

# **Community Assistantship Program**

**Long Range Humanities  
Program Planning  
“In Their Own Words”**

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Prepared in partnership with  
Friends of the History Museum of East Otter Tail County

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FINAL REPORT  
LONG RANGE  
HUMANITIES PROGRAM  
PLANNING

**“In Their Own Words”**

HISTORY MUSEUM  
OF  
EAST OTTER TAIL COUNTY

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

“In Their Own Words (ITOW),” part of the History Museum of East Otter Tail County, is a unique museum located in Perham Minnesota that will place the memories and experiences of American veterans of war into a living repository.

This humanities planning research developed parameters based on existing models and informed by contemporary conditions. The scope of the veteran experience blurs boundaries between war, human nature and the passage of time. Results are the culmination of assessments, conversations with professional and academic advisors, key community representatives, literature and case studies. The report is intended as a tool for future program development.

The main challenge to the museum for long term programming success is to become a learning destination rather than simply a tourist attraction. To meet the challenge, ITOW will function on multiple levels. Most broadly it will serve rural America by keeping veteran heritage visible in the local environment. It will cultivate new knowledge and expressions of the wartime experience for those who have had little or no exposure. The museum will draw an audience to Perham who share an interest in hearing the narratives of experience about war’s impact on rural communities that will likewise be transformed.

ITOW garners local, statewide and national support. Perham schools are enthusiastic to work with the museum as a learning venue for the student population. The economic community hopes the museum will draw tourists and provide an additional destination for people already visiting East Otter Tail County. Veterans see ITOW as a place where families can find their stories in the future.

Museum professionals advise cultivating a deep sense of ownership among the veterans via their participation. On the other hand the museum needs to continually refresh itself with ideas and experiences from the outside, both to maintain interest and develop its’ own role as a learning destination. Programs developed here reflect the two dimensions.

The vision of the museum published online and in print is disconnected with perceptions of the place by the geographical community. ITOW has an opportunity to assert its’ position by highlighting enduring aspects of conflict; it must make the presence of conflict visible in the local environment through the veteran narrative and programs that reveal the changes to everyday rural American life brought on by war

## INTRODUCTION

Veterans of war are those people who served or are currently serving in a branch of the military. War and its' profound effects were shielded from American civilian life during the last 100 years because American involvement in conflict occurred overseas. Yet our culture and way of life is intimately connected to war. Scholars profiled later in this report reveal the social, commercial, and political mechanisms that tie American nationhood to the events of war. The first person veteran story offers profound access to the history of America concealed by distance and time.

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines intangible heritage as **“the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.”** The definition provides a structure to the overarching ITOW vision. The museum theme is experience itself; a launching point for present and future heritage.

Perham VFW Post 4020 donated to the Museum of East Otter Tail County with their building and start-up funds. Their support of the institution continues in their desire to tell stories, “in their own words” to the communities of East Otter Tail County and beyond. The narratives collected through the Museum form the place; the stories, heard in the voices of those who experienced war firsthand, are the mechanism through which wars unseen by the homefront shape American experience. As defined by UNESCO, objects and intangible heritage are traces of the tangible effects of our ancestors and our protection of them key to a society's integrity of its' understanding of itself.

Museums came into existence approximately two centuries ago; as information technology and education are challenged to keep up with global demands for time and resources their role shifts. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines a museum as “a non-profit making, 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 (viii), cultural centers and other entities that facilitate the preservation,

continuation and management of tangible or intangible heritage resources (living heritage and digital creative activity) (Article 2.b, vii and viii).

Museums have become places where conflicts over some of the most vital issues regarding national character and group identity – the struggle between universalism and particularism-regularly break out. These conflicts are displays of power, the result of groups flexing their muscles to express who they are or to beat back the claims of others. Even if such controversies were to cease immediately, they will remain an important artifact of an era of extraordinary social change and self-examination in America (Dubin 245). ITOW must adapt to societal changes and adaptation demands an integrative approach to programs at multiple scales. A critical niche for the employment of the rich collection of oral histories tuned to the rural experience is evident: there is a lack of research on veterans in rural America. ITOW will serve as the starting point of future research and knowledge about the way the veterans experience has transformed rural America.

Symbolic politics is a process, based on confrontations that flare up with great intensity and then fade into relative obscurity over a brief interval. This captures museums at its most evanescent, when the nature and tenor of the symbolic battles that are waged in and around these places can impact on their public identity and ways they conduct their business. The book investigates museums as enduring institutions; they persist long after the shouting dies down. Museums solidify culture, endow it with a tangibility in a way few other things do ((3). In the 1990's, the term "sustainability" arose to describe a balanced situation between communities, economy and ecology. UNESCO asserts that safeguarding of cultural heritage is a key ingredient to sustainable development. The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted at the UNESCO General Conference in late 2001, declares cultural diversity and expression on the same level of importance as biological diversity, as it is a process whereby a community renews itself, exchanges and grows, and is open to acknowledging variations on behavior, values and expressions grounded in a tradition.

Avishai Margalit, Schulman Professor of Philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem writes in "The Ethics of Memory," that when history contrasts with memory, "history is habitually labeled as cold, even lifeless, whereas memory can be vital, vivid and alive. What this contrast means is that stories about the past that are shared by a community are as a rule more vivid, more concrete, and better connected with live experiences than is critical history...I believe that shared memory as a cement for the community involves a far more ambitious sense of a live memory, a sense not unlike the one involved in revivification through myth (67)." The oral histories and local



involvement in the deployment of ITOW programs is a rich source of shared memory and culture. Humanities are avenues through which to experience history together.

ITOW emphasizes the rural American experience of war as unique; most veterans left for war from rural communities. By leaving and returning as changed individuals to the homefront their memories of war and lived experience afterwards alters the composition of the community. War does not form part of our individual memory unless we witness its' effects. By listening to the veteran story, wars of the United States become part of our collective, or social memory. Memories retold through institutions are a contemporary equivalent of ancient narrative practices such as storytelling. Other technologies of remembrance include artifacts, memorial making, and textual interpretation. UNESCO believes that cultural heritage is as much an instrument for development as it is for peace and reconciliation. Safeguarding the heritage of the veteran experience, ITOW is a roadmap from where we came and a venue for thoughtful consideration of where we are going.

## **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

Program development responds to the needs of a knowledge-based society and the pragmatic concerns of museum operations. Exhibit interpretation is the program foundation, as exhibits are the core of museum investment and identity (Spilman, pers. comm.) Graham Black writes “a key step along this route is for the museum to cease to be product led and become audience centered in approach (Black 3).” This means taking the personal context of the visitor into account and develop holistic approaches to interpretation. Black elaborates on the role of supporting visitors as the three interlocked tiers of the museum role, of which museum display occupies only one-third. Black’s strategy for a three-tier route to visitor engagement (Black 4):

- 1) Provide the stimulus to visit in the first place – this should include site image, quality of marketing and PR, word-of-mouth recommendation by previous visitors, prior personal experiences, supporting learning agendas, and reflecting leisure trends
- 2) Place visitors in the right frame of mind on site so that they wish to engage with collections and exhibitions – this should include operational and service quality and a sense of welcoming and belonging.
- 3) Provide the motivation and support to directly engage with the site and/or collection –include quality of interpretation, learning provisions and displays.

ITOW exhibits are limited by investment in audio and visual formats. Programs are the interpretation of these captive exhibits, they engage the public sphere; dialogue among participants is the ongoing narrative that serves the museum vision, to relate the experiences of war. Jane Cunningham at the Minnesota Humanities Commission believes documenting programs to chart their impact is critical (Cunningham, pers. comm.). Jefferson Spilman maintains that not every visitor looks for a learning experience, for some the entertainment value suffices. The programming cycle is contingent upon exhibit maintenance, flexible, open visitor experiences and continuous interpretation of the museum mission.

The museum space is the node of museum activity, but programs expand beyond the walls to reach a social and physical network. Jeff Kollath at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum relies on the reputation and excellence of speakers to ensure quality experiences. Don Patton manages the Dr. Harold Deutsch World War II History Roundtable Program and finds that his commitment to seeking the best lecturers on a given issue is the reason for the programs success. Exploring the profound effect war has had on the men and women of rural Minnesota and the communities from which they came (adapted, ITOW brochure) implies the museum space itself has become the impact of those veterans made visible in the local community. Programs shape the community through these encounters, but the humanities scholar as a mediator between community and knowledge not only meets the expectation of the visitor, but sets up the museum for long term knowledge accumulation and success.

## **LIFELONG LEARNING**

The History Museum of East Otter Tail County hired a long-range humanities program planner in order to elaborate existing exhibits and research ways to continually engage the community. When I began this research assistantship I had little inkling of the impact war has had on the people of the United States and especially rural communities. Through this experience already I have come to believe that it for people like myself ITOW is critical. War occupied twenty-five years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, excluding the Cold War. Shortly after the beginning of the new millennium we entered a new phase of American warfare with the War on Terror and prolonged presence in Iraq. Yet the presentation of war has been on the periphery of my world as media portrayals of the war itself are my only reference. The research position itself has been transformative.

In her book “From Knowledge to Narrative”, Lisa Roberts distinguishes between logical, scientific approach to understanding the world and a narrative approach that establishes not

truth, but meaning in people's lives. The concept serves those who attend the programs for empowerment, experiences and ethics. ITOW fits a niche between the veteran population and those who have not participated in war. Programs seek to open the experiential meaning of war to the civilian population. Communities demand access to the knowledge veterans hold. Tamara Uselman asks that we "become privy to the conversations," that typically occur between veterans, so that visitors might themselves become transformed.

The role of history is to record human actions over time, it is a tool whereby we carve out new actions for our descendants based on lessons from the past: the relevancy of ITOW programs in times of war cannot be overstated. David Carr writes, "The truth of individual lives are crafted truths, constructed from questions often asked out loud. Unlike any other structure in human society, the cultural institution is an ideal setting for public inquiry. Such dialogues need to happen in the presence of objects, and information, and other informed people." ITOW as a cultural institution facilitates inquiry in a safe environment. The aspects of traumatic experience inflicted by past wars are questioned through programs in a way that resonate with the American presence in Iraq.

"The recently and soon to be retired population is and will be the wealthiest, healthiest, most-educated, and active population of nonworking adults we have seen in America (Sachatello, 1)." These adults are looking for compelling adventures, seeking involvement in their community and in the organizations they have supported throughout their adult lives. The experience in the end is personal, individually determined based on its internal impact (2). These visitors, a primary audience for ITOW, learn best while they are being entertained to a certain extent (Spilman, pers. comm.).

Some profound learner effects are revealed gradually over time. The impact may appear to an individual after an opportunity for reflection or a new experience gives the program new meaning. Roberts' book finds that the acquisition of skills and knowledge is the most common immediate outcome of adult learning in museums, while life-changing experiences are privileged in the long run. Excellent museum programs deliver experiences, memorable events, and activities that are personally engaging. Personal transformation or change is a measure of a meaningful experience and a criteria for success. The extent to which museum programs deliver the mission "can be measured by their ability to affect, empower, and change people, and in doing so, help them improve themselves (Sachatello 19)."

Learning and education are key elements to sustainable development as noted on the Sustainable Communities Network web page <http://www.sustainable.org>. Within the museum space, heritage becomes "an actor and instrument of dialogue between nations and of a common international vision aimed at cultural development (ICOM)." It aids in

disseminating a set of ethics for cultural heritage issues on multiple scales, from peacekeeping efforts to teaching school children about the legacy and patterns of human behavior. Creativity is an essential component of developing dynamic, sustainable societies while memory is the ingredient feeding the inspiration of people who attach their identity to their heritage. Museums work to develop the values it conserves and to hear the voices it protects. It is an active deployment of community aspirations turned consistently towards a broad public.

## **LOCATION**

Sustainability is an important objective in community development. The concept implies social, economic and ecological balance. With ITOW, Perham receives a significant social institution that strengthens this component of sustainability. A rural location can be a drawback or benefit to museum programs. Rural places are noted for providing an enhanced quality of life; museums play a part in adding to the distinctive character of rural towns. Development challenges such as isolation, infrastructure deficiencies, poor metropolitan and global links, and the exodus of skilled laborers often reflect poorly on rural economies.

Many rural areas are harnessing their unique assets to revitalize economies and interact with the global economy. Experts contend that cities maintain a competitive advantage by generating and retaining talent; the arts are a key component to developing the quality of life that many young workers in the knowledge economy demand. Creative industries, whether folk arts, media or visual arts, music heritage programs, or design, rely on the uniqueness of a place to thrive. Rural programs that build the strengths of the region while stimulating creative activity breeds successful development in many arenas, among them tourism and hospitality. In the United States, one in seven jobs is in tourism. Arts and creative industries too are under-recognized sources for job creation, especially part-time and post-retirement.

In a Museum News article on challenges and strategies for the twenty-first century, the importance of collaboration was repeatedly mentioned. Ellsworth Brown, president of the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, described the Natural History Museums of the twenty-first century as “collaborative, accountable, connected to issues of current and critical interest to humankind,...(and) activist.” (47-48)

## HUMANITIES IN THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Humanities programming complements the needs of museums as it integrates global and national narratives with experiences specific to East Otter Tail County. According to the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, “The term ‘humanities’ includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life.” The potential to create rich learning experiences for all audiences is vast.

Whereas the arts are those things is produced, to make humanities programs is to foster events and opportunities for people to consider works of human endeavor, works of nations and works of art among other aspects of the human condition. David Hawkins, author of *The Language of Nature: An Essay in the Philosophy of Science*, explains, “Exhibits, unlike textbooks, often make strange things familiar and familiar things strange.” Humanities programming takes the idea one step further, providing open-ended connections and allowing flexible interpretation in a way that rewards creativity and encourages healthy questioning. David Chang, history professor at the University professor, points out that while to tell stories in the veterans words is essential, “if you take it at their own words, you might miss some of the critical thinking behind the event.” At the heart of the museum program is collection and presentation of a story. The museum then tells the story through the material exhibits, expert interpretation or lecture events.

When asked to describe all the areas in which they are conducting significant learning experiences, one that takes 10 or more hours, adults in Elderhostel study replied:

- Music, art, dance, arts-related crafts (58.7%)
- Travel or travel related (51.6%)
- Literature, drama, humanities (46.5%)
- Politics, foreign affairs, current events (36.7%)
- History family history, genealogy (36.5%)

*Source:* Lois Lamdin, *Elderlearning: New Frontier in an Aging Society* (Phoenix: Oryx, 1997), 74

The study reveals the adult preference for humanities based programs and exploration of meaningful themes through the arts.

## **THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT**

ITOW seeks to reveal the impact on rural communities and depart from traditional veteran museum practices of focusing on war. How can ITOW rivet the narratives towards the human need for creative, meaningful learning experiences? Tamara Uselman spoke of new school best practices approaches like “fence-posting”, where learning occurs around a theme that crosses temporal limits and bridges common human experiences. For long-term success, ITOW can develop programs through these critical themes. Furthermore, accountability to the community and financial considerations lead to programs that are multi-functional and deliver a high degree of impact on the intended audience. Programs should seek to stimulate discussion and raise questions (Feinstein, pers. comm.) The following questions (adapted from Butler) could be used to consider humanities programs for ITOW:

What is the theme?

Which audience is this program intended for?

How does this program meet institutional goals?

After the theme, audience and goals are identified, the focus of the program grows around its’ ability to become a meaningful part of a learning experience. Military museums have a history of causing controversy. One of the most famous examples is the Smithsonian’s Enola Gay exhibit, when curation research discovered that the plane was not necessary at all; that it was in fact irrelevant. Veterans groups deplored the revelation of the information and the entire planned exhibit had to be changed. Nevertheless, the case went down in the historybooks and had perhaps a wider social impact than initially intended (Yeh, personal communication). Programs attempt to raise as many questions as they answer about the rural transformation of America in terms of veterans lives.

Scholarship is lacking about American veterans and their homefront impact. However recent initiatives on behalf of the U.S. Congress, such as the Veterans History Project (see Bartis, pers. comm.), disclose the fact that veterans have not received the attention they

are due. These arguments for veterans museum program planning may therefore be useful in selecting particular programs:

### 1) Programming need in terms of civic life and experience

Each individual will be faced with choices that require an element of understanding the implications of defense on public decisions. Literacy and awareness of the historical context of previous decisions provides a platform for grappling with those recurring issues. The threats to our system from civic illiteracy are serious ranging from complacency to frustration and apathy and decay of the democratic process. Access to information about these issues is essential in keeping vital decisions in the hands of the public rather than the few elite.

### 2) Programming need in terms of humanities and aesthetic perspective

The humanities enrich the human experience in an elegant and approachable manner. The capacity of the humanities to raise consciousness is not as easily proven as scientific fields of inquiry and is thus being gradually cut out of public school curriculum. Nevertheless, cultural institutions are engaged in the act of creating experiences through the humanities. Humans need venues for expression as guideposts for living. Intercultural and intergenerational approaches are increasingly recognized as critical to healthy functioning of society.

### 3) The need for programming in terms of intellectual connectedness

War and its effects have played a major role in shaping the history of human civilization. It is thought that it is difficult to comprehend how society came to its' present state of development without finding intellectual parallels to the contemporary discourses about war, conflict resolution and preservation of values without a flexible and working knowledge of the effects of war. War is one of the underlying threads of connection between most cultures.

Intellectual connectedness occurs at two levels. First, a public understanding of war and the veteran reality. This implies an informal discourse among the public about the issues raised at the museum in ways that are inherently valuable. Second, integration of research with education and outreach or a symbiotic relationship between up-to-the-minute scholarly research on veterans issues and interaction with the museum communities. Literature indicates a strong bond between learning and inquiry; that the impact of the

museum may in fact be gauged by its ability to stimulate critical thinking.

#### 4) Programming need in terms of contemporary circumstances

ITOW locates in the military context of the War on Terror and the presence of the US military in Iraq, which are inextricably intertwined with national efforts to secure America. These efforts are changing the topography of national memory as the length of the occupation grows and the numbers of military casualties and injuries increase. The need to develop sustainable communities through the humanities, embracing cultural heritage, intergenerational discourse and learning, has never been greater.

### **PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES**

Program themes that address the ITOW mission will lend themselves to wider American narratives. According to Steve Sandell, storyline development is the work of the contemporary museum (Sandell, pers. comm.). Storylines must also reach the heritage issues outlined above. In other words, programs and the stories they tell need to return to their thematic origin and inform the community about itself. Literature and expert interviews suggest the following principles in curating and hosting humanities programs for ITOW.

#### **First principle: Personal stories tie the community.**

The veterans participation in the work of the museum should lead to their feeling a sense of ownership. Continue to ask questions and listen to the questions raised by visitors that may strike up interesting future programs. For example, what about men who were too old to enlist but remained in the community with the young men gone? Such a question might extend the narratives and interaction with the community beyond the veterans and their immediate family. Strong participation leads to long-term community support.

For some, the museum becomes a place of closure. Memorials and monuments serve a similar function. According to Dr. Gloria Leon, psychologist at the University of Minnesota whose work focuses on stress and coping in extreme environments and situations, “A lot changed when the Vietnam Veterans Wall was built. There was a tangible recognition for the terrible experiences they had lived, it legitimized their experiences.” Jacek Nowakowski at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum related a similar idea about the uses of a new holocaust museum in Poland, “My mother [from he village has been there four times



since the museum opened. The museum is a tool for education. Preservation is for survivors while educational programs are for others.” The programming of museum space for the Legion, VFW, Auxiliary and Purple Heart meetings should not be overlooked as a critical role.

**Second principle: Tell the best story possible.**

Always engage your audience personally in the content. The oral histories they have are stories but may not be structured. The audience will respond better to a clear story line than an accumulation of interesting but unstructured facts. Identify scholars, films that deal with the subject matter, and locals that know the storylines well. Contact those to involve them in development of the program. Keep local people who have close involvement with the subject matter close to the development.

Steve Sandell at the Humphrey Forum at the University of Minnesota believes that “Politics, personalities, and policies develop storylines. The Forum is a collection of personalities. There are a couple of parts to any story. Personality (who) + Politics (how) + Policy (What).” One part tells the story, the other lights the fire, others carry the flame. Vietnam, for example, is an idea for a story. As a collection of people it does not tell a story, does not light the spark. Men and women tell the story of a time when the U.S. was bubbling with protest”

As a final word, keep it brief! Gordon Murdock, director of the Museum Studies minor at the University of Minnesota, advises, “Talk to those who tell stories and ask the one question you would ask if you were in an elevator. Take snapshots of the one critical element.”

**Third principle: Once the audience is engaged, give them deeper levels of content to explore.**

To consider experiences of war is to explore the darkest episodes in human history. It is essential not to take sides, or make judgment statements; simply represent the facts when curating or developing a program. An expert or scholarly mediator can be especially helpful in this respect. Tim Glines at the Minnesota Historical Society believes there is a spoken or unspoken tension in any war related effort. The potential for charged stories is high and must be carried out with a great deal of sensitivity. Interpretation is left up to the audience.

Steve Sandell encourages delving into issues such as foreign affairs that have contemporary relevance, changing the reach of the military into people's lives through poetry, song, short stories. By reaching back into history through these texts, the museum defends a story or a set of ideals.

ITOW is tied to the experience of war through the veterans voice, but to continually refresh its' content it needs to continually challenge itself beyond its' permanent exhibits and concentration of voices from particular wars. In the case of the Smithsonian, the "Price of Freedom" on its own would not be sufficient for a museum; active programming becomes critical.

**Fourth principle: Let authentic, first-person voices speak instead of the curator or writer.**

ITOW already holds this principle in its structure. The idea implies deeper engagement between the story-teller and the audience. To let the voices come out tie the programs to local entry points and let the audience relate beyond. Gordon Murdock gives the example, "It is easy for people to walk away thinking they have nothing to do with that. People enjoy locating known landmarks on such things and then you proceed to tell them something about those places. "This is where David and Ellen Olsen and their 2 children lived in 1943..." The approach starts with something very familiar and uses a simple tool like a map. By focusing on what is specific to Perham or East Otter Tail County the program can extend the interpretation to the national context.

The San Diego Veterans Museum was founded on the principle that as a city, there is a particular military history that relates to local culture. The museum works through the United Veteran's Council to answer the question: Why is San Diego so full of veterans? There are 300,000 in the city. The museum weaves itself into the fabric of the city through relating individual stories and connecting itself to larger institutions. Dr. Abe Shragge is a professor at UCSD. One of his undergraduate classes uses the space as a theater for events, and students write papers about the oral histories that are part of the museum. Local theater groups collaborate with the museum to develop programming; "Piece of my heart," is a new performance based on women's oral histories who served in the war.

Another case of developing local involvement is the Anoka County Historical Society, which maintains a permanent space for military exhibits. The most recent is about Vietnam. Local veterans developed the idea over the course of several years, and with the guidance of one of the VFW members, who is a grief counselor, opened the exhibit last May. The

program continually employs veterans as volunteers and sends them out to schools to speak about the experiences. Likewise a space is available to regain composure at the exhibit in case there is an emotional breakdown. The atmosphere is highly sensitive to the particularities of veterans when encountering memories of war.

**Fifth principle: Let artful presentation and design of the exhibits and programs speak for themselves.**

Marcy Schulte, Minneapolis architect and sponsor of recent photo exhibit, “Archiving Memory,” believes that artful practice plus tangible products like mapping, might link statewide memorials, outreach, small towns to other small towns, or significant sites in the state. Adding research onto this repertoire completes a formula for long-term connectivity and approachability for ITOW.

Lynn Mason-Dixon, Director of the Goldstein Museum of Design, has a charge to interpret design exhibits through programs. Goldstein audiences demanded that the research center and library expand. These places become exhibits and elegant ways to portray the mission. The collection is now a permanent display guided by the needs of scholars, classes and access to collections. At the Veterans Museum of San Diego, Dr. Abe Shragge developed a presentation on the use of the B-24 in the wars. The presentation sparked the idea of a Memorial Garden featuring a replica of the B-24. His long-term effort through research led to the dedication of the garden and granting of funds from the City of San Diego.

Many interviewees cautioned that sometimes the most authentic exhibits can be the most devastating. The case in point is the Enola Gay Hiroshima bomber, which was scheduled to open at the Smithsonian for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bomb. The Smithsonian Air and Space Museum’s curation identified new evidence that proved dropping the bomb was not worth it caused veterans groups to protest the exhibit. Ultimately the entire product had to be changed. Politics changed the presentation of the topic despite the fact that they wanted to present a different, and authentic, side of the story. In a politically charged environment an elegant, textless program or exhibit goes further than an explicitly inflammatory one.

Dr. Leon cautions against graphic images, tapes and loud noises. Veterans can become extremely upset by stimuli, though it varies by individual. The greatest predictor to their reaction and recovery time is the amount of trauma they have been exposed to, how extreme is their suffering of post-traumatic stress disorder. Focus on the positive experiences to avoid survivor guilt. Validate the difficulty of the experience and the search for meaning; why what they did changed their life circumstances.

## ASSESSMENTS

### METHOD

General and community assessments were conducted as a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis based on interviews with key informants, review of existing materials, and two site visits. The method was chosen as the most effective for the general understanding of the Perham community in order to develop humanities programs with the assistance of other inputs.

### GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Perham is located in western Minnesota along a major transport corridor, Highway 10, and the Burlington Northern Railway line. The estimated population in 2004 was 2,706 people. There is some light industry and a well-established tourist economy on the lakes in the area. Perham is a noted progressive community with an established arts culture.

ITOW is an extension of the History Museum of East Otter Tail County. The idea for the museum was born approximately three years ago in informal discussion between members of VFW group 4020. When the group noted a decline in the gambling and bar revenue at their building in Perham, Minnesota they donated their building to the History Museum of East Otter Tail County. The museum occupies approximately 12,000 square feet on Main Street. Physical seating in the mainstage area is 250 people. A floorplan is developed and construction is underway for the July 2006 grand opening.

The ITOW concept is built around a library of recordings about the experiences of American wars from the 20<sup>th</sup> century up to the present. Oral history collection on a video and audio platform will continue. The museum board aspires to show both sides of events at a number of levels. Further, to highlight that soldiering is what people do because that is their situation in life; they especially hope to transmit this idea to youth.

A website is online that will provide information about past and present exhibits. Presently the website contains an introduction to the museum concept. **“In Their Own Words** is a sophisticated completely engaging audio/visual and interactive experience. All the exhibits are designed to provide an auditory, and/or visual experience through the use of video documentaries and interviews as well as audio commentaries. Re-dramatizations of events leading up to and during the wars of the 21st century will be another way for visitors to experience these thematic exhibits. They will also be given opportunities to delve deeper into individual veteran’s experiences through the interactive Identity Kiosks.

These fully interactive video monitors will read the dog tags each visitor will be given and then provide detailed personal accounts of the veteran listed on their dog tag.” According to the website, the audio and visual narratives make up the core of the visitor exposure to the lives and experiences of the veterans. The exhibits were not prepared at the time of this report, but access to several of the recordings provided a context for the type of information a visitor can expect to receive.

According to director Lina Belar, ITOW will partner with regional organizations. They hope to have a variety of programs, including those that they can take out on the road to show. Another important aspect is the creation of opportunities for the community to interact with veterans, including lectures and parties. Eventually they hope to generate publications. Discussions for programming content range from having veteran docent guides to hosting tour groups. They are interested in developing an exhibit on propaganda posters and a range of interactive encounters from humorous to serious.

A video, “In Their Own Words” was produced by Kirk van Doer of Archival Film Productions to promote the museum. In the video a clip of a narrative shows a veteran describes his experience as pushing living in an “envelope on the edge of the emotions.” Narratives such as this will be featured in a technologically cutting edge facility, where interactivity and access to specific names and dates is readily available. According to Syd MacLain, VFW Commander, one of the dreams for the museum is that in ten or twenty years a grandchild of a veteran can return to Perham and search for their relative to see a moving portrait of that person’s experience.

“Memories of World War II: Photographs from the Archives of the Associated Press” will be the first ITOW major traveling exhibit for the grand opening July 2006. The scale and scope of this exhibit informs future programming.

## **SWOT Conclusions**

### Strengths:

- 1) Abundant physical space for large audiences
- 2) Broad subject matter and approach
- 3) Adjacency to transport corridor
- 4) Abundant facilities for guests
- 5) An emphasis on the veteran experience of rural America
- 6) Record of support and contribution from the local veterans community

- 7) Commitment to engaging schools and cutting edge technology

Weaknesses:

- 1) Reliance on limited sensory experiences
- 2) Distance from metropolitan center and expertise
- 3) Seasonal variation on comfort level of facility
- 4) Breadth of mission

Opportunities:

- 1) ITOW provides additional layer of information to the tourist landscape
- 2) Other venues within the region are available to host programs

Threats:

- 1) Difficulty attracting people from a distance
- 2) Loss of focus on local veterans
- 3) Reliance on tourist economy deviates from internal knowledge generation

## **COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Three communities were interviewed: Potential partners, veterans, and city developers.

### ***Potential Partners***

Potential museum partners in the local community include educational and archival institutions such as schools and libraries.

### ***Veterans***

The VFW donors want people to understand what they went through rather than simply to hear. For fifty to sixty years they were unwilling to talk about war for the experience was too fresh. The last few years has seen growth in veteran's willingness to talk about the experience of war. On the other hand veterans are passing away as quickly as information can be gathered. Nationally 1,500 WWII vets die every day. Since donating the building the Perham VFW 4020 membership numbers decreased from 300 to 274.

### ***City Developers***

There are high expectations for ITOW and a sense of skepticism that it will not reach the intended targets. Tourists are the most reliable traffic through the museum, but local schools will also benefit. The arts are a critical part of the region's progressive nature.

## **SWOT Conclusions**

### Strengths:

- 1) Strong veteran support; local veterans feel a sense of pride and ownership
- 2) Strong school support
- 3) Enthusiasm and acceptance by broad community
- 4) Unique tourist destination known for arts culture
- 5) Meaningful educational, archival, cultural institution with no parallel in the region
- 6) Concept meets contemporary need for transformative, knowledge-based place
- 7) Provocative subject matter

### Weaknesses:

- 1) Unclear mission
- 2) High seasonal variation in audience groups
- 3) Future orientation of many supporters
- 4) Skepticism in economics of project
- 5) Lack of knowledge about the local context and cultural relevancy of project

### Opportunities:

- 1) Little scholarship on impact of veterans and war on rural American communities
- 2) Veterans participate and share leadership by managing, volunteering, teaching, and communicating with all audiences
- 3) High potential for network with libraries, economic groups
- 4) Strong veterans communities throughout West Central Minnesota, abundant sources of oral histories
- 5) Rich duration potential within the geographical community
- 6) Scholarship can be drawn from nearby institutions such as Fergus Falls, Moorhead, Fargo, St. Cloud State and Morris.

### Threats:

- 1) High expectations
- 2) Need to continually refresh puts high demands on leadership
- 3) Controversial subject matter
- 4) High need for strong year round programming to maintain support

## **AUDIENCE GROUP APPROACHES**

During the 1990's a new knowledge based age dawned that will replace the industrial production of the last 150 years (6). Museums must develop a new social function. The relationship between the museum and its publics must become more effective and genuine use of the collections.

Niel Pittman, then the head of the Museums and Galleries Division of the Office of Arts and Libraries, now subsumed into the Department of National Heritage, here makes very explicit the expansion of museum education when he says, "Museum education is too important to be left to the educators. It needs to imbue everyone who works in museums...the policy of any museum should be an education policy...education is a key component in every museum's raison d'être (Hooper-Greenhill 9)."

Collaboration between museums and businesses, schools, community groups, government agencies, and other organizations often leads to innovative and successful programming. The cultural enrichment of the community, social interaction among diverse groups, and personal growth among individuals can create momentum leading to future success (Sachatello-Sawyer 47).

### **Geographical Region**

This group includes life long learners, local veterans and their families, and all users of East Otter Tail County Historical Society and greater Western Minnesota, especially the most rural areas.

The geographical community has year round access to the museum and its' offerings, and a direct relationship to the veterans whose stories are part of the museum collections. The geographical community most directly represents the community that has been transformed through the lives of veterans.

This group will visit the museum as a learning experience and to witness the lives of local veterans through the exhibits. Activating this community requires a long-term strategy designed around the idea of life long learning and enrichment programs.

Educators and community leaders are paying more attention to the concept of lifelong learning because it is well understood that much learning occurs after the years of formal education. "Lifelong learning has emerged as one of the major challenges for the



worldwide knowledge society of the future ... Lifelong learning needs to promote effective educational opportunities in the many learning settings through which people pass, including home, school, work, and communities” (Fischer and Scharff 1998, p 2). UNESCO has included “Lifetime Education” as one of the key issues for future planning. The increased number of recent research studies and public policies further confirm the growing importance of lifelong learning. According to Fischer and Scharff (1998) “the challenge for environments supporting self-directed learning is to allow learners to work on authentic problems and tasks of their own choosing, and yet still provide them with learning support contextualized to their chosen problem (2).”

Compared to children, adults have more knowledge and their learning styles are more highly developed and practiced. According to studies, adults prefer to control the learning process, set their own pace, and use their own learning style (Tough 1999); they also prefer a learning environment that is comfortable, cooperative, noncompetitive, and non-evaluative (Hiemstra 1981).

Families or multigenerational groups are another learner group that falls within the geographical community. This group may experience the museum through conversation and as part of a group. Conversation is an important social process by which knowledge is constructed and through which new knowledge is appropriated. Through conversations the learner incorporates past experience into current activity; conversations shape future behavior (Leinhardt and Crowley 1998).

### **Student Population**

Perham has a student population of approximately 1,000. This group constitutes the core of the student audience, but just a fraction of other student groups that might access the museum. Other potential users include high school student field trip groups, scouts, 4-H students, university or technical college students. The aspect of learning again informs how this group will interact with the museum.

*How People Learn* (Chapter 4 “How Children Learn,” pp 67-101) provides a comprehensive overview of children as learners. Understanding the role of play in the development of children’s mental and physical abilities is particularly valuable for museums with a hands-on approach. Diamond (1996) notes that “in the context of museums, play can be encouraged in ways that few other public institutions make possible.” She adds that researchers suggest the following hypotheses about the relationship between play and learning: a) play provides both adults and children with experiences on which to build later

learning; b) play promotes flexibility and creativity in problem-solving, and c) play can relieve factors that inhibit learning, such as stress.

In addition to formal education activities ITOW can develop informal learning activities to complement the needs of formal education. These might include out-of-school activities for families or interactive experiences that addresses curriculum content. The Institute of Museum Service (IMS) publication *True Needs, True Partners: Museum and Schools Transforming Education* highlights the informal/formal learning relationship and includes 15 case studies of museum-school partnerships that received an IMS Museum Leadership Initiative grant in 1994.

ITOW has potential to enhance social science, English or technology curriculum.

“Educators contribute their understanding of the audience how children and adults learn so that they can ‘achieve a deep understanding rather than a superficial assortment of isolated, unconnected facts.’”

Best social studies practices from Pittsburgh Public Schools describe the efforts educators are making to abandon curriculum that leaves students disconnected from and unexcited about social studies. Curriculum that restricts learning to the dominant cultural heritage tableau is also being discarded. The thrust of new curriculum models is to expand student awareness of everyday issues among social groups, and enhance the sense of learning beyond the classroom, in other words, to abandon traditional isolation from the real world of citizenship at earlier ages. Tamara Uselman believes the theme of “conflict” is a social studies theme that bridges the Perham School District with ITOW.

Interactive and co-operative learning is heralded over passive learning techniques, where students sit for classroom-based lectures, educators are asked to offer choices to the students about what to study and to penetrate the deeper dimensions of complex human affairs. Students are being called to take responsibility for the world around them and to participate in wide social, political, and economic affairs, and to engage in real problem solving about significant human issues.

Among the practices, the “use of evaluation that involves further learning and that promotes responsible citizenship and open expression of ideas,” is critical to the mission of ITOW. Another significant point is students valuing and developing a sense of connection with American and global history, the history and culture of diverse social groups and the environment which surrounds them. (see: [www.pps.k12.pa.us/academicoffice/instructionalsupport/citizenship/strandsk1.asp](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/academicoffice/instructionalsupport/citizenship/strandsk1.asp))

They are places for integrating lessons into practical applications and an opportunity to feature such efforts within the community. With teacher guidance they become substantial and meaningful classroom experiences. ITOW can do this because it offers primary sources of information and open-ended exhibits that provide students with the joy of learning and the kind of opportunity to “learn by doing.”

### **National Community**

This group includes tourists to East Otter Tail County from the Midwest region; both those who regularly visit the area and those who actively seek out opportunities to learn about the veteran experience. It may include scholars, veterans, people with a strong interest in world history and contemporary events, especially retirees, and families.

The national community has restricted physical access to the museum and its’ programs, except via the internet. The national community represents a group who will attend the museum to gain exposure to specific events or ideas.

### **Evaluation Strategies**

Evaluation strategies for museum programs vary according to program. According to Spilman, a successful program leaves the visitor feeling somewhat different. Tangible measurables include sales from a museum store; he or she will buy something to remember their visit. Intangible assessments include such things as the look on their faces as a program progresses or the questions raised during the program. As mentioned earlier in this document, records of these incremental changes are important tools for museum programmers. Records may include video recording or dialogue transcriptions.

In addition to these methods, formal evaluation strategies include audience surveys and evaluations. Audience studies have provided more information and direction for generating new programs. The most common assessment procedure is to offer programs and see how many and what types of adults enroll (72). Paper surveys and forms can be filed and computerized for later reference. The litmus test of a successful program is it’s ability to sustain the museum and reproduce a variant of itself.

## *LONG RANGE HUMANITIES PROGRAMS PLAN*

### **INTRODUCTION**

ITOW has developed a series of permanent installations that will be the basis of museum life. The exhibits are filled with images and narratives from veterans themselves. The exhibits have an interactive approach that will allow the visitor to manage his or her own experience. Other programs will depart from the exhibit frameworks and explore themes critical to the dialogue of war.

For long-term success, museums today have an increased need to justify their programs. Accountability to the community and financial considerations lead to programs that are multi-functional and deliver a high degree of impact on the intended audience. Thus, allowing sufficient explanation for choosing particular programs is of utmost importance.

While a long term planning framework is a critical component of museum operations, from my research I see examples for the following types of successful programs. Temporal (or calendar), ongoing, permanent exhibition based, spontaneous programs developed to fit the needs of the community based on circumstances on the national, state or local level, web based activities, and partnerships. Based on the assessments, primary and secondary research, and model museums, ITOW has an opportunity to build a repertoire of programs that catalyze the knowledge and experiences it houses by setting critical priorities. The following is an outline of conclusions for programs based on the research:

- 1) Establish a sense of immediate legitimacy with the geographical community.
- 2) Continue to define the museum in terms of its relationship to rural America.
- 3) Reveal and contextualize the homefront through veterans and their relations.
- 4) Create a visibility and materiality for the phenomenon of change.
- 5) Open dialogue around the power of 'conflict'.
- 6) Build spatial, technological and conceptual networks.

## **STRATEGIES**

### **Temporal or Calendar based programs**

Museums employ major events or programs based on the calendar year. These events might relate to specific dates or national celebrations, such as Veteran's Day or Memorial Day.

A program concept that would touch on all audience groups, provide ongoing dialogue and bring the humanities into ITOW is an annual film festival. A film series is usually several films designed to enhance appreciation for a subject related to a museum exhibit or collection or based on a specific theme. Forty-six percent of museums offered some kind of film series (Sachatello 44). Dr. Lary May at the Department of American Studies points out that homefront knowledge of war is popularized through film; it was often used to mobilize people in favor of war. Bringing wars home in this manner has a tendency to distort history or, in contrast, to address internal discussion shaping the homefront.

An extensive collection of films is available speaking to the variety of perspectives on times of war. Some examples of films include Frank Capra's "Why We Fight," a documentary series that analyzes the Nazi violation of peace. "War without Mercy" by John Dower, portrays the brutality of the little known Pacific War. The Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences maintains an archive of war films, including scripts and special collections that is open to the public for research and interpretation.

### **Spontaneous programs**

This type of program arises because of an expressed interest or need in the community. Such a program might feature a collection of objects about a certain theme, brought in by veterans or their families and discussed at a social gathering. According to Cedric Yeh, curator at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, exhibit ideas are kept on file and can be accessed on demand when the timing is right. The current large exhibit, "The Price of Freedom," is one such example. The exhibit was spurred by a large donation from a private donor and is contractually bound. Yeh advises that any museum move forward with a particularly strong idea. If the support is there for a particular narrative, move forward.

## **Ongoing programs**

Ongoing programs are those that the museum continually works into its calendar of events. Such programs include school visits, docent tours, visits to community landmarks, book clubs, or lecture series. Ongoing programs develop what has been discussed above as the need for ownership by the veterans, the need for continual connection and support from and for the local community, and the goal of reaching youth.

## **Permanent exhibition based programs**

Another approach is to look to the framework already laid out by the ITOW board for permanent exhibitions. These exhibits offer the most concrete ideas the community has to date for the scope of museum content. Programs bridge the gap between the permanent exhibition and cultivation of new knowledge. The theme of the program becomes the thread through which to narrate the program, and its' exhibit the launching point for locating the politics, people and events which develop the story. Books, lectures, collections of art or artifacts then create tangible vessels through which to anchor the program while scholars mediate and contextualize. The outline here is a suggestion of how the system would work.

### 1 - Leaving home

**Program:** Lecture, film discussion, classroom learning

**Mediator:** Nancy Roberts, Professor, Albany State University

**Theme:** Heroism, civic culture, community, media

**Audience:** Student population, geographical community, national community

### 2 - Staying home

**Program:** Roundtable discussion, classroom learning

**Mediator:** Roland Guyette, Professor, History department, U of MN-M, Joseph Fitzharris, Professor, History department, University of St. Thomas

**Theme:** Transformations, community, civic culture, economic life

**Audience:** Geographical community, student population

### 3 - The first six weeks

**Program:** Lecture, roundtable discussion, classroom learning

**Mediator:**

**Theme:** Women, civilian and military experiences, transformation

**Audience:** Student population, geographical community especially adult learners

4 - Leaving for battle

**Program:** Roundtable discussion, lecture, classroom learning

**Mediator:** John Kim Mulholland, Professor, Department of History, U of MN

**Theme:** Communities, Heroism

**Audience:** Student population, geographical community

5 - Summary of war

**Program:** Lecture, film discussion, round table discussion

**Mediator:** Stephen Feinstein, Professor, U of MN and Director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies

**Themes:** Genocide patterns, complacency, community effects

**Audience:** Geographical community, student population, national population

6 - The Middle East

**Program:** Lecture

**Mediator:**

**Theme:** Contemporary war in the Middle East

**Audience:** Geographical community

7 – Korea

**Program:** Film discussion, lecture, roundtable discussion

**Mediator:** Lary May, Professor, Department of American Studies, U of MN

**Themes:** Civic culture, protest, culture, homefront, foreign affairs, national identity

**Audience:** Geographical community, adult learners, older student population, national community

8 – Vietnam

**Program:** Film discussion, lecture, roundtable discussion

**Mediator:**

**Themes:** Civic culture, protest, popular culture, homefront, women

**Audience:** Geographical community, national community

## 9 – Europe

**Program:** Lecture, roundtable discussion

**Mediator:** Eric Weitz, Professor, Department of History, U of MN, Head of the Center for German and European Studies

**Themes:** Rural populations, genocide and complacency, foreign affairs, civic culture, voices of war, modern warfare, rural populations

**Audience:** Geographical community, adult learners

## 10 - Prisoners of War

**Program:** Buszeum

**Mediator:** Michael-Luick Thrans, Executive Director of Traces Museum

**Theme:** Midwest POW recovery and camps abroad, intercamp relationships

**Audience:** Student population, geographical community

## 11 - The Home Front

**Program:** Lecture, roundtable discussion, tour

**Mediator:** Elaine May, Professor, Department of American Studies, U of MN

**Themes:** Women, homefront, sexuality, domestic culture

**Audience:** National community, geographical community

## 12 - Aftermath of war

**Program:** Ongoing roundtable discussion

**Mediator:** World War II History Roundtable group member, Community Education

**Themes:** Transformation, closure, political statements

**Audience:** Geographical community, especially adult learners and veterans

## 13 - Coming Home

**Program:** Film and discussion, lecture, roundtable

**Mediator:** Paul Solon, Professor, History department, Macalester College

**Themes:** Emotional and physical changes, myth and cultural development, communities, culture, heroism

**Audience:** Geographical community, student population



## **RESEARCH BASED PROGRAMS**

The most common type of programs are volunteer and docent training, lectures and guided tours. In addition, museums frequently offer field trips, gallery demonstrations, and workshops, while history based museums might be more likely to offer performing arts events, symposia, and film series (21).

Guided tours and docent training can be developed as programs themselves. Docent training is critical as docents may be the only museum representatives with whom visitors interact, apart from the person who collects their admission fee. (29). 93 percent of museums offer volunteer training, by far the most common adult education in museums. The overarching objective is to train them in the best ways of presenting that material to the public.

Seminars and symposia derive from the idea that when a group of informed people are brought together and stimulated to interact, good things happen. Seminars are traditionally less formal. A seminar is a small group led by an informed discussion leader in which a particular concept, museum exhibit, or research idea is explored. Symposia are usually larger and more formal, typically consisting of series of short presentations by several persons on related topics or various phases of the same topic.

The success of seminars and symposia depend on the presenter willingness to address varied aspects of the subject and participants acceptance of diverse input. Time is usually allowed for interaction among presenters and participants. (43).

## **DESIGNED SPACE**

ITOW exists to demonstrate the profound effect war makes on the communities of rural America by expressing changes that may otherwise go unseen. Showing those changes is a process of connecting with the audience through a series of sensory, interactive experience (ITOW website). To understand the long-term connection between the local environment and the impact of veterans, the community can choose to undertake a series of design programs that generate new knowledge and ways of seeing their world. Many collaborative design strategies can engage the community and solidify ITOW mission. Mapping programs and design of an outdoor space, for example, are means to develop the ITOW mission and to create meaningful destinations on the rural American landscape.

Monuments, memorials, cemeteries and public spaces are common features on the American cultural landscape. The way groups and individuals define themselves depends on interpretation of history, conceptions about the future, and political, moral, and other ideals. As early as 1796 in Lexington an obelisk to the revolution was erected and for the next half century patriotic monuments and celebrations appeared as focal points on the landscape. Places of commemoration preserve memories, whether of individuals, groups of people or events (Woschke 2), shaping the future of a community specifically via their relationship with time. In the contemporary American landscape war does not occur as a battlefield remembrance but as the subtle shifts in the identity of rural communities. ITOW has an opportunity to make site visits to other places of conflict or change routes of discovery.

## **Mapping**

Concretizing the veteran role in changing the local landscape is a key ITOW objective. How can ITOW find evidence about various social groups perceptions and experiences in the overlapping territory? Mapping the social aspects of the experience, or specific state-wide sites of remembrance, is a collaborative process that can anchor the role of the museum as a multi-dimensional institution and let the veteran voice speak to a broad community. Marcy Schulte of Conway + Schulte Architects believes mapping is a practice that bridges art and research to produce new knowledge. Cognitive mapping and public history programs were extensively utilized by the “Power of Place,” Delores Hayden’s urban design non-profit organization in Los Angeles. Along with other curricular materials, ITOW can produce maps by conducting workshops with veterans, their families, and a team of designers, artists and public historians.

Other field-based programs are built around the idea of “citiscience,” in which participants contribute to real investigations while building knowledge and interest in their surroundings. (65) “The Power of Place” culminated into a book, but originated with the need to legitimize and dedicate space to women’s and ethnic history. Public space that is dedicated to working through issues with the “collective knowledge of earlier struggles (Hayden 237)” are meeting places for the project, creating tangible and localized memories and value.

Social scientists increasingly look to multi-disciplinary means to build collaboration and a sense of ownership for the local environment. Teamwork is difficult, but prove fruitful when the results show new synergies in the working environment (Hayden 236). Kevin Lynch, an MIT designer, worked in the 1960’s and 1970’s to demonstrate that sprawling

conceptions of space are difficult for citizens to map, but that landscape architects and planners through cognitive mapping have an important role to play in making the space more coherent in the citizen mind. While acknowledging some of the political limits of Lynch's claims, cultural theorist Fredric Jameson believes cognitive mapping can "give individuals a heightened sense of place, and suggests that mapping can raise political consciousness (Hayden 29).

The Design Institute at the University of Minnesota developed a series of cognitive maps for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, including smells and industries. Design Institute research reveals that mapping is practiced as a new technology of navigation and location that charts "virtual" terrain such as social networks (website: [www.design.umn.edu/go/project/ELSEWHERE\\_MAPPING\\_overview](http://www.design.umn.edu/go/project/ELSEWHERE_MAPPING_overview).) New mapping strategies borrow traditional cartographic metaphors at various scales, at the local, regional and national levels for instance, to reveal relationships. Finally, representations of spatial data empower alternate groups by employing their collective considerations for space.

East Otter Tail County through ITOW can devise alternative mappings of social and spatial relationships, in collaboration with artists and designers and technologies such as GPS and GIS. The practice underlines John Thorup's plan for regional developing. A series of mapping workshops to develop tangible outcome, such as maps or rural tours, are other ways mapping practices become learning based program.

### **Commemorative Garden**

Commemoration is a meaningful vehicle to engage the community in a through the body; it is a cultural mechanism by which we call to remembrance or preserve in memory, often through an observance or a public celebration. It affirms the identity of the participants based on a shared history and played out in the commemorative act. Indeed, ITOW is based on the premise that rural American identity rests on its' exposure to the experience of war. The design of space, through architecture and landscape architecture, can be a collaborative process whereby art and information inform new ways of knowing, or seeing, the local environment. Followed with a trained design professional, the design process makes new or revised cultural meaning legible in spatial and temporal continuity. Commemorating the veteran experience is already familiar with designed commemorative space, for example, Maya Lin's Vietnam Memorial on Washington Mall. As an enduring public program ITOW has an opportunity to create a garden where war's impact is clearly available to the senses in a commemorative tribute or celebration.

Research revealed several approaches to commemorative designed space. In San Diego, Abe Shragge's Memorial Garden was the product of his research on the B-24 bomber and long-term collaboration and support from the San Diego veteran community. San Diego prided itself on its history and the concentration of veterans in the city; indeed, San Diego was known as the "Navy City" (website [www.veteranmuseum.org/garden](http://www.veteranmuseum.org/garden)). The veterans council, city and museum collaborated to develop the garden and hired an architect to realize the vision for the plan. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum maintains an online catalog of memorial sites since the fact their locations and details are sought by veterans and their families.

At the United States Holocaust Museum, design played a central role in enhancing the visitor experience. The building is made enhance the feeling of envelopment and solemnity. The approach carries through to public outreach. Jacek Nowakowski related how pilgrimage becomes an important part of the healing process. Nowakowski works with Holocaust sites in Europe, assisting them through the stages of design, development, and recognition often engaging artists to create sculpture and representation on the traumatic site (Nowakowski, pers. comm.).

When identity is changing commemoration grows in importance. J.B. Jackson notes, "that is why every new revolutionary social order, anxious to establish its' image and acquire public support, produces many commemorative monuments and symbols and public celebrations (2-3)." Commemorated history may be shared religious or common cultural traditions: we remember happy or sad events, wars, revolutions, persecution, or the birth and death of national and other heroes. Mount Vernon and Monticello, for example, are among the most well known national places of commemoration (Wolschke-Buhlman 2). Making a place of commemoration is an on-going program that invites the community into the museum in a long-term sensory learning experience.

In the course of human development death has played a significant role in the process of establishing identity. "Places that commemorate the dead, whether en masse or as members of distinct religious, ethnic, political and other groups, are often important in societies (Wolschke-Buhlman 3)." The commemoration of death, both ceremonially and as a designed environment, is often seen as helping establish and maintain identity. The veterans at ITOW recognize that the passing of their colleagues is a primary reason to support the museum, further that the passing of veterans affects the composition of rural America (Bartis, pers. comm.). Their death is an aspect of mourning and commemoration, it is also an opportunity to celebrate their lives.

Gardens and landscapes have played commemorative roles in the process of identity formation through time and cultures. Furthermore, tombs and gardens have related to each other for centuries. In works of art, the garden appears as a place of spirit, identity and commemoration. Whereas gardens are intermediate zones between the past and the anticipated future, they are also sites of contradiction. In the garden we witness life transitions through direct contact with nature. The seasonal aspects of the garden focus attention on the changes that occur as part of the rhythm of existence. The typology of the garden invites reflections on origins, as attention is called to the original garden as a bountiful, earthly paradise. As things of beauty gardens invite a sense of peace and resolution of this conflict (Dixon-Hunt 9).

“Garden art aspires to compensate for those lost worlds by recreating a new perfection-paradisiacal, arcadian, utopian ( Dixon-Hunt 21).” It can exemplify invented traditions, such as the Victorian Christmas or the Scots tartan. This is a process by which some cultural event is created, adapted, or revised as a space, connective tissue between the present with a significant past event.

The designed garden is an enclave between outside and inside, town and country, social space and private space. This positioning lends to the commemoration of the dead by the still living; gardens are zones where we release temporarily from everyday routine to focus on broader issues. Landscape architects mediate the process of place-making by telling the story of some place, or revealing the genius loci. Designers draw out and affirm the meaning of a site using the palette of the Earth in collaboration with the community narrative. Designs might employ ideological or geomorphology, it might be more general or related immediately to a point in space, celebrating identity through the time frame of earth systems (Potteiger 33).

Landscape architecture is associated with memory in the way a garden may locate ideas, themes, and references in its fountains, statues, inscriptions, and other formal devices; “to the prepared, that is to say, to the knowledgeable visitor, these “codes”, or “messages” can be recovered and, if appropriate, strung together into an iconographical program or narrative (Dixon-Hunt 21-22).” Inscriptions are a permanent feature of landscape architectural commemorations, from iteration of names and dates to endlessly inscribed walls of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, to the writing of a famous literary or biblical passage, calling to mind the relationships the space maintains to the local environment (22).

A garden would provide the space necessary for reflection or solitude after time in museum, a necessary part of the learning experience (Black 141). It would make a space for public rest and fraternization in the summer months, as suggested by Susan Huesser, a destination for people to enjoy their lunch. It increases the visibility of the museum from the point of view of the regional art perspective and it opens a space for contemplation of the changes veterans and their lives instill on the rural American landscape. ITOW brings a unique perspective to modern rural identity; it can be preserved and made legible to American memory in a garden of public remembrance.

## **WEB BASED ACTIVITIES**

Access to home computers continues to increase. Depending on the platform, enhancing web-based content is one of the fastest ways to reach new audiences, experiment with new approaches to learning, or facilitate accessibility to the information. In 1999, more than half of the American public had access to a home computer (*Science and Engineering Indicators – 2000*, p 8-24). Regional museums can incorporate media like audio/video clips to give users additional ways to learn about a given subject. The website is another venue for increasing the reach of humanities programming to a wide audience. See: Forests, fields, and Falls, an online exhibit at the Minnesota Historical Society: [www.discovery.mnhs.org/connectingmn](http://www.discovery.mnhs.org/connectingmn)

By increasing its' web-based program offerings, ITOW can reach the largest potential audience and make optimum use of local, regional, national and international partnerships. Access to home computers continues to increase. In 1999, more than half of the American public had access to a home computer (*Science and Engineering Indicators – 2000*, p 8-24). Depending on the platform, enhancing web-based content is one of the fastest ways to reach new audiences, experiment with new approaches to learning, or facilitate accessibility to the information. In 1999, more than half of the American public had access to a home computer (*Science and Engineering Indicators – 2000*, p 8-24). Regional museums can incorporate media like audio/video clips to give users additional ways to learn about a given subject.

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 includes the questionnaire set used for each population type. Appendix 2 includes a summary of each interview. Interviewees are alphabetized by last name and coded according to their population group. When an interviewee represents a potential institutional partner for ITOW an asterisk (\*) follows the code.

### **A: Humanities programs advisor**

Individuals who work in the field of program development for a museum or other archival type of institution.

### **HS: Humanities scholar**

Individuals with expertise in an area related to the content of ITOW, such as historians, sociologists, or artists that offer sources of program contextualization.

### **CR: Community representative**

Key informants interviewed for the general and community assessments.

## **Questionnaire Design References**

### **Books**

Bynner, J. and Stribley, K.M. (eds.) (1978) *Social Research: Principles and Procedures*, Longman/ Open University Press.

Foddy, W. (1994) *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires*, Cambridge University Press.

de Vaus, D.A. (1990) *Surveys in Social Research*, Unwin Hyman.

### **Web Sites**

Questionnaire Design and Sampling

<http://obelia.jde.aca.mmu.ac.uk/resdesgn/arsham/opre330Surveys.htm>

Research Methods Knowledge Base

<http://trochim.human.cornell.edu/KB/contents.htm>

## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRES

36 interviews are conducted to submission date of this report. The objective of the interviews was to identify existing knowledge, community needs, and sources of expertise in order to prepare a coherent plan for humanities programs. The questionnaires were administered in an open format style, where questions revealed unprompted opinions with no no predetermined set of responses. The method was chosen to find subjective data and because the range of responses could not be tightly defined. An advantage to the method is receiving wide and insightful comments, but a disadvantage is the variation among respondents. Moreover they must be read individually and no statistical information can be immediately analyzed.

Most interviews were conducted over the phone, though some took place one-on-one in the host institution or scholar office. Other limitations to the process included a lack of extensive background from “ITOW” about the exhibits themselves, breadth of subject matter, and congruency between “war” and the “veteran experience.” Some interviews varied depended on the subject or knowledge of the interviewee. Insightful responses were followed up with more probing questions. The variation reflects in the summaries.

**A:**

How does (institution name) plan for public programs?

I see (the exhibit name) on your website. Could you share with me the process by which that exhibit came to be developed?

What is your annual schedule for programs?

What is your approach to handling multiple political views?

What is your evaluation strategy?

Could you recommend anyone else I should speak to?



**HS:**

I understand your research revolves around (area of emphasis). Could you tell me more specifically about your work and interests?

How does (area of emphasis) relate to (area of ITOW focus)?

Have you worked directly with veterans themselves?

Would you recommend any further sources of information?

Would you be interested in sharing your knowledge through a public program with visitors to the veterans museum?

**CR:**

As the student researcher for the new veterans museum, "In Their Own Words," I am talking to local people about their knowledge, hopes and role in the museum as part of a community assessment. How have you been involved with the museum development to this point?

As a representative of (community name. ie, schools, veterans), how will this group be impacted by the new museum?

What do (community group. ie, students) know about the veteran experience?

How can humanities programs correlate with your efforts (area of emphasis, ie, to teach social studies)?

What limitations do you see in the community towards ITOW?

How can the museum approach this dilemma?

## APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

Bartis, Peter (A*)	Nelson-Mason, Lynn (A*)
Bunkers, Suzanne (HS)	Nothnagle, Alan (HS*)
Chang, David (HS)	Nowakowski, Jacek (A)
Cunningham, Jane (A*)	Otwell, Maureen (A)
van Dorn, Kirk (CR)	Patton, Don (HS)
Feinstein, Stephan (HS)	Roberts, Nancy (HS)
Glines, Tim (A*)	Sandell, Steve (A)
Guyotte, Roland (HS)	Schulte, Marcy (HS)
Heusser, Susan (CR)	Shoptaugh, Terry (A)
Johnson, Chuck (CR)	Shragge, Abe (HS*)
Kinder, John (HS)	Solie, Ruth (CR)
Kollath, Jeff (A)	Solon, Paul (HS)
Krueger, Kitty (CR)	Spilman, Jefferson (A)
Lehman, Mark (CR)	Tassava, Christopher (HS)
Leon, Gloria (A)	Thorup, John (CR)
MacGuire, Charlie (HS)	Uselman, Tamara (CR)
May, Lary (HS)	Weitz, Eric (HS)
McLain, Syd (CR)	Weiss, Florian (A*)
Munholland, John Kim (HS)	Vicki Wendel (A)
Murdock, Gordon (A)	Yeh, Cedric (A*)

**Name:** Bartis, Peter

**Institution:** Library of Congress

**Role:** Veteran History Project, Senior program officer

**Contact information:**

Phone: (202) 707-4919

Email: [vohp@loc.gov](mailto:vohp@loc.gov)

Web Site: <http://www.loc.gov/vets/>

**Interview Date:** November 3, 2005

This is an American Memory project. It was mandated and funded by the US Congress to collect oral histories when the death rate of World War II vets began to escalate. The Veterans History Program works with members of Congress. 96 out of the 100 Senators have at least 1 person appointed to work as a direct contact with the Project. 204 of the House. VFW is a formal link to veteran's histories. The work puts the veteran impact in perspective. The VA was going to do the collecting, but things became too political. Most interviews come from World War II and Vietnam vets. New soldiers are not yet veteran's. Most of their interviews come from collecting partners; they have 40,000. Someone calls Peter, for example and wants to interview 20 people.

The impact from WWII was profound, the conjunction with the Depression. Some of the kids that came in didn't have access to the life they had afterwards. It created the Middle Class, the 'Melting Pot'. Now, the way we have the war set up, 2,000 plus deaths is already having an impact on rural communities. Farms and reserve incomes are no longer part of the changing rural dynamic.

No formal public programs, but release of publications based off the oral histories, such as a recent release with National Geographic.

The new museum is important because few scholars work on the impact to rural communities. The CCC work program is one way to get at what you're doing. Black men are recorded saying "Stepped off the train, it was the first time I stepped on dirt," Talk to history scholar Lt. Col. Mike Perry – Omni Military History. "Why were people lining up to get into WWII service?"

The museum can become an official collecting partner. You receive access to partner archives, and they send a copy of the biographical information to other archives. If ITOW writes to the Veteran's History Project, say we are ready to be a repository. Make it clear to donors that it is not a registry. If ITOW would like to use the pre-designed kits, we are welcome to use the prepared version at the LOC.

Bartis recommends being careful with accepting donations. They try to send uniforms, hand grenades, and more uniforms. Stay with the theme of rural America, and concentrate on the homefront experience.

**Name:** Suzanne Bunkers

**Institution:** Mankato State University

**Role:** Professor of English. Oral histories, veterans project.

**Contact information:** On leave.

Survivors narratives from the European perspective. Scholarship rising out of Germany. Retells the Allies story, Japan exercises different interpretations on history. Bunkers also worked on Korean comfort women.

To date I have not interviewed Suzanne Bunkers. She emailed several times to say that she is interested but has not committed to a time to talk. I advise contacting her at least six months in advance of any program proposal related to women and war.

**Name:** Chang, David  
**Institution:** University of Minnesota, Twin Cities  
**Role:** History professor  
**Contact information:** dchang@umn.edu  
**Interview date:** November 3, 2005

Specializes in Civil War to WWII, especially the experience of the American West. Land ownership became especially important during this period. How wars and those who served them shaped the American rural experience, the structure of the community was critical to the period. Not only the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Civil War and the Dakota Conflict had profound influence on the look and feel of rural American foundations. Those conflicts made rural America, the European conquered and stole the land.

War and farmers is an interesting theme. Minnesota was close to the site of many, the Plains Wars; all of those were Dakota Lands. From the Soldier of 1860 to Wounded Knee in 1890. All Rural All White Americans are represented. Sitting Bull, Little Crow were veterans but not American. Indian Wars made it possible for farming communities to exist. The Midwest thought of itself as Westerners until the 1930's. Testimonies are available from both sides from this period. Gary Clayton Anderson's "Little Crow" and "Through Dakota Eyes". "What happened at Wounded Knee," includes testimonials from both sides.

Civil War has good models of community. The Valley of the Shadows. 2 communities, locally engaged in the narrative. Civil War diaries, memoirs are available at the MN Historical Society.

WWI was a major event. It was great for American farmers, unlimited market, the government buying things for the Allies, the richest time for American farmers in American history. WWI story on local politics in Bemidji. Conservative politicians were able to use the war to squelch radical politics. War is very useful for politicians. Smith, Henry L "Memoirs of an Ambulance Company" Describes what he saw as a doctor during WWI in a rural community.

Other wars made an impact but receive little scholarship. 1898- the Spanish American War  
1902- the Philippine War

During these wars America is asserting its power on the counterinsurgency over seas. The military did not know who they were fighting. It sets up the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the idea of the US as a global power, not just the nation, the local idea of the United States.

The U of MN library website includes Hmong oral histories. They fought with the US against the VietCong. After awhile, the US allowed them in as refugees. They are willing to be interviewed and any man over 50 likely participated in the war.

Chang notes that the ITOW website, if you take it at their own words, you miss some of the critical thinking behind the event.

**Name:** Jane Cunningham  
**Institution:** Minnesota Humanities Commission  
**Role:** Director, Grants & Community Programs  
**Contact information:**  
987 Ivy Avenue East  
Saint Paul, MN 55106  
651-772-4249  
Toll Free 1-866-268-7293, x. 109  
Fax 651-774-0205  
[jane@minnesotahumanities.org](mailto:jane@minnesotahumanities.org)  
[www.minnesotahumanities.org](http://www.minnesotahumanities.org)  
**Interview Date:** October 28, 2005

Jane assists organizations apply for grants, from the Humanities Commission for example. Funding for exhibit development, speakers.

Humanities is not about production. Is about academic, interpretation and analysis. Humanities takes art and contextualizes it. To find other exhibits go to the Library of Congress. Library at Chicago had the "Lets Talk About It" series, and "Rosie the Riveter." Take an Inventory of Scholars and look to educational institutions geographically closer like Moorhead State and Morris.

How do you evaluate exhibitions? In terms of value added for school? Community? Seattle library posed 8-10 questions for users. Approach Lakes area regional arts council for assistance. Provide anecdotal evidence. Survey the content areas. Document the stimulus for the program and the impact

Other models to look at include the Iron Range Interpretive Center, the MN Association of Museums, the MN Alliance of Local History Museums. You might find technical support from the MN Academy of Arts and Sciences. Museum on Main Street exhibitions (Smithsonian) are available on an informal basis, with the Alliance for History Museum.

MN Tourism has information on resort owners and McKnight has a project on art towns. Public art in the suburbs developed economic rationale for programming. Neal Cuthbert is the contact.

At the County level, seek out the VA's. County coordinator on aging, National Guard, Statewide VFW chapters and the Legion.

Charlie Morris, Connecting Generations project through local churches.

County Extension- 4-H projects can become programs.

The Lake Harriet Peace Garden is a public place maintained by the city. A new peace garden is approved at Lyndale Park.

Great American History Theater offers music to interpret. Golden Valley Historical Society, musician Charlie McGuire writes music.

Align with the state history standards to collaborate with schools.

National POW exhibit at the MIA, Weisman, MPR has documentaries, Alliance Francais, Goethe Institute, Institute for Germanic Studies

Federal State Department. Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs

**Name:** van Dorn, Kirk  
**Institution:** Archival Film Productions  
**Role:** Owner  
**Contact information:**  
**Interview Date:** December 8, 2005

Kirk's company interviews individuals, boards, companies, produces professional archival video for multiple purposes. Kirk wrote a 3 page proposal do his own interviews, then heard about this museum through a friend of a friend.

The museum will be a priceless, permanent legacy. The nuances of the voices are alone a treasure. At first there was only a few volunteers. Now they are flooded with people ready to be interviewed. They set up an interviewing facility at churches to reduce his travel time. The project is about the life story, about the service. The assignment is to ask about the time in the military, regardless of their role. Each one did whatever they could. Women and war is another aspect. They served, also those who were left at home and had to deal with the ration elements.

Paul Stebbins was a shining gem, was willing and able to really go there during the interview, using phrases like, "The river running red with blood," he choked down, but was really ready to be a medium through which the travesty of war was felt.

Another quintessential interview was Antoine (Tony) Cichey. He was the last remaining survivor of the Arason Maroon. He was taken prisoner with 800 men, put on a boat without a red cross flag. The US attacked the boat, 7 out of the 800 survived, Tony is the last remaining survivor. He went to the kitchen and ate all of the sugar he could find and drank all of the fresh water in the canteens. He found a plank and saw a lifeboat in the water. Something came bumping up against the side of the boat, it was a cask of water, he and another took turns scratching with their bloody fingernails to get the cask open. Next, a mast came bumping up. It was a comedy of errors. Finally, they ran into a Chinese fisherman, who risked his own life to take them to China. Tony is gun shy of being taken advantage of. Someone came up from Texas to make a video about his experience and he was never compensated.

People might not have any clue how they are being transformed. He needed a good hour to decompress after hearing each interview. It was sometimes difficult to maintain the professionalism during the interview.



In his everyday life now he is compelled to share segments of the experience. It is so dismaying to see Veterans Day, Memorial Day, the anniversary of Pearl Harbor to pass by unnoticed by the general public. Now he stops when he sees a disabled Vet to thank them for what they did. They break down, they just do not hear that. He has become more mindful.

Bus tours, whatever age is appropriate. Veterans will go away feeling honored. Acknowledge their service. For the common citizen, it is a way to understand the sacrifice. What we're doing currently, individuals are being called to serve without awareness of those who went before them.

Justice needs to be done for the Korean War. Many lives were permanently altered without any recognition.

**Name:** Feinstein, Stephan

**Institution:** University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

**Role:** Director, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. History professor.

**Contact information:** feins001@umn.edu

**Interview date:** September 30, 2005

The atrocities were due to a coalescence of chaotic event. Schonfeld, Anomie, Big fear of world because of chaos. End WWI, End of Kaiserreich. Rise of women, minorities, homosexuality, economic instability, great Depression, no black Germans born. Hitler was a vegetarian. Purity Campaign. Wheat/White Bread, Anti-Liquor, Butter/Margarine.

Nationalism: The Germans were pissed off about the partition, economic reasons

“Transfer” of Sudeten Germans

Method of plowing was different in Poland, Germany, Poland. Himmler wanted to plant windbreaks, believed they could change the weather, cause more rain to fall. Released birds of prey to eat the mice.

Polish military transfer point from West to East.

Aly, Heim. Architect of annihilation.

Reduce aquifer, nutrient intake.

Borders, Peace treaties

Teschin dispute

Theriestenstadt – Brandenburg swastika

Book: “How Green were the Nazis?”

Antarta- Degenerate Music (Literature, Art in favor of the military)

- Swing Kids – Afro Judaic, threats of impurities

The Eternal Jew (film) Whites controlling the slave trade.

UTOPIAN idea about purity, Germans felt threatened by Czechs, Liebensraim, Manifest Destiny, strated 500 years too late.

National Socialism was “Applied Biology.” People maintain physical and thinking aspects. Jewish were invisible.

Nuremburg Law – Protection of blood, Czech and Poles were inferior because of Slavic blood

Jews thought differently, were inventive, made money, god at banking, urban mentality, pro democratic tendency, talked with their hands

(Book) Rosenbaum – Explaining Hitler

6 out of 7 of Hitler's female relations killed themselves.

Racial hygiene – Proctor (Book)

Jewish Army is lice

AIDS

Genocide shares a language – Tutsis called the Hutus “Cockroaches”

Atomic Jew – Einstein

Psychedelic Jew – Freud

Otherness, “Stranger”

Conceptual way to deal with what happened

War in Poland was a way to deal with immigration, an opportunity for experimentation  
Nazis prohibited conversion to the Church since superiority was due to blood, not faith.  
Rewrote book of Jewish history.

\*Shooters have psychological problems

Alcoholics

Drug addicts

Polish mass graves

TODAY:

Gulf Vets: Higher levels of suicide, wife beating, wife murder

Fear of what happened to the Germans.

Test gas vans

Got to gas chambers

\*Ordinary men becoming involved

Police who wind up shooting 87,000 men at Auschwitz, conveyor of death. Had to burn them.

Topf Company. Could burn 8,000 per day. Fat could become fuel.

Sterilization, feeble mindedness, Alcoholism,

- Keeping industry clean was important
- Shortages, cut corners
- Change in Language

**Name:** Glines, Tim

**Institution:** Minnesota Historical Society

**Role:** Outreach

**Contact information:**

**Interview date:** October 27, 2005

Role is to assist in the process and provide history resources. Who is designing and fabricating the exhibits? Typically when planning an exhibit, the designer and the programmer are sitting at a table. Identify the audiences.

Models: Madison-Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Recommends a museum visit, if possible, programs in addition to the museum space. Talk to community leaders, get a sense for what they hope to see. Local history is critical!! Personalize more general things.

See the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier. At that facility like ITOW, you get a headset, located in a park, there is an outdoor space for reenactments. Contact Jefferson Spillman, is a college friend of David.

Vicki Wendel at Anoka County HS. They maintain a permanent space for military exhibits. Vietnam most recent. A psychiatric counselor is on hand. It was prepared for multiple experiences. If there is a meltdown, there is a place to go on site to regain composure.

MN Society for Military History. Professor Joe Fitzharris at the University of St. Thomas. Bill Breer. Public History at Augsburg, local military histories.

Program depends on the age group.

What did Grandma do during...? What did children do? What was obedience like?

Whether scholars are in the cards to do the type of programming depends on the finance. Resources can be very local. The Veterans at Snelling. There is a Twin Cities WWII Round Table. Steve Osman, Historically active and appealing to a non-scholarly audience.

National Endowment for the Humanities. Community groups might not want a PhD talking to them. The Drivers of the project are the Veterans Groups. There is a spoken or unspoken tension in any war related effort. Curator deliberately does not make a statement on whether an event was good or bad.

Smithsonian Enola Gay- the bomber that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Hiroshima, the entire event was changed due to the politics of the topic. Wanted to tell different sides of the story, the effects of the bomb. Veterans groups did not want anything to be said. Has to do with how much you say. The lesson, the exhibits can be calling the shots.

**Name:** Guyotte, Roland

**Institution:** University of Minnesota, Morris

**Role:** Professor, American History, War and peace

**Contact information:** 320 589 6185

**Interview date:** December 14, 2005

Studies military issues and the publishing field.

The history of higher education of immigrants. Guyotte has been declared an expert of anti-war efforts and their families. In the context of Iraq, people have a lot of questions.

“Learning Unlimited” was geared toward the National Guard.

Teaches a course, “The History of Peace in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” Peace as an alternative to war. Follows successful non-violent alternatives to war. Mandela and the Velvet Revolution.

His problem with Perham is that he is mobility limited. If someone can pick him up he is willing to go.

Suggests talking to Arlin Nikolas. He teaches history at Fergus Falls Community College and might have more connection with those who have served.

**Name:** Heusser, Susan

**Institution:** Perham Area Public Library

**Role:**

**Contact information:**

Not involved in museum development but aware. She saw the floor plan on display. In Perham, people focus on economic base as a way to draw people in and spend money. One objective is to bring in bus tours.

Historical materials are available at the library related to specific military campaigns. Some locally published materials on Veterans. Heard people speaking about the museum, no change in the traffic to the library.

From a personal perspective, having a father in WWII, having a recollection and image archive would be a valuable addition to the community, especially for future generations.

Try to succeed at the library, to determine why something works and why it does not. They brought in a bus display. They were very visual, very tactile, with short accessible topics. You need to get their attention in about 10 seconds, these displays could not spend the time to go in depth.

Students have very little comprehension. Part of the role of the museum is to raise this awareness, through primary sources. In Perham community, people are very concerned with Early Childhood Education. The older the child, the more difficult it is to get their attendance. If you are going to draw them, you need to have a major promotional event. If you do a promotion, go through the school. Kids have to go home and tell their parents they want to attend. Thru the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, attendance is typically good to public events.

Activity level rises in the summer. People come in to get books for the kids and to use the internet to check their email. Tourists make use of town sites, occupying children's time with attractions. She speculates they would stop at the museum if it is accessible. If you are not charging you catch a lot more people. The building is a ways out from the business group downtown. It has to become a local destination. The museum is three blocks removed from the center; the museum needs to post signage downtown. Everyone will go through to see the exhibits once. If you have a park area, a place where you could have rotating bands, and a place for people to eat a sandwich.

Perham residents are very proud and is noted for uniqueness. They will support an endeavor financially, if you can make it a success. You have to bring people from the outside in. A lot of people. For example, do not use the library but comment that they like it.

Smithsonian exhibits would bring in the locals and tourists, who would go anyways because it is a destination. Local people will be proud to see their next door neighbor in the museum and to show their kids. But once they've seen it they might not go through again.

**Name:** Johnson, Chuck

**Institution:** Perham Economic Development Agency

**Role:** Director

**Contact information:** 218 346 9798

**Interview date:** November 14, 2005

EDA Director, involved with business expansion. Johnson was involved on a committee at the outset of the museum development. There are high expectations. Lina is the guiding force, she has a proven background. She asked the community to take risks and because of her background they complied. The museum features a unique format. It appeals to people because of the personality that comes out of the recordings.

To the person who is a vet, it is a place to store memories, to people who know that vet, all vets, they have something in common. It may stop people driving by, or those looking for something to do. Students will take part if the museum reaches out to schools and plugs into social studies curriculum. "We've got this unique way to look at this issue,"

The challenge is to hit all of them. The museum must keep refreshing itself. The tourist will not come back unless it provides something new each time he comes. These are the types of resources they will have to tap into, huge resources. It requires permanent refreshing.

Big challenges include continuous financial demands, to keep the cash flow in line with the expenses. Lina is the master at grant writing, volunteering and coordinating this challenge.

Tourists come for the summer cycle. Starting on Memorial Day, the population rises 50%. Plummet then on Labor Day weekend. Some of these are traveling to a further destination. Others have a second home in the area. Many are retired folks with homes in Tulsa and Minneapolis, who visit the area on the weekend. To the person who has a second home the museum is an attraction. Shrinking population in the winter. There is almost inconsequential winter tourism, but a fair amount in the winter among local residents.

A new resort facility, a multi-million dollar complex, Thumper Pond, has a large water park, a hotel, amenities, banquet and meeting room, should attract year round people for conferences. It will have a positive, noticeable impact on tourism, if Thumper can succeed.

Johnson recommends Explore MN tourism. Talk to Pat Simmons, a research assistant.

**Name:** Kinder, John

**Institution:** University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

**Role:** PhD Candidate, Department of American Studies

**Contact information:**

kinder23@aol.com

(651) 646-3546.

Specializes in World War I & II. Research focuses on the treatment of wounded and disabled veterans as they are imagined in popular culture. The long-term political milieu in which they are embedded.

John has looked at cemeteries, paintings, films. He taught classes on WWII, American Memory, ways in which museums and pop culture remember.

Exhibitions on disabled veterans provided of land and ordered to live together and make their way. “Veteransville” Community of disabled veterans in rural Minnesota. Veterans and families lived on an island in a lake; there was a campground for veterans and their families.



**Name:** Kollath, Jeff

**Institution:** Wisconsin Veterans Museum

**Role:** Public Programs Curator

**Contact information:**

(608) 261-0541

Jeffrey.kollath@state.dva.wi.us

The Wisconsin museum started in 1901, former Grand Army of the Republic Hall. At that point it was mainly a couple rooms in the capitol, civil war interpretation. There was a lot of stuff posted, thrust of the collection; the museum left capitol in 1993. Presently they have 20000 sq ft. ability to host exhibitions and programs. Official mission is to affirm the veteran. Technically the place is a memorial. Permanent exhibit serves that. To honor the lives of Wisconsin soldiers, in all wars since Wisconsin became a state. Twelve full time staff appear to work at the museum, but we don't really have that. Rely a lot on volunteers. Work with archivists and interns. There is an intern and part-time staff to help me out with staff.

Community served depends on the project. For the most part, veterans and their families. The other important group is Wisconsin children who come to study history, they make a field trip to the capitol and the veterans museum. A lot of people visit from out of town. Most tend to be older. If we do something with culture, film, have a younger audience.

[Jeff has] been here since May of 2004. He develops a program series. Picks a theme, builds 4-5 programs in spring and fall. Hard to get an audience in the summer, recently we've built things chronologically. Korea, Holocaust, Vietnam last year. They are trying to be more open, not plan things out so far in advance. Keep track of what is going on in military scholarship and bring a person in with a new book to talk about it. We are doing a program series in February, it seems all over the place, but gets back to War in Iraq. A Gentleman who studied the Philippine War will talk, another who write a book on CIA torture methods. Opening up a new photo exhibit for the Iraq War, speakers to talk about how politicians use rhetoric. A huge effort to give secondary school speakers the tools to teach how the Iraqi War is handled. Contextualize it enough to give them confidence to answer questions; we provide background, explain how to set up a Veterans panel, so the kids learn from firsthand. How did we go back to the origins of the conflict? The program encourages discussion.

In terms of handling political points of view, it's all about balance. If you bring in someone to talk about one side, a few days later bring in someone to talk about the other. Try to

bring in political scientist, international affairs experts. Scholars are refined enough that they will talk about both sides of the stories. We know enough ahead of time to know what the speaker is going to talk about. Audience can talk about whatever they want. We are very careful. We think it is very important to teach. In the back of our minds, it always goes back to the veterans themselves. They are all very supportive of what they have done. Everyone comes in with their own set of beliefs. There has been two times when I've been uncomfortable because of a heated exchange, or because someone made a rude comment during a lecture. There is enough time to talk about the issues afterwards.

Take the Vietnam War as a topic. Pick the Vietnam War then aspects within the Vietnam War. Cannot separate the programs and exhibits. Exhibits should reflect programs and programs reflect exhibits. Did two art shows, both were Vietnam related. You have to cover culture, politics. Not only the music, but what songs gave the Veteran's meaning. Veterans panels, guys who served in the fields come in: a variety who served on the ground, in the kitchens. Then pull in the diplomatic history, contextualizing. A particular war is the jumping off point, then you pick concepts within it. Opens up interests within it. People know songs by Creedence and can relate.

Something they've done for a long time here is educate teachers on the different aspects of war. We had an educational professor here, talks about how he presents the war in the classroom. We spent time on the refugee experience and massive amounts of people who left Indo china and how their lives were impacted. Lao, Thai, Cambodian since some teachers expressed interest in hearing about the kids who are sitting in the classroom. The teachers did not know the story of people from SE Asia, it is different from the majority of white kids sitting in the classroom, we know those stories.

Also did music, we agreed that every teacher we ever had played music from Vietnam. Had a musician in, contextualized everything. Gave them a timeline, could see and hear how the songs changed over time. Gave them lesson plans. I transcribed song lyrics, gave them a CD of the music. We provided an annotated bibliography of references, movies, books. A lot of lesson plans use primary sources. The National Archives has a great collection of photographs online. Use photos online and recordings used in the White House to take home, it opens up in the classroom. Develop a lesson plan comparing Kennedy's election speech with Nixon's. Most SS teachers are not historians. They have a basic knowledge of that stuff. It is harder with the Iraq War. The big thing is bias and politics

The guy who did the knife drawings of the Jewish experience is in town. Did some drawings in 2003 interpreting poetry of WW1 and WWII. He called and said he did the

drawings and he'd like to bring it in. The themes he is depicting are in one tight packet. Had a couple of months in the exhibition hall to put it in.

Evaluation is ongoing. Put out comment cards and evaluation sheets for every program. Half to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the audience fill them out every time. They want to get out instead of hanging around. If there are too many people they complain it is too warm. If they disagree, they might make note. As far as internal evaluation, the staff attends and talks about it afterwards.

The Memorials Catalog is part of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Assist in the creation of the memorials catalog. A memorial is anything from a simple plaque, or something at a cemetery or school. Find a way to increase the memorial stuff we get in. Pretty good reference so far, wish we had more photographs.

For another perspective, try the First Division Museum at Cantigny. Oral histories are a large part of our collection. Designated interviewers for Vietnam, World War II. Researchers are here a lot, trying to use them as much as possible.

**Name:** Krueger, Kitty

**Institution:** Prairie Wind Middle School

**Role:** Principal

**Contact information:**

218 346 4892

480 students, 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Middle school students are primarily rural, come from varied support systems. School population in decline over four years, it is now holding at just under 500. Most students come from blue collar families, also workers at the facilities offered by the 1,000 lakes. There is some light industrial, also some very upscale families, 40-60 year old. Significant population of gray hairs, the housing market expresses the diversity. Programming for schools might occur at the museum space

The idea was present at a presentation by the Lions. It will be a resource to see and go. At this age, kids do not know what a veteran is. Develop an awareness of who the veterans are and basic information about their experiences. They brought veterans into the classroom and some years did a program in the Social Studies classes.

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students might know about the soldiering experience, only if their brother or relative is in Iraq. In one recent case, a child came to school so distraught because his brother did not call home for three weeks.

There is limited connection to community resources. Gifted and talented students might have more access to such ideas.

Krueger will work with teachers to say this is a resource, make sure the teachers are aware of the curriculum possibilities in the museum. Narratives and storytelling, 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades would benefit from that experience. Elders Wisdom is a program with children's songs. They identify people in the community, a gentleman helped kids create songs. The museum represents a similar concept.

In today's society, kids are a little more hardened, the realities are pretty grim. Krueger is not sure ITOW needs to filter any content for the youth. At the museum, the task is to tell the story like it is, the responsibility to process information comes from the educators. She advises staying true to what the realities are.

**Name:** Lehman, Mark

**Institution:** Perham VFW

**Role:** Former gambling manager

**Contact information:**

**Interview date:** October 20, 2005

Two years ago, Mark was the gambling manager for the VFW, he ran the bar. When they saw it was not making much money, they asked themselves what could be done with the building? The idea of having a Veteran's Museum had been circulating for several years, several of the veteran's wanted to donate their oral histories to the local museum. Of the 300 members at that time, 24 showed up to vote on the donation. General membership is not involved with developing the museum. A couple of men are very involved. If they get called for an oral history, they participate.

Membership declines quickly due to death. From 300 two years ago they are down to 274 now. New veterans do not join as frequently. Mark is 58, a Vietnam vet. World War II vets are declining at 1,500 per day nationally. Not so many from Iraq are joining.

Members support the floorplan. It will be a real asset for the veterans and the community. Not so much now as in the future. The approach is to try to get a Cadillac; after hearing what is going on, more people will want to help out. Mark served on the city council. In Perham, public work is fun since people know each other and are supportive. Outsiders are taken into the community. The city is very progressive; as a community, the place is not dying, it pushes forward. If an entity is going to help the community, people will back it.

Mark participates in the community through the schools. He assists with flag training and etiquette for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. For him, the value of interaction is to talk to young people about what he went through in Vietnam.

The primary audience for the museum is school age children, relatives of those who served, then the general public, especially baby boomers. The museum will be based on audio and video. Obtaining interviews is no problem. The main challenge is financing. Bids for the building came in too high. They started out high, then scaled it down to where it looks reasonable

**Name:** Leon, Gloria

**Institution:** University of Minnesota- Twin Cities

**Role:** Professor, Psychology

**Contact information:**

[Gloria R. Leon](#)

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**Interview date:** October 25, 2005

Research focuses on personality survival and change, stress and coping in extreme environments and situations, disaster management, thermal control of astronaut status. Holocaust survivors and children in terms of their current psychological condition. Now is on NASA committees to develop guidelines for catastrophic disaster psych treatment. Studied Vietnam vets and nurses, specific issues and factors, being a female, slightly older. Control group of nurses, slightly older. PhD student working on exposure to Agent Orange.

Dr. Leon cautions against graphic images, tapes and loud noises. Veterans can become extremely upset by stimuli, though it varies by individual. The greatest predictor to their reaction and recovery time is the amount of trauma they have been exposed to, how extreme is their suffering of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Focus on the positive experiences to avoid survivor guilt. Validate the difficulty of the experience and the search for meaning; why they did that changed their life circumstances. Vietnam stigmatized people. They were not welcome in hospitals; they were the first American soldiers that lost a war. There were no programs for re-entry, they were literally lifted from Saigon by helicopter. Only the peer groups provided support. Later the Wrap clinics offered the first psychological clinics. "It was a disgrace...horrible, just horrible..." Nationally a lot changed when the Vietnam Veterans Wall was built. There was tangible recognition for the terrible experiences they lived, it legitimized their experiences. There has to be recognition of the despicable way these people were treated. Provide acknowledgement and recognition.

**Name:** MacGuire, Charlie

**Institution:**

**Role:** Musician

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**Interview date:** December 13, 2005

Charlie is a musician. Through the Golden Valley historical society he became involved with WWII vets. In Minnesota there not many folk songs about recent things that happened, it was all old or old world folk songs. Believes you do not have to receive the medal of honor to deserve a certain amount of respect. Every war since the revolution is part of the story of this country. The women his mother knew when he was growing up were involved with the war. She knew one who was killed by shellfire in Belgium.

Charlie worked with the historical society through the “We the People,” grants, people get a chance to tell their stories. They conducted an interview, thanked the veteran, set dates to do programs in the future and go back to the veteran. Write something, flesh out the story you heard and tell the story in front of an audience. Preparation for war is an example, how people prepared for service during war, the steps they took. He tackles the homefront component. The last component is victory, or homecoming. He has enough background to be able to ask really good questions. For example recruiting was happening not at churches, but in theaters! These old vaudeville theaters with a stage would host female soldiers and nurses. Interesting facts make the music.

Charlie composes original music as well as period music. It is good for the veteran as well as the public audience, it allows a different, open engagement. Taking the story from a violent part of society and turning it into a song, a thing of reflection and peace. Using an artist as a medium relaxes people. It’s sometimes easier to hear a song then to begin to talk. Every person you meet has a kernel of a story, though it might not be the most unique, it is part of the collective experience.

He will sing an original song or a period song. Also showed slides from veterans telling the stories, before and after. A nurse, for example, would show photos of her patients.

People and museums need to realize that we have to work fast to get WWII stories.

**Name:** May, Elaine

**Institution:** University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

**Role:** Professor, American Studies

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**Interview date:** September 29, 2005

Research focuses on the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of the United States, especially on intersections of gender, sexuality, domestic culture and politics. She studies the way private life, such as family and leisure, reflect American values.

Recent work focused on the family and roles of women during the Cold War era culminating in a book “Legacy of the Cold War at Home,” that discusses the security issues implicit in the homefront during times of conflict.

May works with artifacts and media such as photographs, newspapers and objects and has worked with groups to present her research.



**Name:** May, Lary

**Institution:** University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

**Role:** Professor, American Studies

**Contact information:**

612 378 0666

**Interview date:** October 24, 2005

Research focuses on film. Intersection of politics and the rise of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, how the film industry portrays the Korean War and Vietnam War through films and debate.

Difference is that WWI and II were popular wars. Korean War films on the other hand were unpopular. The 10 year post war period before there was ambivalence about supporting a new war. Internal discussions shaped the homefront. Wars were not at home and gender roles became more defined. There was the domestic baby boom after coming home. Men and women experienced wars in other ways here, the same ways in other countries because they witnessed them together. There was the shock of the veterans coming home that was profitable to the homefront. Film was used to mobilize the homefront. Two problems: bring the war home and it distorts history.

The Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences maintains archive of war films, including scripts and special collections, someone can go to use their facilities and interpret the films.

There is a relationship between WWII and Disney. Cartoons changed during this era. Story lines included waiting at home for the soldier. Dougherty produced a WWII film. Musicals, in 1946, “The Best Years of Our Lives” covers a little more than 12 years of how people were changed on the homefront during the war.

Some films have shown the negative aspects of war, “Platoon”, and the Mei Lie massacre. “Rambo,” an Oliver Stone movie, comes later. Filmmakers were in conversation with each other about how to portray those events. Sargeant York poses the question: “Should we enter into the war?”

Documentaries have been extremely influential as well, Frank Cappa, “Why We Fight,” Vietnam Vets have controversial stories, if the Museum hosts an exhibit there will be a controversial point of view. “Victory Culture” by Tom Inglehart and “War without Mercy” by John Dower, portrays the brutality of the Pacific War.

**Name:** MacLain, Syd  
**Institution:** Perham VFW  
**Role:** Commander  
**Contact information:**

VFW Commander and Vietnam vet

They were aiming for a museum for 3-4 years; they'd been donating money to the local history museum so that they could do the oral history project. The building donation was a business decision, the club was no longer viable. They talked to membership and made the donation. A lot of people think the VFW shut down, but it is not true. It is still a very viable organization, they still do member funerals.

It will be a very beautiful thing, a very positive thing for the community. When people go on vacation they can make a stop at the museum. It will be hands on, they'll have volunteers help with the museum. The really big thing is audio-visual histories. In 10-20 years, someone can come and look up their grandfather. The museum will be self-explanatory, it will also be a meeting space for veteran organizations in perpetuity. The Legions, and Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart will use it as a home post. They are all still very much involved with the community, in parades, for example. Now, when people get out of the service they know about the Legions or the VFW. Before there was not a lot of support. This war is not like previous wars. Activating the guard or reserve instead of having a draft. The VFW offers the first year membership free to new returns.

There is still a lot of enthusiasm for the project. They've gone around to other posts in the region to talk about the museum, there is knowledge in greater MN. They went as far as Wadena-Ashby: the whole veteran and civilian community is aware. All of them are struggling; the VFW also went to churches, PTA meetings and passed out cards so that veterans can volunteer to be interviewed. Fundraising is forever an issue. They've been fundraising since last September.

Students and scholars will be more than welcome at the museum. There will be a lot of artifacts, you can see and hear the experience. Veterans feel more comfortable talking to each other; the museum mediates between groups. As kids grow up, this will be a valuable addition. When people come back from the armed services, they do not talk about the experience, even to their families, particularly if they were on the ground, or in harms way. People who never told their families can tell here.

**Name:** Munholland, John Kim

**Institution:**

**Role:**

**Contact information:**

**Interview date:** December 12, 2005

Expert in Europe, WWII, Social History

The lives of Veterans is told through specific events of war. 1957-1959, the Air Force was engaged in the Cold War, this is an untold part of US history.

Contact Don Patton at the Fort Snelling WWII roundtable!

Munholland interpreted letters from families of those who served in New Caladonia. He did not look for extensive memories, or photographs from New Caledonia. Elmer Williams from Pennsylvania. A recent event, the Greatest Generation at the Historical Society, does a good job of portraying this time.

The French in Indochina occupies the story. In his historical analysis, he uses photographs to complement a historical narrative. Why were certain photos preserved and not others? There are none of the Black Americans, though they were a rarity, and none of the French.

There is a concern that veterans are dying. This makes a big impact on rural communities, a change in the structure. The task for the museum is a combination of narrative and relating problems to more general problems, like the war going on all over the country. For college age people, this is an interest. Second, to provide a context, what Veterans wrote home about. We know they were at Pearl Harbor but the Veteran does not have the context: the how and why he is at Pearl Harbor.

**Name:** Murdock, Gordon

**Institution:** University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

**Role:** Director, Museum Studies Minor. Curator of Education, Bell Museum of Natural History

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**Interview date:** October 19, 2005

Consider traveling Shows, and hiring a curator of exhibits.

Form community planning committee

Anticipate a year out, traveling exhibitions can be ongoing

Design an “idea”, asking “how do we approach?”, do we have access to any collections? Is it an anniversary of an event? Is there a MN unit of this group?

Audience is critical: Where are the sources of expertise in the community? How will you produce graphics? Posters, banners and food to generate support?

Anticipate the audience! At the Bell, they work from prior experience and a dead guess. Talk to those who tell stories, what would you say /ask if you were in the elevator with a politician? The one thing that people want to know about a story, a snapshot.

1) Tell stories. Clearly, the narratives they have are stories but they may not be focused around a theme or have structure, particularly when taken together. The audience, whoever they may be, will respond far better if there is a clear story line rather than an accumulation of interesting but unstructured facts.

2) They need to know what the intended outcome is but coupled with that is to think about who the audience is or who the audiences are (there may be several, but think about them and their characteristics and needs). For example, are they adults, many with personal experience in the military or with friends and family members in the military? Or are they school kids with little real understanding of the military or of the world beyond Minnesota (depending on age)? How about HS students considering enlisting while we are engaged in the Middle East?

3) A corollary to deciding on the audience is thinking about what is a useful entry point into the story or stories for the audience? It's good to start with something familiar and easy to relate to and then lead the audience beyond that. Otherwise it's easy for them to say "Oh, this isn't anything I have to do with." and walk away. A thought that comes to mind (may very well not be a good idea, but maybe a useful example) would be a map of the county (some aerial photos might be even better) with the location of the homes of the featured people indicated. People enjoy locating known landmarks on such things and then you proceed to tell them something about those places. "This is where David and Ellen Olsen and their 2 children lived in 1943..."

That approach starts with something very familiar. The streets are still there. The houses will often still be there. So even if people don't know the Olsens and their family, there are things they do know. And this also makes the point that these are knowable people. People who, if you don't know them, you know people like them.

They will, as they should, do what they think best. But my first thought would be that they might really focus on what is very specific to E. Ottertail County rather than the national involvement. The E. Ottertail County experience may be much like that of many similar counties nationwide, but the story should not just be the usual national story rehashed. Some questions I'd ask would be how did the war news reach the county--doubtless by radio for Pearl Harbor. Does someone remember getting a phone call with the news? Where was he or she standing when they heard? Who else was there? Was there a rush to sign up or was there discussion in the area about what to do? What were the factors that influenced individual decisions? Did ministers (e.g., or others) exhort young men to volunteer? Did they talk with their wives/mothers/girlfriends first? Later? What were those conversations like? And so forth. Personal stories tied to the community. What about men who were too old to enlist but had to shoulder more load with the young men gone? You'll see that some of these questions might involve narratives from people other than vets and the wives of vets.

I don't think we got to saying, it's good to form a planning committee early on with a variety of expertise. Some representative folks if they're available, a history expert or two, someone good at planning associated programs and events, someone in charge of PR and promotion, etc. Often the museum staff tries to do all this, but this is an opportunity to draw in the community and make them their friends if they haven't already done so (again, they may have done this long since). The core team might be 5-8 folks. Then find ways to engage more in various aspects--reviewing text, planning the opening, etc. Knowing that greater involvement means less control at the center. Perhaps not on the team, but they might ask a couple of folks from other similar places to review their plans from time to time. Not because they especially need help, but because it's often a good idea to have your work reviewed by someone who's not too close to it but understands what you're about.

**Name:** Nelson-Mason, Lin  
**Institution:** Goldstein Museum of Design  
**Role:** Director  
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612 624 3292  
**Interview date:** October 6, 2005

The Goldstein charge is to provide interpretive programs of design. Interpretation of exhibitions is another component, and programs that expand the research center and library.

There are changing exhibits, called programs on an annual basis. Collection is now a permanent display guided by the needs of scholars, classes, and providing access to collections.

The critical audiences are users of the research and library, annual members group, Twin Cities residents, and friends. Three concentric circles of interest:

Primary: Students  
Secondary: Departments  
Third: Wider Twin Cities, professional organizations

How to evaluate depends on the program itself. Typical methods include: How many people attend, feedback from instructors. The Goldstein practices no formal methods.

Other resources include the Library Memorial in Kansas City, WWI exhibition expansion, They have many material culture resources that relate to our time period.

Eli Paul is the Director

Presidential Libraries: Truman Library developed an exhibition on Poster Design and Production.

Museum of National Jewish Culture also developed a an exhibit about the material military experience of WWI

**Name:** Nothnagle, Alan

**Institution:** University of Iowa

**Role:** Professor, History. Site director/Programming for Traces Museum, St. Paul (volunteer co-ordination)

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**Interview date:** October 13, 2005

Traces developed from Michael's research on Scattergood hospital in Iowa. Discovered Midwest connections with Nazi regime. Encounters between 1933-1948. Started in 2004: the Buszeum. 37,500 visitors to the bus to date.

Alan will assist volunteerism. TRACES will rely heavily on volunteers and tourism through St. Paul.

Traces will feature:

Memorial day conference series

Film series

Impact of the war on human beings

Midwest POW's in Germany (Michael traveled around and interviewed all of these)

WWII study series

The Great Escape

\*Slaughterhouse 5, Kurt Vonnegut – Dresden

Some of TRACES more relevant exhibitions include: Tuskegee Airmen

Meskwaki Code Talkers – Native American military – decoding – nature orientation

History Theater performance- Raw Stages, Bird Island camp

Midwest POW's at Donhough concentration camp

Degenerate music

\*Allied Museum in Berlin

Exhibit: It Started with a Kiss

War brides, fraternization

Roma: Nuremberg laws, racial laws, Nuremberg parties

Celebration of parties

- 1) Citizenship (only Germans could be citizens)
- 2) Defined who was more evolved

Scattergood Czech's: Midwest reporters were stationed in Carlsbad!

**Name:** Nowakowski, Jacek

**Institution:** US Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Role:** Curator, Public Relations, Exhibitions

**Contact information:**

**Interview date:** October 31, 2005

The Holocaust Museum is for the American public, large groups wanted to tell the story of the Holocaust. In Europe, places are for the survivors. Auschwitz became the universal symbol of everything, everyone can identify with and use the symbol. Away from the “site” you have total freedom, you can do whatever you want. At the site, your activities are limited by the way people perceive memory itself.

Especially in those places that still have those touched by these witnesses, survivors, etc. Stories are carried by the region. The entire life was destroyed by WWII, not the same when a different system came back. There was no break from 1938 to 1990, no continuity in that region.

Museum is a tool for education. Preservation is for survivors, educational programs are for others. A photographic archive online in the 5<sup>th</sup> floor reading room and library attracts scholars and enables scholarship from around the world. Commercial side was never intended, the Museum wants to survive, that is the reason for all of the gift shop items. They need a budget for the programs; this is the sad truth of any project.

A large group came to the Holocaust museum from Auschwitz; pilgrimage is important. Everyone comes with their own trauma. Perceives the differences within themselves.

Ed Linenthal “America’s Battleground” writes about these emotions. Gives background, then elaborates when the commemoration begins, how and why. “For the Living” Author teaches in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He is a Sociologist who works on the meaning of memorial space.

Measure the impact. Some museums open, then you never hear about them again. People need to be constantly reminded. In Washington DC, people are constantly reminded of Vietnam. In contrast, people might not notice walking through the WWII memorial, there was never a climate for a memorial, it was forced upon the mall by a small group. Success of Maya Lin is that it gives people a lot of opportunities to remember in their own way.



**Name:** Otwell, Maureen

**Institution:** Invioni and Otwell Consulting. Formerly with the MN Historical Society

**Role:** Cultural Director

**Contact information:**

Maureen Otwell

Now works for a web design firm, housed in same building as the Mill City Museum. Invioni  
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2-7 years as MNHS Site guide and researcher. Education specialist, worked directly with teachers. Eventually became the head of Education.

First textbook publication was classroom evaluation strategies. When the time came to move MNHS into the new building, Maureen had the chance to develop the idea: What is our ideal museum? And the types of programming that would include. Education included the programs in the history center. Shares buildings and archives with rest of the organization. She was appointed head of the museums division developing all exhibits with assistance. Included PR and Marketing, the 3D object collection, and trails and sites (with the assistance of construction manager and interpretive staff). Published the new “Northern Lights” magazine, inventoried and collected historic sites, took the initiative on marketing, developed brand identity. Mill City Museum opening happened while she was running the department, at the time it was one of the most innovative in the industry.

Advises there is no substitute for creativity, for the spark that lights the idea and must carry you through to the end. The concept works in the mill ruin because of the historic landscape, markets to the street. The place was the spark.

For ITOW, look at the audiences, at the overlapping circles of interest, including veterans and others in a 50 mile radius. This is your primary audience, residential communities. Relationships with tourists in the summer and over the weekend are critical. Think about specialized audiences in the winter. Continually ask yourself: ‘Who do we think we are serving?’ People start historical societies because they are interested in a particular aspect of history. A veterans network, might for example, be helpful.

Everyone wants to emphasize school kids. But there is a drift away from the humanities in education. Go to the educators and say, “Can we do this together? We have these resources.”

Never develop a program without teachers. It is arrogant to deliver something to teachers assuming you know what they need to teach or something they cannot deliver.

Evaluation: Everyone looks at attendance. Application of materials counts. Is the teacher using the materials? Are children asking questions? Are the shift in academic goals being addressed? Did the teacher schedule a return visit?

There is no predicting when learning occurs in people. You can “dip them in” information, and it might be retrieved 20 years later.

Show up at community meetings, community ed., Tim O’Brien’s book, “The things they carried.” Provide equivalents of a gun. How heavy was the gun? What was it like to live in a foxhole? The experience was about fear plus camaraderie. Read letters home.

Informal interactions versus lectures. Give training to tell stories that last just five minutes. It is the details, the ordinariness, the intimate details of what it was like in Paris vs. Normandy that reveal the story.

Maureen is totally against guided tours. Totally boring! Provide something for children to find, a “History Mystery” and volunteers to engage youth. To the people who created a museum, it was play, continue on in the spirit of play.

Any veteran, if they are honest, would tell you war was the worst solution to foreign policy. Need a culture of support for veterans.. As much as popular culture leads us to believe that killing another is easy, it is not. All history should connect to the present.

Decisions are not made in a vacuum. We are likely never to be without war. Transformation of a soldier into a veteran and back to a civilian is a very important thing for us to come to grips with.

The length and commitment of WWII was different impact than the duration of other wars. It is not helpful to hear that all wars are the same.

Regarding small museums and their survival.

Continue to serve the core. Do not stop reaching others, but stay relevant to the core. Do not see yourselves as isolated. Network with other professionals in the huge resurgence of military museums. They will feed new ways to innovate into the

programming.

Easier now through the internet.

Link the website to other military museums. Converge into a central, national site.

For example, at Great River Road Learning Center in Prescott, Wisconsin, private and public funding contributed. Everyone thinks it is okay to rely on volunteers to run a museum. It is not.

Nurture a realistic view. The city should pay for something. Government funding helps you stay viable. Continuous fundraising. What do we have to offer our core group so they'll give us \$100 per year?

Operating budget models? American Association for State and Local History. [Aaslh.org](http://Aaslh.org)  
Sponsor debates. Pose difficult questions: "Why do people go to war?" "Are there alternatives?" Look to examples of peace, like Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr.

Violence begets violence. The only way to stop it is to diverge it into non-violent action. Bring in a panel of religious leaders and ask about the moral and ethical implications of war.

**Name:** Patton, Don

**Institution:** The Dr. Harold Deutsch World War II History Roundtable Program

**Role:** Director

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**Interview date:** January 5, 2005

The Roundtable started with strong interest in the military history of World War II, especially among retirees. Started in 1987, in 19<sup>th</sup> year. Started the roundtable, finding a pool of Veterans, can always find veterans. Can always find historians writing on war. Civil War has more books. Lots of Veterans and their families still around. Option of doing the roundtable, finalized the idea of WWII history roundtable. Four Civil War roundtables. Dr. Harold Deutsch and he got together and said they were going to do this, he and I made a bargain that I would do the organization, setting up. If he could not find lecturers, Deutsch would do the speaking. Finally settled on a format. Have a historian speak on a topic, speak on a history lesson. Academic lecture is part one, panel of veterans is part two. Phase three is a question.

The Roundtable has been successful because of the quality of speakers. We don't want them to be rehearsed. Having prominent historians come in, having the veterans speak; they do not teach history, just share personal experiences and open up discussion.

No formula to finding speakers. For the first ten years of development, went around to Lions, Rotary, lots of Veterans organizations that are out there. Try to make my face show up at those meetings on a regular basis, having breakfast with groups. It is a commitment to the idea. All of the people on the board share a strong interest.

Try to make analogies to learn history so you don't repeat it, probably not as much as it should be. Never have enough time to cover all contemporary events.

Audience averages well over 400-500. Don't try to keep track of those who come, try to develop a good product, taken the same approach with this. Have a board of advisors, an executive board that supports him and second guesses what he proposes doing. Not just Don Patton, wonderful board that he works with. Have them do the project management.

We have no evaluation process. We're all just volunteers, we do not just sit around.

Definitely talk about it, “someone we’ll never invite back,” work with the U of MN history department. Tied up in too much in the bureaucracy.

Ken Hechler, gentleman who was on Truman’s staff during the war. Wonderful person, great mind, great experiences. Talk to Steve Sandell; Ken was recently at the Humphrey.

There are some wonderful people in Alexandria. Pool of veterans that live there. One of the fellows working on the Greatest Generation project. Developed Cancer and could not come to the program, worked on a book.

**Name:** Roberts, Nancy

**Institution:** Albany State University (Formerly at the University of MN – Journalism)

**Role:** Professor, Journalism history

**Contact information:** [nroberts@albany.edu](mailto:nroberts@albany.edu)

Nancy is a historian studying the patterns and media coverage of war. Teaches a Distance Education at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities covering legal and military history. Studies the impact of the media in wartime.

Notably in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, you find even Vietnam War broadcasts, blogs and internet information.

Much coverage of wars reinforced the status quo and was not critical of the events. There was a lack of access to the front.

Vietnam was able to go through government force. A tension exists between the media and the military leading to problems reporting war accurately.

The underground press was very much opposed and anti-war. In contrast, CBS goes along with the government story. Scholars say the body count was too high. Look at samples of media content to determine.

Now? We look at peace advocacy writers, the colonial period, and journalism as activism.

At the Newseum, Nancy provided basic advice and conceptualization of media history. There is a Pulitzer typewriter and war posters for interpretation. Objects incorporated into media production. The military tried to keep in touch. It is interesting to see the weekly press releases as the war progressed.

Nancy would be happy to visit ITOW for her specialty on the Vietnam War and media.

**Name:** Sandell, Steve

**Institution:** Humphrey Forum, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

**Role:** Director

**Contact information:**

Developing a program is about storylines: Politics, Personalities, Policies.

The Forum is a collection of personalities. There are a couple of parts to any story. Politics (how) + Policy (What)

Wilderness Act Exhibit, for example. The Story reaches back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century about how people accomplished passage of that Act. One part tells the story, the other part lights the fire.

Veterans WWII, collection of people, does not light the spark. Vietnam, it seems is a resource, there are a variety of stories as a resource. Men and women. When the US was bubbling with protest. Do not be so narrow that other information is excluded.

Exhibits are stories of biographies and something that connects elements and people, such as Patriotism or Youth. Reach back into history. Defend a story. Defend a set of ideals. Stories of individuals tells a narrative, Tom Brokaw's book "The Greatest Generation." Tell stories and cite secondary sources. Footnotes refer to archives so that the story is accurate. Newspapers are not as helpful.

Programming for schools maintains a broad scope and maintains sensitivity. Bring the material culture to the school. Use and study the objects veterans used. Schools came into the Forum. Originally they had 16,000 kids coming through. But field trips are expensive and the interest waned. Kids, answer questions, "Why do countries fight wars?" Relates to a failure to negotiate. For older kids, the answer might be more elaborate, Failure of a distribution of resources, differences in ideologies. Literature, history, culture are resources to tap. Tap issues such as foreign affairs that have contemporary relevance, changing the reach of the military into people's lives through poetry, song, short stories. "Coming Home" film featuring John Voight and Jane Fonda.

The Forum changes an exhibit every 2-6 months. Recently they've had exhibits on Women in the Senate, Voting Rights. Develop partnerships with schools, churches, VFW's. But be careful not to overload with programming. The Forum did newspaper ads, radio spots, but they lost money to the programs. Sherburne Museum hosts a research library, puts a lot of money and time into the permanent collection.

**Name:** Schulte, Marcy

**Institution:** Conway- Schulte Architects, Adjunct faculty, University of Minnesota - TC

**Role:** Architect

**Contact information:**

**Interview date:** 10/5/05

Curation relates to place. Models for particular events, the Holocaust Museum is an example.

Spatialize information: Tell story of place and the scale of the transformative event  
Could include the story of individual experiencing the change. There is a difference between Memorial/Museum.

What does a VA do/not do? As a support system? Community, national museum that has connection to groups.

Site of Memorial Day tributes? Remember a calendar of events

VFW is a catalyst for remembering.

A memorial looks back. Current stories look to the future.

Once people come home they record stories; this lends itself to a digital, online component.

Focus groups with veteran's input.

- The way stories are told are authentic

- Contrast between War and the Retelling of War

- Make a position for the stories the museum will tell

- Document quantitative difference between rural and urban numbers, impact

- Quantify assumptions

Schulte knows about the Peterson family from Iowa who lost 5 sons to a single war.

Patriotism. Liberal/Conservatism= who is more likely to enlist? Veteran v. Soldier (perceptions)

Make the findings and discussions legible in the work. Map + Art + Research.

Humanities interprets Literature/Cinema/Painting.

Film Festival/Discussion are means to this.

Map statewide memorials, outreach, small towns link to other small towns, significant sites in the state



**Name:** Shoptaugh, Terry  
**Institution:** Moorhead State University  
**Role:** Archivist, History professor.  
**Contact information:**  
Work: 218 477-2343  
Home: 218 236-6068  
**Interview date:** September 29, 2005

Shoptaugh will develop exhibit texts based on programming. Terry is concerned to gather artifacts with an explanatory text. Will gather veteran's material if it has a military correlation.

Ellis, John "UIE:Life in Hell"  
Kenney, David "MN Goes to War" about the homefront during the war  
Kennet, Lee "G.I."

Pair veterans with those who did not go. Develop booklet telling the stories of the region. Local knowledge is available, for example, an airplane repairman lives in Hubbard County, gathered classified documents regarding the grounded planes. He was unable to fix them. Why?  
Members of the Military Police on Vietnam.

**Name:** Shragge, Abe

**Institution:** Veterans Museum of San Diego

**Role:** Director. History Professor, University of California- San Diego

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888-534-0637

The Veterans Museum of San Diego works through the United Veterans Council, meets in their building. They decided if they banded together, we would all benefit. Not much in the way of a foundation, they fund projects on an individual basis. The thrust of the exhibits relates to local culture, history: Who the veterans were before the wars, their daily struggle. Why is San Diego so full of veterans? 300,000 in the city.

Potential to be connected with general institutions. Chief mission is the city story, as a city, there is a particular military history. Use the museum to tell the story of the individual, weave into the fabric of the city. Theater groups produced a play, "Piece of my heart," performance is women's oral histories who served in the war. Local group is collaborating with the museum

Mr. Shragge runs a program at UCSD. Stages events- students interview, write papers or experience.

The museum has a Yearly Plan, then operates on an ad hoc basis to fill in the gaps. State of California partially funds, City of San Diego partially funded building development and the new Veterans Memorial Garden. Mr. Shragge developed a presentation on the use of the B-24 in the wars, developed into the garden. Research and knowledge led to dedication of the garden.

**Name:** Solie, Ruth

**Institution:** Northern Lights Library Network

**Role:** Director

**Contact information:**

218 847 2825

**Interview date:**

November 13, 2005

Maintains existing resources at the library. There is a casual relationship with the new museum, they hope to create an awareness of the local impact of veterans.

History museum is a member of the network, they represent a very large community, have done some publicity about the museum in Detroit Lakes.

Online resources exist, interlibrary loans could facilitate access to museum collections.

**Name:** Solon, Paul

**Institution:** Macalester College

**Role:** Professor

**Contact information:**

651 696 6595

Developed a new course entitled: "Hollywood and the American Way of War." Another taught course was called "The Experience of War,"

He is a military and legal historian focusing on the United States. He compares three eras of war, the 100 years war, the Peloponnesian War, and the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He studies the legacy of the wars, how they end, how the experience is integrated into the culture.

There is a film series dealing with war, linked to other types of films. Westerns and Film Noir. Duck Soup was about isolation. Intervention, a Warner Bros. film of the late 1930's. How movies were constructed by the industry.

The theory is that there is a specific American style of warfare. The seminar then asks, How can we discern how popular media portrays the war?

He has spoken in local churches and is willing to visit ITOW.

Emily Rosenberg is a professor at Macalester. Wrote a book on how we remember Pearl Harbor. Might not have time/interest to speak to the museum.

**Name:** Spillman, Jefferson

**Institution:** National Museum of the Civil War Soldier at Pamplin Park

**Role:** Director, interpretation

**Contact information:**

jsleegrant@yahoo.com

1-804-861-2408 or 1-877-PAMPLIN

Jefferson oversees staff, living interpretations of written histories. History becomes oral stories. He started at Fort Snelling in the 90's, interpreting lives of Confederate soldiers. Presently, Spilman manages interpretation of soldier lives at Pamplin Park.

A new program at the National Museum is a Civil War experience Adventure Camp. They train people like soldiers.

The museum has some parallels with ITOW. There is a pre-arranged identity, they hear the soldier talk about the experience, and a macro-display area.

Humanities is used as a lens. Apply aspects of the social sciences to look at things. A Gustavus Adolphus symposium linked to a genre that told the stories.

It is possible to lose sight of real people at interpretive museums. Maybe it's not all objective. Incorporate contemporary relevancy.

Recommends a book by Freeman Tilden, "Interpreting our heritage," ISBN 08078 4016 5

If the story does not hit on what people can identify with, they are not going to hear the message. Present war in terms of previous experiences.

Consider the age ranges of people who are going to encounter the stories.

Each age group has a different need.

There are grants for education.

Merge the theoretical with the practical.

**Name:** Tassava, Christopher

**Institution:** Metropolitan State University

**Role:** Professor, History of business and Technology

**Contact information:**

507 646 5833

Professor at MetroState. American business history, and technology. In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century shipbuilding becomes an important economic driver. Business history is a public history.

Teaches a “Soldiers on the Homefront” course.

Asks, “How do communities remember?”

Public History Memorial Park in San Francisco Bay is set at the shipyards. Especially female workers have the chance to tell the story, and how we won the war, how the homefront “works” in this sense.

In doing the research he did not talk to people. Rather, it is how the workers imagined homefront business. American-social side, more than just the industrial activities. The dynamics of women in the workforce changes dramatically during these times as well.

The development of the atomic bomb was another economic story from the point of view of the homefront.

Christopher adapts to the audience depending on the timeframe.

**Name:** Thorup, John

**Institution:** Perham Chamber of Commerce

**Role:** Director

**Contact information:**

John attended the first two meetings of the museum development. He is somewhat skeptical about the endurance of the institution; there are a lot of questions. He believes a lot of museums are hurting. Parents do not take their children to museums. There might be other ways to pull people in to the community. It will not be an end destination in itself.

The need for interviews accelerates as the Veteran population ages. The concept is phenomenal, but where will the support come from? There are a lot of naysayers to the new museum: Is this a unique thing? Where are the marketing dollars going to come from? If the marketing is there, can you get people to come? The financial projection is 1.2-1.3 million.

Huge tourism during the summer due to the 1,200 lakes in Otter Tail County. A lot of visitors have been coming for 30-40 years regularly. 3-4 months the population doubles. Many tourism dollars support the area. The area is unique, though, in that it is not solely reliant on tourism. Where other towns shut down in the winter, Perham continues. Only 1-2 businesses shut down in the winter. There is a good degree of blue collar industries and workers who frequent businesses throughout the year.

John works to change the mindset of people, so that they spend their dollars locally. In four years he has targeted people to stay in town and gone out to pull people in. He's seen people coming from 700 miles to Perham: the pull is the lakes. They love the uniqueness of the community and will stay with the family for 1-2 days.

John believes Perham can become an end destination. He is developing a small book with highlights in the region; the museum will be featured. Hopes to make the county a city of sorts, with a network of organizations. He is trying to develop a regional partnership to turn the county into a city-towns being sectors of the city. It will be a joint marketing partnership and gives the area an inter-city interaction within the county.

The more arts the better! New York Mills gives something to the other parts of the community. The area is 3 hours from the Twin Cities. A lot of people who supply the tourism industry are retired and look to the arts. He does not have statistics on the tourist population. The museum will be promoted as part of the regional partnership plan.

**Name:** Uselman, Tamara

**Institution:** Perham Public schools

**Role:** Superintendant

**Contact information:**

<http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/academicoffice/instructionalsupport/citizenship/strandsk1.asp>

Very interested in youth involvement and engagement. The museum is a first person way of capturing and maintaining historical information. Becomes a primary source for history. Reliance on a single text does not give an accurate picture of history.

The schools hope to present the museum as a cool collection of stories. It will not waste teachers' time racing around looking for material.

Rudimentary work at the K-12 levels in humanities literature curriculum to teach best practices patterns. See Best Practices Network (BPN) at the state level. Charlie Skemp is the contact. Himmelman Best Practices book. "Fence-posting" is a way of delivering major focal points to students. For example, "conflict" is a fence post which cannot be taught chronologically, that is not how we learn concepts. Rather, fence posting uses anchor points in historical information and uses more than one source. The growing practice is to teach more than one truth and access primary sources.

When programming is live, we assume it is more than a recording, and gives students a chance to interact with the veteran. What we look at is the content, current state standards, beyond content, is the skill set and intellectual edge beyond the prescription.

Because so much of history relates to conflict, other questions to ask are critical: How did it impact women? Offer a broad presentation, more than just one point of view. Tamara's brother was in Iraq, what was it like for him? For the Iraqis?

Conflict is something to learn about, from kindergarten on up. Conflict can be taught as something that is present in the world. Someone in upper high school can handle a different point of view and has legitimate cause to learn about the effects of war, they are being actively recruited. Open up the stories, it is the responsibility of the schools to interpret. Social studies teachers already show films like Schindler's List, and conduct in depth meaningful discussion afterwards.

We owe it to the youth and the public to meet the expectations. If it is a true story, it can center on the diverse perspectives around one area. Programming that would be valuable would allow the audience to construct their own response and bring veterans to the same table as the public.

The community has a strong patriotism. A number of people have been called up to serve from the Perham area. There are pockets of old hippy liberals. Conservatives are here, too, in commerce. You find the radical left as well. If it is a broad cause, people will come together in discussion, thought and offer time. The museum idea is delicate, it is a bit like



holding a bomb. Lina has been respectful. Individual people participating in the project will determine the collective impact.

Tamara's father was in the service. People who served are able to talk to each other about the experience; through the museum they are defined to connect to a broad audience. She hopes that some of the same conversation that would occur from marine to marine would be available to the rest of us. We should stop glorifying war. She is sick of rural men and women objectifying the war. She hopes we will be privy to private conversations at the museum.

Parents do not have much connection to the school programming. Do not have a machinery set up for that. Community Education exists for adult education.

There is been overwhelming community support in Perham for a town this size. There is so much to do here, you could be busy every night. Perham is aggressive and progressive.

**Name:** Weitz, Eric

**Institution:** University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

**Role:** Professor, History. Director, Center for German and European Studies

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612-624-2800

**Interview date:** October 15, 2005

Research focuses on German and European modern history, Holocaust and genocide in the German context. History of perpetrators and how populations become complacent. Legacy of violence on society, not in the sense of how they adapted to a community, but in terms of family and sex relations (adapting to family life).

Crimes against humanity

Rituals of violence are a means of binding together male populations.

Not interested in justifying but understanding the other side.

“Wehrmacht” exhibit. German armed forces, hugely controversial, exposed German Army involved in the Nazi atrocities.

American G.I.s that were separated from the Jews, chemical plant south of Halle.

Allied Museum Berlin, “It Started with a Kiss”, love affairs between American G.I.’s and German women.

At the US National Archives Administration Military Research Center, the public can register as guest.

**Name:** Weiss, Florian

**Institution:** Allied Museum, Berlin

**Role:** Curator

**Contact Information:**

weiss@alliertenmuseum.de

**Date interviewed:**

Museum's objective is to record and illustrate the Western Allies' role in, and commitment, to Berlin and Germany as a whole from 1945-94. It documents, from both the Allied and German perspectives, the evolving character and purposes of this vital relationship in post-war European development. We try to put emphasize on an Allied viewpoint. But since the US dominance in the political constellation of Berlin, there is undoubtedly a special focus on US representation in our collections, exhibitions, and other museum's activities.

Idea for "It Started With a Kiss" began when the museum was approached by two freelance curators. Based on some monographs about German-American love stories and their implications they wrote a draft for an exhibition that we widened by German-British and German-French love affairs. We were a team of four curators doing a lot of international research and getting support from international scholars. The Allied Museum does loan out exhibits. Most prominently there are three pieces of the Berlin Wall from our collections on display at "The Price of Freedom: American at War" exhibition at the National Museum of American History.

German veterans - that's a history different from the dealings of US society with their veterans. This difference causes in the special role of German military in the two World Wars. If German veterans have a place for exhibitions, it is at museums or within historical programs of the German Army. There are, of course, exhibitions in non-military museums which present the role of the German Army in WWII and so on, but in an totally different approach than yours: it is about to distance ourselves from this history. It's part of coming to terms with German military aggression in 20th century.

In London the Imperial War Museum is undoubtedly the address most interesting for you. They keep a huge oral history collection. In Germany both from museum's and academic side every effort is made to collect and publish "Feldpostbriefe" (forces' letters) written by soldiers during WWI or WWII campaigns back home to their families.

**Name:** Wendel, Vicki

**Institution:** Anoka County Historical Society

**Role:** Director

**Contact information:**

763-421-0600

Vicki cannot think of another group as helpful and receptive as the veterans. It took a couple of years to develop the exhibit. From a pool of vets, others were brought in that they knew, cousins, neighbors of neighbors and so on. By obtaining the oral histories years in advance, the subsequent feeling of ownership is phenomenal. Their own words remove a sense of judgment, and honors their experience without alienating them. The veterans organization was a founder of the museum. The board decided on one gallery, 900 square feet would be dedicated to the military. Exhibits are on a 1.5-2 year rotation.

The first exhibit was dedicated to the end of the Korean War, oral histories. Featured among them was a cab driver, someone who knew how to build a bunker. He assisted in the construction of the indoor bunker, built to match the actual Korean War bunkers.

Collaboration works well. Involving the community leads to a need to share the product with friends and family, in-laws or others who come to town for a visit.

In the military gallery, school groups and scout groups learn about the experience of war. "Imagine you are sent to Vietnam," There are booby traps to touch or not touch, a flap jacket, and so on. There is story-telling with the veterans. County lines are pretty nebulous. They focus on Anoka County because that is the mission.

A Saturday event, "History and Hollywood" features popular films, Mel Gibson and the like, where a film is shown and a vet comes in to talk about what was real and what was not in the film. People are very well educated. A grief counselor attends and supports the attendees.

The museum works to enfranchise the local media. Vets take the media through the exhibit, they got a full front page article. No resources for scholars at Anoka County Historical Society. Evaluation takes a count of attendees, peoples stories added to the entrance book, the number of times in the newspaper, and people coming to see the exhibit.

**Name:** Yeh, Cedric

**Institution:** Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Military History  
Department

**Role:** Deputy Chair and Associate Curator

**Contact information:**

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**Interview date:** 10/31/05

Yeh's background was in Archaeology then became museum work. He heads the Asian-pacific American Initiative Community within the Smithsonian. Despite 150 years of collecting, that aspect of the collection had been ignored until 6 years ago.

"Price of Freedom" is contractually bound. They found a donor who was interested in military history exhibition. "Price of Freedom" on its own might not fly as a museum; it will be a challenge for ITOW to reach beyond the permanent exhibitions to keep the narratives alive. Therefore programming becomes more important.

Museum reports the history, tells the stories. Does not take sides, just tell the story. It is a matter of interpretation. Deliver facts and what people went through, then cater to the specific audience, the best story you can tell. Exhibits are 2D experiences.

Division does not do community outreach or training. Occasionally brings in outside exhibitions: Portrait of armed forces history.

Programming at the Smithsonian entails a diversity program. Selective for certain audiences. "A more perfect union" covers ill treatment of US Citizens over a 20 years time span. Enola Gay exhibit was hugely controversial. Air and Space Bomber plus new research plus lives saved from dropping the bomb, proved that it was not worth it, caused the Veterans to go ballistic. Entire exhibit had to change.

Identify scholars, films that deal with the subject matter you are interested in. Contact the people involved, sometimes the director comes. Locally based is good you do not need to stretch so far. Reach the community, find out more about who is doing what locally.

Strong community support = more participation, more donations.

At the Smithsonian they spend a lot of time doing web searches to find out who might be

coming into town. Being able to get the word out is essential. Don't stop for particular programs. If you have a lot of support go forward with new takes on the idea.

Smithsonian programming materials include: Archives, Files on ideas that are brought up , Documentary groups, Partners with museums across the nation, affiliations website.

Exhibitions are loaned. Archival materials tends towards community military related

Look at the National Archives, they do loan constantly

Active curation is important, when you hear something is going on, or of a new development.

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