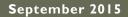
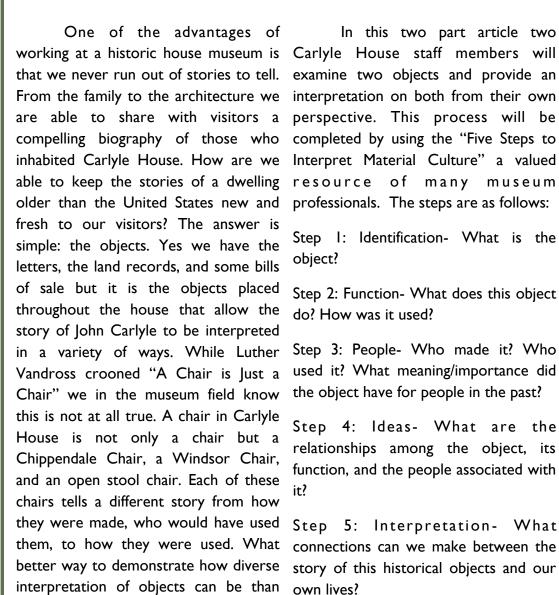
CARLYLE HOUSE HISTORIC PARK

Docent Dispatch



Interpreting the Objects of Carlyle House: The Educator's Perspective

By Vanessa Herndon



having two people who know the

museum well provide an interpretation?

In this two part article two examine two objects and provide an interpretation on both from their own perspective. This process will be completed by using the "Five Steps to Interpret Material Culture" a valued resource of many museum professionals. The steps are as follows:

Step I: Identification- What is the object?

Step 2: Function- What does this object do? How was it used?

Step 3: People- Who made it? Who used it? What meaning/importance did the object have for people in the past?

Step 4: Ideas- What are the relationships among the object, its function, and the people associated with it?

Step 5: Interpretation- What connections can we make between the story of this historical objects and our own lives?

The first analyses will be my perspective and the second will feature Helen's perspective. The objects we selected to



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CARLYLE HOUSE Susan Hellman

Site Administrator

Helen Wirka Site Specialist

Vanessa Herndon **Education Assistant**

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study and the spinet, two of our more rising in popularity in Britain and then popular objects. As you read my making their way to the colonies. This interpretations think about the steps also is a great way to talk about trade above and how I build upon each step between the colonies and Britain and to formulate an analysis.

Floor cloth



Upon entering Study I ask visitors to agrarian society where the 18th century. there are no paved roads, the main mode of transportation is horses, and there are

more livestock on public streets than today. I point out that John Carlyle's household was busy with many comings and goings causing the remnants of the outdoors to be left on ones shoes and

interpret are the floor cloth in the servant? I also discuss floor cloths first connect it to John's role as a merchant. Overall, my interpretation demonstrates that the floor cloth is not the just another material possession of John Carlyle but is a representation of class, imagine living in an trade, and the distribution of labor in

Spinet



then brought into the home. This is Placed against the back wall of the when I point out the floor cloth if a parlor is an object that many visitors visitor has not already commented on immediately describe as a piano or it. Many visitors will then admire the piano forte. I explain while it is similar beautiful design while I discuss how to a piano forte we refer to this object floor cloths had a dual purpose by being as the spinet. This spinet, often attractive and easy to clean. I use the confused with a harpsicord, is a smaller items in the touch basket to discuss the version of a piano making it ideal to materials and demonstrate how the have in rooms that lacked the space for floor cloth was made. As visitors feel a piano. I discuss the parlor is where the materials I then pose the question Mrs. Carlyle or the Carlyle daughters "who was making floor cloths?" It is a would receive friends and family for tea, very simple question but one that if musical entertainment, or conversation posed can lead to a different story after dinner. I find this room fun to about the object. Was this a job for a interpret, especially when I have skilled artisan? Would one work as an children on my tour. At first sight of the apprentice to learn the craft similar to a spinet they exclaim "Oh a piano!" to blacksmith? Was this a job for an which I quickly correct them before enslaved individual or indentured explaining the difference between a



CARLYLE HOUSE HISTORIC PARK

piano and a spinet. I also use this opportunity to ask if they play an instrument, allowing each child to answer. I then explain it was customary for women to play instruments such as the harpsicord, spinet, and bass violin while men played the flute, oboe, and violin. I do this with adults as well, since it is another opportunity to engage my audience. Like the floor cloth, this interpretation of the spinet allows me to present it as more than a form of entertainment but also an example of gender roles in the 18th century.

You will notice that a large part of my interpretation of these objects creating dialogue with the visitor. I am not just sharing information about the objects but I am also posing questions to get them to think critically about what they are seeing in the museum. This complements the style in which I give my tours, which relies heavily on visitor engagement. Of course you do not have to do this on your tour, it is a demonstration of how interpretation changes person to person. Please be sure to see Helen's object analysis in the October Docent Dispatch!

CHAD Events

Sunday, September 13 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner 6pm-8pm

The Staff of Carlyle House would like to say "Thank You!" for all that you do at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Come join us for an evening of food and fellowship at **Gadsby's Tavern**

Restaurant.

Please RSVP to CARLYLE@nvrpa.org by Friday, September 4th.

Monday, October 5 Marine Corps Museum 18900 Jefferson Davis Hwy Triangle, VA 22172 10am

More details to come. Please RSVP to vherndon@nvrpa.org or sign up in the Docent Lounge.

Monday, October 19

Carlyle House Book Club

12pm
Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis,
Thomas Jefferson and the
Opening of the American West by
Stephen E. Ambrose
Email Jamie Harding for more

information jamieh3@verizon.net.





Calendar of Events

CARLYLE HOUSE HISTORIC PARK

September 14, Monday

New Docent Training Curator's Lecture 12pm

September 16, Wednesday

New Docent Training Curator's Lecture 7pm

September 19-20

Scottish Heritage/Outlander Event Docents Needed See page 5 for more information

September 21, Monday

New Docent Training Educator's Workshop 12pm

September 22, Wednesday

New Docent Training Educator's Workshop 7pm

October 17, Saturday

Walking With Zombies Details TBD

October 18, Sunday

Cauldron Tea
Ipm, Magnolia Terrace
\$30/person, \$15/child

October 31, Saturday

Trick or Treat
5pm-7pm
Carlyle House will open its door to
provide tricks and treats to the many
pint sized visitors on All Hallow's Eve
this year.

December 5, Saturday

Soldier's Christmas Details TBD

December 12 and 13

Candlelight Tours
Saturday 6-9 and Sunday 3-6
Adults \$25
Seniors/Active Military \$20
Children (6-17)- \$5
Docents Needed

Нарру Hours

Every 3rd Thursday of the month we will meet at a different location for a chance to catch up and share good company! Vanessa will be present to validate parking for happy hours that take place in Old Town. Check your email the day of the happy hour for more details. If you have a great idea for happy hour please feel free to share!

This list has been updated since the July Dispatch

September 17

Charthouse 4pm-6:30pm

October 15

Bilbo Baggins 4pm-7pm

November 19

TBD 4pm-7:00pm

December 17

TBD 4pm-7pm





Outlander Comes to Carlyle House

CARLYLE HOUSE HISTORIC PARK

During the Alexandria Arts Festival weekend, stop by Carlyle House for some Scottish fun, Outlander Style! On Saturday, September 19th at 10am, there will be a Scottish fashion show discussing dress at the time that Jamie, Claire AND John Carlyle lived in the 18th century! Advance tickets must be purchased for \$15/attendee; children 5 and under are free. Coffee and shortbread cookies (baked by the Dairy Godmother!) will be provided as refreshments and included in the ticket price. At 11:15am the Granfling School of Highland Dance will give a free performance of Scottish dancing which has strong roots in history. Then at 12:30pm, the Devil's Tailors will perform on period style instruments. This event will also include the City of Alexandria Pipe and Drums making an appearance.

On Sunday, September 20th, Carlyle House is hosting an Outlander Tea! Check our website for details and pricing at www.carlylehouse.org. Advance reservations will be required. Call us at 703-549-2997 or email us at carlyle@nvrpa.org with questions or to reserve your spot at the fashion show or tea!



