

Interpretive Recommendations to Enhance The Constitutional Philadelphia's Free Self-Guiding Tour



William Birch print of the Pennsylvania State House circa 1800 shows strolling couples, children at play, and a visiting delegation of American Indians

**Prepared for:
The Constitutional Foundation**

**By:
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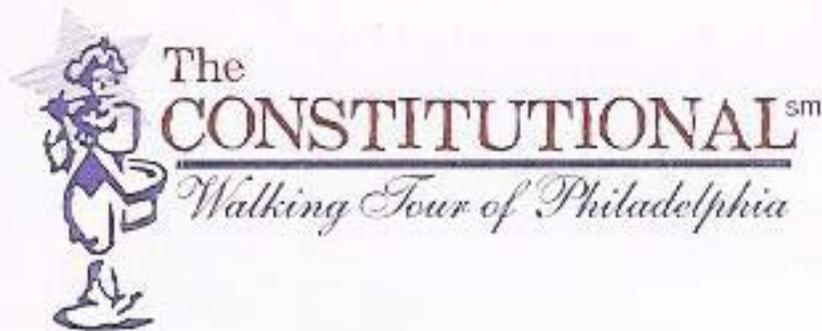
October 1, 2004

Background

In only two years, The Constitutional Walking Tour of Philadelphia has quickly found a niche in the region's tourism services. More than 30 historical sites line the three-mile walking route, and nearly two-dozen more are nearby, just "steps off the tour."

Tourism professionals have embraced The Constitutional's brochure, with its map, high quality photos, and brief descriptions of the historic sites, as a useful (and free) addition to Philadelphia's tourist literature.

A website, www.theconstitutional.com, includes all the information contained in the brochure plus links to individual sites.



The Constitutional Foundation, sponsors of the tour, wants to build on its initial success by enhancing the existing route—to amend The Constitutional with added features. Specifically the foundation intends to add to the factual information already provided by offering more of the engaging personal stories associated with writing and implementing the U.S. Constitution. Expanded narrative and new programming will reintroduce the men and women who created the Republic to Philadelphia residents, students, and tourists.

By preparing stand-alone, site-specific vignettes, and then weaving them into connected storylines, the foundation hopes

to appeal to the most casual visitors as well as to dedicated students of constitutional history. By offering a variety of interpretive media, in addition to the brochure/map and website that already exist, they intend to extend their reach to new audiences and to enhance the effectiveness of their message.

During the summer of 2004, The Constitutional Foundation identified three goals:

- To augment The Constitutional Walking Tour from a listing of sites to a more engaging and interconnected storyline from site to site that will entertain and educate visitors in compelling ways,
- To promote The Constitutional in a manner which reawakens visitors and local residents alike to Philadelphia's unique history while increasing visitation to the historic sites along The Constitutional, and
- To invite broader participation by stakeholders in the Independence Mall area ecosystem including interpreters, historians, historic sites, the tourism industry, individuals, residents, government officials, etc.

The recommendations that follow are intended to help the foundation reach those goals.

First, based on discussions with over 30 stakeholders, the recommendations will identify several possible storylines that can be used to connect individual sites and support an enhanced narrative.

Then, the recommendations will identify a variety of additional interpretive media that could be used to enrich the walking tour route and expand its interpretive value to new audiences.

Interpretive Storylines

Freeman Tilden's now classic book [*Interpreting Our Heritage*] made the case for "interpretation" over 50 years. Tilden urged tour guides and park educators to look beyond the facts, to "interpret" what the facts mean, and then to make those meanings relevant to the lives of their audiences.

Interpretive storylines are simply a communication tool, a thread that will help audiences follow along. They connect individual places and the ideas they represent. By returning again and again to a central theme, they will help audiences "get the point" and remember it.

A valuable discussion with a wide range of stakeholders interested in promoting and interpreting Philadelphia's historic square mile (see Appendix 1), helped to identify three interpretive storylines.

Although the content of walking tours of the area could be organized in any number of ways, the stakeholder group recognized that The Constitutional Walking Tour had an obvious focus—the origins, crafting, ratification, and subsequent evolution of the U.S. Constitution. Few documents have greater contemporary relevance. Many constitutional issues remain subjects for debate; modern life continually tests the foresight of the Founders. And, as the stakeholder group pointed out, while other tours and tour brochures address stories like revolutionary women, architecture, neighborhoods, religious liberty, and churches, none currently focuses on the Constitution.

Several interpretive storylines emerged from the stakeholder discussion, but three seemed to have the basic ingredients that would appeal to a range of audiences and connect directly to the dozens of special places in and adjacent to Philadelphia's historic square mile.

- **Choosing Philadelphia**

“The cleanliness, evenness, and length of the streets, their illumination at nighttime, and the vigilance of the guards, posted at each corner to maintain security and good order, make Philadelphia one of the most pleasant and well-ordered cities in the world.” Francisco de Miranda, 1783

As North America’s premiere city in the late 18th century, Philadelphia attracted both immigrants and travelers, including Congress and members of the Constitutional Convention.



Philadelphia was the logical choice for the Constitutional Convention in 1787, and this storyline explores why that was the case. It uses historic buildings, the city’s evocative streetscapes, and the descriptive words of residents and travelers to help modern audiences see late 18th century Philadelphia through the eyes of the past. The city itself becomes a major character in the drama of constitutional creation, and an expression of national ideals. This storyline presents Philadelphia as an enduring, yet vibrant and undeniably altered American city—a city founded in a

fundamentally different time, with rules of social interaction more medieval and modern, and yet with roots that still nourish 21st century political life around the globe.

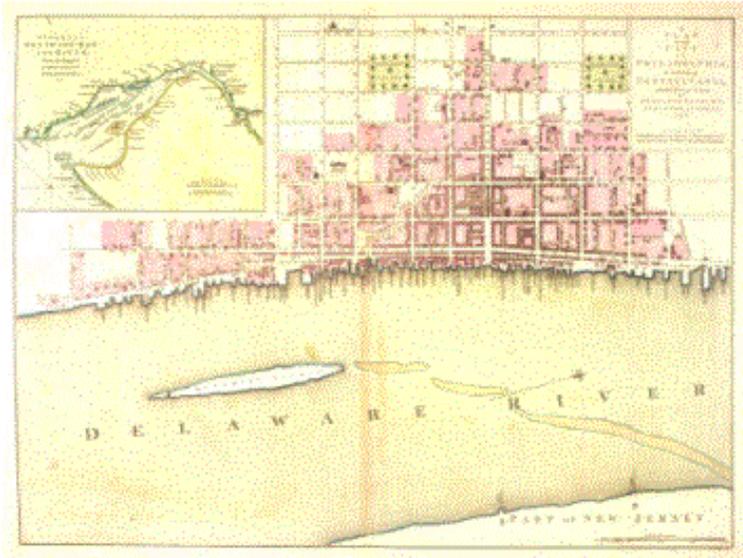
This storyline also will continually call attention to surroundings. It will encourage those who follow the tour route to take a second look at buildings along the way, to pause and consider a vista up a historic street, to walk to the river and discover the city's rich heritage as a seaport, and to imagine the city at another time described by a fellow traveler who passed the same way 200 years ago.

Tour materials will provide a basic primer on reading the city's built environments—its regular, rectangular pattern of streets, alleys, and open spaces, its durable brick homes, shops, and public buildings, and its institutions rooted in Enlightenment philosophies. With narrative enhanced by this storyline, those who follow The Constitutional will appreciate why the Founders, and others, converged on Philadelphia again and again.

This storyline will form the core of the interpretive narrative. The two other storylines that follow will contribute vignettes that will humanize and demonstrate the on-going influence and relevance of the Constitution.

Locations, Currently on The Constitutional Route, Connected to this Storyline

Independence Visitor Center
Independence Hall (Philadelphia as a government center)
Congress Hall (...as national capital)
Old City Hall (...as judicial center)
Philosophical Hall (...as intellectual center)
Washington Square (...as planned city, African burial ground)
Library Hall (...as intellectual center)



“Seen from the river, [Philadelphia] has a genuinely lovely appearance, and offers in its form a slightly concave line whose ends round out toward the east.”

Moreau de St. Mery’s American Journey, 1793-1798



circa 1800

William Birch views of Philadelphia,

City Tavern (...as social center)
First Bank of the United States (...as financial center)
Carpenters' Hall (quality construction and artisans)
Franklin Court ((...as magnet for aspiring youth, examples
of civic improvements)
Franklin's Market Street Houses (...as printing/literary
center)
B. Free Franklin Post Office & Museum (...as
communication hub)
Christ Church (...as religious center)
Elfreth's Alley (...as urban center)
Arch Street Friends Meeting House (Quaker origins and
influence)
Congregation Mikveh Israel (...as diverse)
Declaration House (...as center of revolution)
The African American Museum in Philadelphia (...as
diverse, tolerant/intolerant)

Locations Listed as "Steps off the Tour"

Walnut Street Theatre (...as center of culture and the arts)
Pennsylvania Hospital (...as medical center)
Mikveh Israel Cemetery (...as diverse)
Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (...as
diverse, tolerant/intolerant)
Old St. Mary's Church (...as diverse)
Old Pine St. Church (...as diverse)
St. Peter's Church (...as diverse)
Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial (...as
cosmopolitan with international connections)
Old St. Joseph's Church (...as diverse)
Powel House (...as socially/economically stratified)
Independence Seaport Museum (...as seaport)
Fireman's Hall Museum (...as urban with necessary
infrastructure)
Old First Reformed Church (...as diverse)
St. George's United Methodist Church (...as diverse)
United States Mint (...as financial center)

Examples of New Vignettes

Streetscapes of Old City & Society Hill; Brick Construction
(city appearance)

Delaware River and Penn's Landing (seaport origins)

Welcome Park, 2nd between Chestnut and Walnut (William
Penn and city plan)

Philadelphia Insurance Companies (city institutions)

Traveler Narratives (cosmopolitan flavor)

Focus on a neighborhood or city block (mix of occupations,
ethnicities, class, etc.)



▪ The People Shape the Constitution

“That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community; of all the various modes and forms of government, that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration.” George Mason, 1776

Born of the concepts that rights derive from the people, and that governments exist to protect and promote the welfare of citizens, the Constitution reflects not only the contributions of the Founders who traveled to the Constitutional Convention, but also of others who visited or lived in Philadelphia.

The human stories associated with the origins, creation, and evolution of the Constitution are everywhere in Philadelphia. These stories help to reduce legalistic issues to the personal dimensions that resonate with all audiences. They cut across time as well as divisions of race, gender, class, and national origin. Contemporary audiences see themselves in the actions and emotions of distant ancestors.

This storyline, of course, introduces the rich and powerful who are so well represented in the pages of history. It explores the people who “made” the Constitution in 1787 and remade it over time.



Bank note issued by the Bank of the United States. The Second Bank now houses over 250 portraits including many Founders, Philadelphians, and visitors to the city.

But it doesn't stop there. The enhanced narrative will tell the untold stories of some who were nearly forgotten and of those who worked behind the scenes. It will challenge modern day audiences to look beyond the rhetoric and consider the realities of everyday life in the new Republic. By refocusing attention on the first words of the Constitution's Preamble—We the People—it will explore

ways that the Constitution affected the lives of a cross section of citizens. It will lift words off the pages of aging paper and superimpose them on the lives of Philadelphians.

Locations, Currently on The Constitutional Route, Connected to this Storyline

National Constitution Center
Independence Visitor Center
Independence Hall (delegates to the Constitutional Convention)
Portraits in the Second Bank of the United States (circles of influence, who isn't portrayed)
Todd House (John Todd, Dolley Todd Madison, James Madison)
Bishop White House (William White, family, servants)
Polish American Cultural Center Museum (Thaddeus Kosciuszko)
City Tavern (delegates as lodgers/dinners, tavern owners/employees)
Franklin Court (Franklin, Deborah Franklin, Benjamin Franklin Bache)
First Bank of the United States (Alexander Hamilton)
National Liberty Museum
Christ Church (religion and the delegates)
Christ Church Burial Ground (graves of signers)
The African American Museum in Philadelphia (Philadelphia Africans and African Americans)

Locations Listed as “Steps off the Tour”

Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (Richard Allen)
James Madison House (“Father” of the Constitution)
Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial

Examples of New Vignettes

Welcome Park, 2nd between Chestnut and Walnut (William Penn and constitutional origins of PA)

Oney Judge and Hercules, 6th and Market (Washington's slaves who escaped to freedom, others enslaved by Washington)

Martha Washington, 6th and Market (First Lady's role in government/president's household)

Cyrus Bustill, marker at 210 Arch Street (Free African Society and school for Black children)

Fraunces Tavern, 310 S. Third Street (Samuel Fraunces relocated to Philadelphia in 1790)

Free African Society, 6th and Lombard (Richard Allen and Absalom Jones)

Haym Salomon, 45 N. 5th Street (helped finance the Revolution)

James Forten, 336 Lombard Street (antislavery advocate)



James Forten

Printshop of Dunlap and Claypoole, 2nd and Market (printed the Constitution)

Philip Syng, Jr., northside of Arch between Front and 2nd (made the inkstand used in Independence Hall)

Mary House, 5th and Market, (ran a boarding house and Indian Queen Tavern used by convention delegates)

Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 18 S. 7th St. (immigration and ethnicity)

Head House Square, 2nd and Lombard (market used by African American merchants and artisans)

Focus on the residents of a neighborhood or city block (mix of occupations, ethnicities, class, etc.)

Zion Lutheran Church (4th and Cherry) German church and site of the national funeral for George Washington

▪ **Adapting the Constitution**

“When you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men, all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected?” Benjamin Franklin, at the Constitutional Convention, 1787

No one in 1787 expected perfection, and the constitution produced in Philadelphia has continued to evolve with the times, struggling to address persistent age-old issues as well as complex new conditions.



Right to assemble/Freedom of Speech

Like the city of Philadelphia itself, the Constitution keeps changing. This storyline focuses on some of those changes, on how Philadelphia’s places relate to constitutional amendments, and on how constitutional issues parallel national politics and the evolution of society.

Like “People Shape the Constitution,” this storyline will provide supplementary narrative. Vignettes related to constitutional amendments will illustrate the demands that politics and society have made on the original document over time. Other stories will focus on issues unresolved and challenges never envisioned by the Founders. All will be linked to Philadelphia and Philadelphians.

Locations, Currently on The Constitutional Route, Connected to this Storyline

National Constitution Center
Liberty Bell (abolition, protests, symbolism)
Congress Hall (Bill of Rights, constitutional precedents)
Old City Hall (establishment of a national judicial system)
Second Bank of the United States (Bank Wars)
Merchant’s Exchange (the Constitution and commerce)
New Hall Military Museum (role of the military)
National Liberty Museum (symbolism)
Betsy Ross House (symbolism)
National Museum of American Jewish History (civil rights, religious freedom)
The Bourse Building (economic evolution)
Atwater Kent Museum (urbanization, immigration)
The African American Museum in Philadelphia (diversity and multi-racial society, racial discrimination, voting and civil rights)

Locations Listed as “Steps off the Tour”

Pennsylvania Hospital (medical issues, right to die)
Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (intolerance, multi-racial society, religious freedom, human rights)
Old St. Mary’s & Old St. Joseph’s churches (religious freedom)
Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial (global constitutionalism)
Independence Seaport Museum (maritime issues)

Chemical Heritage Museum (patent rights, issues related to research & development)

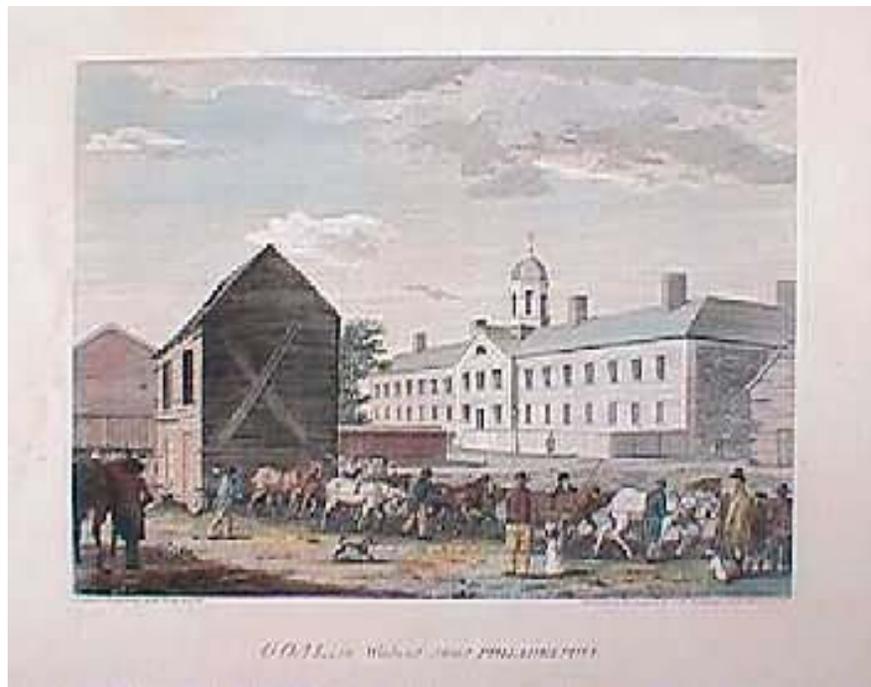
Fireman's Hall Museum (government's role in promoting the general welfare)

The United States Mint (currency)

Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia (fiscal policy)

Examples of New Vignettes

Walnut Street Prison, 6th St. near Walnut (prison reform, rights of the accused and prisoners)



London Coffee House, 2 S. Front St. (site where enslaved Africans were auctioned in the 18th century)

Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Front below Chestnut (abolition)

Philadelphia Female Anti-slavery Society, 5th and Arch (role of women, abolition)

St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church, 200 block, N. 4th St. (religious intolerance and Nativist riots)

Additional Interpretive Techniques

In tandem with enhanced storylines, The Constitutional Foundation should consider using additional interpretive techniques. There seem to be several possibilities for expanded interpretation.

Enhanced Website

The foundation's existing website should be modified to include interpretive narratives as they are developed.

The website also might be used to personalize tours based on user interests or time restraints. "My Constitution," an idea already under consideration, seems to be a logical extension of the focused, connected storyline approach suggested above. "Choosing Philadelphia," "People Shape the Constitution," and "Adapting the Constitution" provide a starting point. But many other storylines, connecting the Constitution to religion, to African American or ethnic history, to the interests of children, to events like the yellow fever epidemics, etc. also could be developed incrementally.

Finally, the website could be used as an interactive tool, not just a source for information. For example, it could be an excellent way for visitors to record their impressions of the city (in words or photographs), much like travelers in previous times.

Enhanced Brochure

The Constitutional's brochure cannot and should not attempt too much. The current size of the folder is ideal. It fits in brochure racks and is easy to carry. Printed in full color, the brochure is attractive and competes well when displayed in multi-folder racks at tourist destinations and hotels.

Enhancements should come not in size or appearance but in content. Entries for each stop on the tour route should weave factual information into interpretive narratives connected to the

three primary storylines (see Appendix 2 for examples of brief interpretive narratives). If more space is needed to introduce each storyline, or if new entries are added to enrich the storylines, considerable space (1/12th of the total) could be gained by shortening (or eliminating) the list of “firsts,” which are arguable and available from other sources. Stakeholders made a clear case for recreating The Constitutional as a unique tour, rather than a rehash of existing material.

Further, in order to provide users with content cues that connect places to storylines, icons, like those suggested for discussion below, could be added to the interpretive narratives written for a revised brochure.



Compass for “Choosing Philadelphia.”



Silhouette of Moses Williams for “People Shape the Constitution.” Williams purchased his freedom by making silhouettes in Charles Willson Peale’s Museum.



Debater for “Adapting the Constitution.”

An enhanced brochure also needs to address the issue of sequencing. While some users will find a sequenced route helpful, there is no single way to see Philadelphia’s historic square mile. The Constitutional has no beginning or end. In reality, users will enter the tour route at any number of places and from all directions. While the suggested storylines connect the sites, they also will entice even casual users, including residents, and encourage them to search for other tour stops. Each vignette will relate to a larger story or stories, but should be written to stand alone. In its enhanced form, The Constitutional should retain a route and indicate stops, but eliminate numbers.

For more information on walking tours, see “A Different Path for Historic Walking Tours,” a technical bulletin published by The American Association for State and Local History. It offers 11 tips for enriching walking tour narrative and provides three case studies of successful programs.

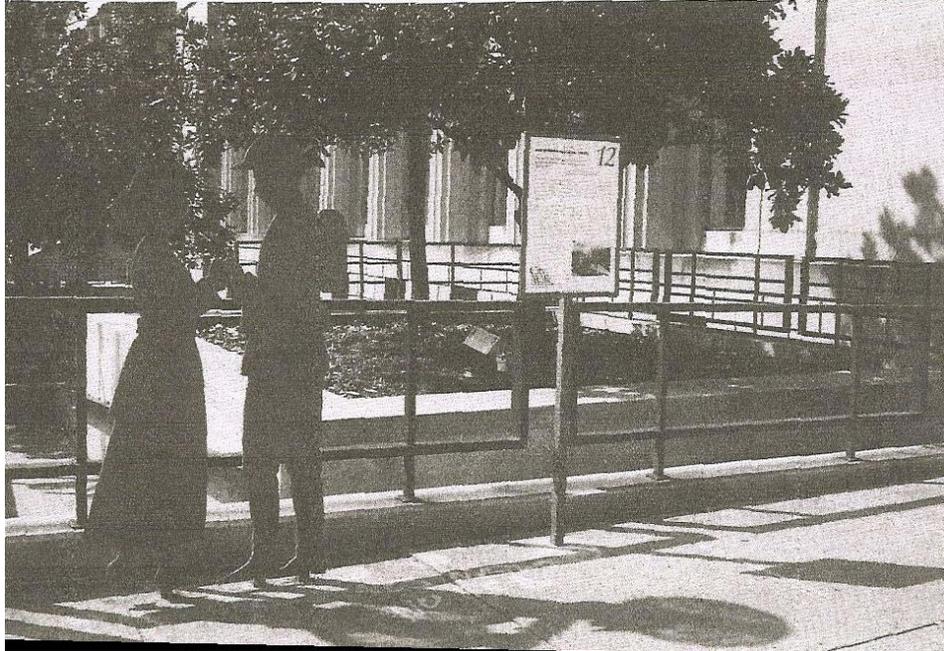
Wayfinding, Interpretive Signs/Markers with Narrative and Images

If desirable, the route of The Constitutional can be marked in a variety of ways, with the caveat that whatever method is employed must be mindful of existing street signs and street “furniture.” The route has many residential and commercial neighbors. Visual overload, perceived as annoying additional clutter by some, can be an unintended outcome.

To avoid unintended negative consequences, The Constitutional will, whenever possible, rely on existing signs or use sidewalk pavers whenever appropriate and feasible. Philadelphia already has an extensive system of directional signs supplemented with markers installed by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Independence National Historical Park also has begun to “engrave” information about the cityscape into newly laid sidewalks along Chestnut and Market streets.

Any sign or route marker system must provide for maintenance. Exterior urban environments, with auto emissions, dust and dirt, graffiti, etc. challenge the long-term attractiveness of signs.

Additions to these existing sign/marker programs might be installed with the cooperation of stakeholders, perhaps off city right of way. For example, as in the case of Nashville’s CityWalk (see below), life size figures with accompanying interpretive text might be an attractive and interpretively useful enhancement. Historic images or photographs, included on the signs/markers could help visitors envision the city at other times.



Silhouettes and signs with narrative and historic images support a walking tour in Nashville.

Audio Tour

Audio is often used along walking tours, and the proliferation of cell phones has introduced a new way to integrate sound into interpretive programming. By simply purchasing an allotted number of cell phone minutes, subscribers can use their own equipment to hear recorded messages along a tour route. This approach eliminates the need for expensive transmitting and receiving equipment as well as for complicated equipment distribution and inventory control procedures. As a spin-off, the cell phone tours generate income.

Live Interpretation

There are many possible ways to use interpreters along the tour route.

As some stakeholders suggested, interpreters could be available along The Constitutional's walking route at specific, advertised times. A coordinated program with interested organizations (the Philadelphia Heritage Project, for example) could identify

a schedule for such programming, help to develop a base of knowledge that supports the storylines, and assists with training.

Providing interpreters dressed in period clothing would undoubtedly be an attractive enhancement. However, no one should underestimate the considerable investment in time and dollars required to deliver a quality program. Accuracy in clothing and how it is worn is critical to credibility. The clothing can be expensive and the many sizes and shapes of possible interpretive recruits will complicate procurement.

Historical vignettes, scripted performances delivered by actors or trained interpreters, have been used in similar situations. This approach reduces the need for knowledge training, but requires command of dramatic/theatrical skills.

Finally, while staff are one of the most flexible interpretive techniques, they also are one of the most expensive. Even the use of volunteers, recruited by stakeholders, requires the investment of many hours of training and supervision.

Educational Programming



Many educational groups, from all grade levels, visit Philadelphia, and The Constitutional can be used by these groups in a variety of ways. As they exists now, The Constitutional's brochure and website already function as planning and wayfinding tools.

In the future, The Constitutional as enhanced will offer content that applies to the standards of learning for grades K-12. The history addressed by "Choosing Philadelphia," the human stories suggested by "People Shape the Constitution," and the relevance embedded in "Adapting the Constitution" all will help to make the Constitution even more intellectually accessible to students.

By working cooperatively with educator advisors and with stakeholders who already have developed formal educational programs, The Constitutional Foundation could integrate the tour route and the new interpretive narratives into curriculum-based lesson plans. Pre-visit, on-site, and post-visit activities would offer teachers a useful, complete package ready for use.

However, only by developing educational materials with the input of educators will The Constitutional Foundation avoid investment in lessons that are unused or underused. Establishing liaison with local educators in schools and at historic sites must be the first step in developing educational programming.

Special Events, Celebrations, Commemorations



Special events, celebrations, and commemorations are excellent ways to focus attention on interpretive stories. Philadelphia is fortunate. It has a full calendar of these events. Rather than attempt to stage additional events, The Constitutional Foundation should plan to cooperate with sponsors of existing events whenever there are interpretive connections.

This could be accomplished by adding information to the foundation website, by distribution of walking tour brochures, and with temporary markers at related sites.

Language Materials

Some stakeholders suggested that interpretive materials be prepared for non-English speaking visitors. When The Constitutional Foundation is ready to expand into other languages they should consider two factors that increase effectiveness. First, the text should not be a translation of the English narrative. As with any other form of communication it should be written with the audience in mind. Specifically, visitors who do not speak English may not have the same exposure to United States history or the same level of familiarity with the Constitution. Second, when the narrative is translated, it must be completed by a qualified company, preferably with translators or reviewers who are native speakers.

Marketing

A revamped tour with interpretive narratives will provide an ideal opportunity to reintroduce The Constitutional Walking Tour to the public, local media, and tourism professionals. The addition of other interpretive media will facilitate on-going publicity and renewed attention.

Cooperative Activities

The Constitutional Foundation is well positioned to expand contacts with area stakeholders and develop cooperative

activities. The Constitutional Walking Tour should continue to define its role as supportive and complementary rather than competitive. Continued dialogue seems a desirable consequence. Materials produced by The Constitutional Foundation should, as possible, reference other tour and tourism programs. Partner activities could help harvest funding beyond the reach of individual groups, including The Constitutional Foundation.

Specific examples of cooperation include wayfinding and signage, live interpretation, educational programming, special events, celebrations, and ceremonies.

Additional Reading on Interpretive Techniques

In 2000, The National Register of Historic Places published “Telling the Stories: Planning Effective Interpretive Programs for Properties Listed in the National Register of Historic Places.” This 60-page bulletin discusses a variety of interpretive techniques including when and how to use each effectively. It provides actual examples from properties on the National Register, and concludes with a section titled “Where to Turn for Help.”

Appendix 1

Stakeholders Attending Planning Workshop

The Constitutional Foundation invited 338 stakeholders to attend a planning workshop on September 14, 2004, to gather input on enhancements to The Constitutional. The following signed in at the workshop.

Randi Berman, Sales/Marketing Manager, The Big Bus Company

Joanne Blacoe, Interpretive Planner, National Park Service
Northeast Region

Doven E. Brezner, Executive Director, Friends of Independence Park

Maxine Dalsemer, Information Resource Manager, Independence Visitor
Center Corporation

Frances Delmar, Interpretive Specialist, Independence National Historical
Park

Jim Dephilippo, Tour and Travel Sales Manager, Holiday Inn Historic
District

Kathleen Dilonardo, Interpretive Program Manager, National Park
Service Northeast Region

Stuart Feldman

Ken Finkel, Executive Director, Arts & Culture Service, WHYY

Stephen M. Foxman, Esq., Partner, Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott

Steve Frank, Senior Director of Research, National Constitution Center

Sarah Hines, Communications Manager, Philadelphia Convention and
Visitors Bureau

Peter Iacovoni, Manager of Special Projects, Office of the City
Representative/Commerce Department, City of Philadelphia

Nidhi Krishen, Solution Media

Andrew Krause, Educational Consultant, Historical Researcher, Freelance
Writer, B Franklin 300

Reverend Jeffrey N. Leath, D. Min., Pastor, Mother Bethel AME Church

Robert Levin, Museum Educator, National Museum of American Jewish
History

Brian McCloskey, Administrator, Historic Old St. George's Church

Theresa Romanowski, Museum Special Events Coordinator & Board
Secretary, Polish American Cultural Center

Ira L. Rosen, President, Entertainment On Location, Inc.

Cara Schneider, Media Relations, Greater Philadelphia Tourism
Marketing Corporation

Michael Shannon. Solution Media

Wayne Shull, Tour Development Officer, Ride the Ducks

Steve Sitarski, Chief of Interpretation & Visitor Service, Independence
National Historical Park

Richard Stengel, President & CEO, National Constitution Center

Brian Sullivan, Arch Street Friends Meeting House

Beth A. Twiss-Garrity, VP, Interpretation, National Constitution Center

Christian Variquez, Program Manager, Friends of Independence Park

Abbi Wicklein-Bayne, Heritage Education and Outreach Administrator,
City of Baltimore, Office of the Mayor

Workshop hosted by: Jon Bari, The Constitutional Foundation

Workshop facilitator: Ron Thomson

Appendix 2

Examples of Interpretive Narrative

1. Father of the Iron Bridge

Squire Whipple, the man who designed this bridge in 1858, was correct. Writing about the benefits of using iron rather than wood in bridge construction, Whipple predicted that “the iron bridge gives fair promise of enduring for ages.”

By applying his mathematical training, Whipple added science to the art of bridge building. The formulas that he developed and published carefully calculated the stress that iron could endure. The bow-string trusses that he patented and used in his bridges proved their strength as well as their beauty.

Several of Whipple’s bridges, like this one, crossed the Erie Canal.

This brief narrative supports one of interpretive themes for the Erie Canal: Construction of the Canal

2. Sloops to Nuts

When John Chapman, Sr. opened his boatyard on Mamaroneck Harbor, he started a trend that continues today. Ever since Chapman’s craftsmen laid their first keel, just after the Civil War, a long line of boat builders has called Mamaroneck their homeport.

Over the years, this working waterfront gave birth to sleek sailing sloops, the first steam launch on the Long Island Sound, expensive ocean-going yachts, rowboats sold at Macy’s department stores, and even an experimental (slightly nutty) concrete submarine that floated but never proved practical.

This brief narrative supports one of interpretive themes for the New York Coastal Interpretation Project: Working along the Coast

3. Chincoteague's Front Door

Historically, Chincoteague's western waterfront provided the town with its front door.

Many watermen sailed from docks along Chincoteague Channel, "goin' down the Bay" to return with cargoes of oysters, bay and sea clams, and mussels.

For decades, steamboats shuttled across the Channel from the mainland five miles away. Visitors to Chincoteague arrived at several wharves built along this waterfront.

Completed in 1922, the causeway that touched down near where you are standing delivered thousands of tourists to Chincoteague and revolutionized the way the island connected to commercial markets.

This brief narrative supports one of the interpretive themes for the town of Chincoteague's new waterfront park: The Changing Waterfront

4. Fifth Avenue Historic District/The Arcade (Nashville CityWalk)

"Rules of Conduct

Do show yourself friendly at the counter at all times.

Do sit straight and always face the counter.

Don't strike back or curse if attacked.

Remember love and nonviolence."

The Tennessean, February 28, 1960

In the 1960s, this street was the center of Nashville's civil rights movement. Highly effective and well-disciplined sit-in demonstrations here became a model for similar protests throughout the South. Midway down the street is the Nashville Arcade, a rare, turn-of-the-century shopping mall, still thriving today.

5. The Men's Quarter (Nashville CityWalk)

"The Southern Turf is located...almost opposite the Maxwell House, and he who has not been in this tavern knows not what a paradise it is...a veritable glittering palace of mirth and merriment."

American Journal of Commerce. New York, 1899

Any respectable Victorian land refused to be seen on this block where gentlemen frequented saloons and billiard halls. Even the famous Maxwell House Hotel, on the corner of 4th and Church, whose coffee Teddy Roosevelt proclaimed "good to the last drop," had a side door entrance for women. Two of the original saloons on 4th Avenue can still be seen today: the Climax (210) and the Southern Turf (212). The Utopia Hotel stood at 206 4th Avenue.