

Introduction to the Tour Guide Program (TGP) & Historical Interpretation

How NOT to Interpret History





Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxPVyieptwA

Agenda



- Welcome & Staff Introductions
- Why the TGP?
- Docents vs. General Volunteers
- Program Overview & Goals
- Summary & Questions
- Demonstration
- Practical Application
- The Visitor Experience (Rail Yard Tour



Welcome



Staff introductions

The VMT Mission Statement:

"To advance all modes of transportation across the Commonwealth, to celebrate and preserve the hard work and ingenuity of generations past, and to inspire current and future generations to value this industry which is essential to Virginia's history, culture, and economic growth."

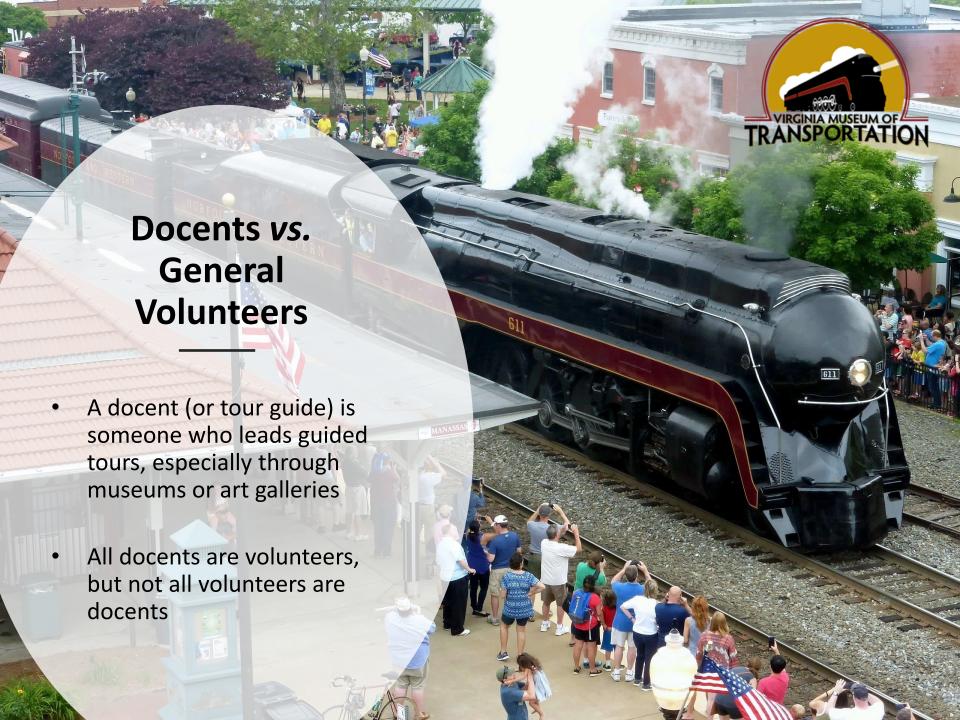
Why the TGP?



Implementation & standardization

- Eventually establish a series of professionally-guided tours
- Celebrate, preserve & inspire







The Nuts & Bolts of the TGP

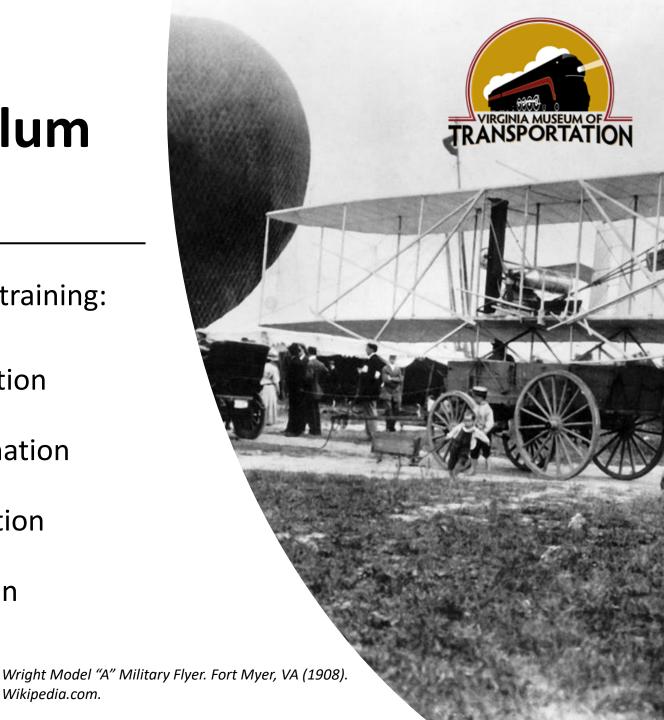
- Delivery & content
- Nineteen courses
- Initial & follow-on training
- Awards & Recognition

Curriculum

- Four phases of training:
 - Introduction
 - Indoctrination
 - Certification

Wikipedia.com.

• Follow-On







Delivery ("A"-Series) Courses:

A.3 Learning Styles

A.6 Connecting with Your Audience

A.8 Tour Practicum



Content ("B"-Series) Courses:

B.2 Virginia Rail History

B.7 The Life and Legacy of John T. Hanna

B.11 VMT Architectural History

Training Documents



- TGP Training Syllabus
- Follow-On Training Log
- Training Roster
- Standardized Lectures

TRAINING OUTLINE						
TASK / TOPIC	LECTURE NO.	HOURS	DATE	INSTRUCTOR	TRAINEE INT.	INSTRUCTOR INT.
Introduction to the TGP and Historical						
Interpretation	A.1	1.5				
The Visitor Experience	A.2	2.0				
Learning Styles	A.3	1.5				
Public Speaking	A.4	1.0				
Leadership Essentials	A.5	0.5				
Connecting with Your Audience	A.6	1.0				
Museum Facilities, Staff, and Special						
Situations	A.7	0.5				
An Overview of Transportation in Virginia	B.1	1.0				
The History of Roanoke	B.10	0.5				
Tour Practicum	A.8	1.0				



Historical Interpretation



 Tour guides/interpreters are not walking textbooks!

• Six Principles:

- Context
- Revelation
- Art
- Provocation
- Inclusiveness
- Applicability



Tilden, F. (1977). Interpreting Our Heritage (3rd ed.). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.



Goals

- Skill development
- Public engagement
- Knowledge
- Emergency response
- Feedback
- Consistency & accuracy

Standards of Interpretation



Know Your Subject:

"Knowledge is the key to credibility and critical to a visitor's comprehension of the experience. A dedicated interpreter constantly seeks out sources for a greater breadth and depth of information. The learning process never stops."



Know Your Audience:

"Knowledge alone is insufficient to interpret effectively. Get to know people."

"Examine your audience."

"Empathize with the people your encounter."



Know How to Make Connections:

"Think of this as your toolbox. What are some of the possible tools you can use?"

- Quotations
- Questions
- Setting the scene
- Humor





Know Your Parameters:

"Know the time parameters."

"Know the conceptual parameters."

"Stick to them."



Standards of Interpretation: Summary



"Know Your Subject"

"Know Your Audience"

"Know How to Make Connections"



"Know Your Parameters"

Discussing Objects in Context



- Discuss objects in time and place they were used
- Differences between the past and present
- Relate objects to historical vignettes or anecdotes (verifiably TRUE accounts!)

Presentation Techniques

- Eye contact
- Non-verbal cues (body language)
- General appearance & posture
- Language
- Quality of voice
- Clarity of message
- Confidence



IT'S WHAT YOU DON'T SAY THAT COUNTS!



LEARN TO READ AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE THROUGH NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION.

Tour Guide's Role During the Tour



Not a disciplinarian

You're an educator, not crowd control!

Be adaptive and change the pace

 Look at the students, not the adults, they're the ones you want answering the questions

Summary



- Contribute to the VMT mission
- Core values
- Consistency & accuracy
- Tilden's Six Principles
 Handout



Questions?











Practical Exercise

- Groups of two or three
- Select prop to interpret
- Five-minute prep time
- Five-to-ten minute presentation
- Peer-review process
- Remember Tilden & Monticello guidelines



The Visitor Experience

- Observe the presentation
- Critique
 - Content/Flow
 - Presentation
- Distribute TGP Books
 - Take home material

End of Session