple historical perspectives and evaluating historical evidence when a visit to the actual museum is not possible.

We then explore the role of mobile technologies in museums and three example projects designed to help extend the museum visit back to the classroom and to provide access to inquiry-based activities, perspectives, and artifacts that may not be part of the existing physical exhibits. All the projects, the Bletchley Park (UK) Text project, the Behind the Scenes Project at the