



Advisory Committee Meeting #5, November 29, 2007
Religious Freedom Byway – Interpretation and Heritage Tourism Marketing
Charles and St. Mary's Counties, Maryland

Introduction – Vidal Martinez

- Welcomed the Committee to the Thomas Stone National Historic Site
- Feels byway theme should not just consist of religious freedom – need to expand
- Suggested “liberty” as a theme – Thomas Stone worked for liberty

Interpretive themes and sites – Peter Benton

Currently identified interpretive sites . . .

- Only considering sites available to public
 - Some are only partially up and running
 - Some are just locations/structures to view, e.g. Old Durham Church
- Need to knit sites together into current theme

Two books on Maryland history Peter has been using as references:

English and Catholic – story of Lord Baltimore

Tobacco Colony – study of people here in 1600s through probate (?) records

Peter summarized historical observations that support his revised themes (discussed at last meeting)

During its founding, Maryland went through extended period of frontier development (until approximately 1715)– longer than Plymouth, Jamestown or Maine settlement.

Why? 1. Disease plagued settlers

- Affected both rich and poor
- Had to undergo period of “seasoning” during which time became accustomed to bacteria and germs in new land
- Ironic, given number of Native Americans who died from diseases brought over by European settlers

2. Indentured servitude

- After fulfilling obligation of service, men needed additional time to establish themselves before marrying and started families – children born to parents later and in fewer numbers
- Because of high mortality rates, had less time between completion of servitude and age of death

3. High mortality

- Lead to many mixed families (widows marrying widowers)
- Maryland families did not develop strong lineage and social hierarchy common in other settlements

In Maryland, early settlement dictated by land – looking for adequate soils

- Lead to dispersed settlement, large gaps between communities
- Land owners still lived much like their indentured servants – perhaps better shelter and a few more possessions

In New England . . .

- disease was less prevalent and death rates were lower

- there was no indentured servitude
- family hierarchies dictated social structure

In Maryland from 1715 to the American Revolution, settlements underwent period of stabilization.

Suggested primary theme: the founding of Maryland
(that is the theme this byway can convey uniquely)

Sub-themes (from last meeting):

1. Ecology
2. Period of Early Settlement (1620s – 1689)
3. Tobacco Culture

Two additional sub-themes:

4. Religious Conflict – Lord Baltimore advocated separation of church and state, but unsuccessful. Overthrown when Episcopal Church established and people forced to pay taxes to raise money for Church.
5. Colonial Period from 1715 – 1780

Interpretive Sites

Anchor Sites must meeting following criteria:

- professionally staffed
- offers professional programming
- visitor services

All four anchor sites meet these criteria

Of the secondary sites, a few are close to meeting these criteria: Port Tobacco, Smallwood, and Friendship Farm

What stories can be told at these sites? How do they relate to the byway theme(s)?

Nanjemoy Loop is best suited for discussion of ecology and rest of route for history

Committee Comments

- Committee expressed concern over losing the African American story – originally covering period through Civil War, but now stopping at/after Revolutionary War
Peter emphasized need to focus and stressed that these stories can be told in currently identified sites (e.g. Thomas Stone site not just about Stone, but his family legacy, their plantation, the slaves on that plantation, the manor structure, etc.) African American story comes into play as slavery replaces indentured servitude.
- Same concern raised regarding Native American history – it also ties in to current themes within revised time period. Less obvious than slavery, but ties to ecology and Nanjemoy Loop – strong Native American influence.
- Ann Kyle pointed out that themes are currently just topics – need to develop theme statements. Peter plans to do that.
- Jim Gibb feels that anchor and secondary designations very rigid. In three or so years, Port Tobacco will be at anchor-site level, but because currently secondary site, won't have funding opportunities that it might have with anchor designation – designation will affect funding and management plan needs to help sites obtain as much funding as possible so that secondary sites have financial means to become anchors.

Ann Kyle suggested that secondary sites (e.g. Port Tobacco, Smallwood, etc.) with potential to become anchors be identified in the plan

- One committee member asked about including the Nanjemoy Environmental Center as an interpretive site. Cathy explained that it is run by the Board of Education and is really only used by school groups.

Cultural Heritage Tourism – Carolyn Brackett

Have to ask . . . who are we targeting?

how do we get them here?

Need to develop a list of interpretive media we should pursue – need to develop a phased approach that we can implement in the short term and then develop over time.

Also need to identify current tourism efforts and what we can build on.

Carolyn went through PowerPoint presentation to introduce the group to cultural heritage tourism and the different marketing tools that can be used to bring visitors to the byway.

Additional notes from slide presentation:

- Heritage travelers are very desirable tourists (they stay longer, spend more); consequently, attracting them to a particular area is very competitive
- The number of heritage travels will increase as the Baby Boomers age
- Because they plan their trips at the last minute, need to make information available immediately – no time to send away from materials
- Interpretive Wayside Exhibits: included in original project outline, so are a given – just need to decide where the best places are to put them
- Printed Materials – Brochures: some are free, others must be purchased, and others are ad-funded – have to think about financing
- Printed Materials – Map Pads: approximately \$700 for 10,000 (printed in pads of 100); black and white less expensive than color; some available for download – visitors print their own
- Printed Materials – Guidebooks: longer-term development and bigger investment – could be part of later phase
- Audio Interpretation – Talking Hosues: each site has own radio frequency; can record five-minute message; just need electrical source at site for recording machine
- Audio Interpretation Audiotours: SoundaboutPhilly enables visitors to download tours from website – can pick sites visitor wants to see; brings to life sites that are not open; have to decide if makes sense for byway (i.e. are the visitors to the byway technologically savvy? Do they use iPods, cell phones, etc.?)
- Exhibits: many churches open, but no educational materials – could use small exhibit to tell story and explain historical significance
- Tour Guides: big investment of time and resources, but people enjoy them, particularly living history interpreters

Comments from Committee on marketing tools:

- Jeremy would like to see web-based guide book – need to take advantage of internet
- Ann Kyle reminded group that people may not take too much time to pour over internet because planning trips so last minute, so internet may not need to present too much in-depth information
- Carol(yn) (?) pointed out that this is a traditional driving experience and believes that a good old-fashioned guide book has a place here

- Committee member pointed out that cell phone coverage can be problematic in some areas in St. Mary's and Charles Counties
- Need to match type of traveler with type of technology or interpretive tool
- Carolyn Brackett pointed out that we don't have to decide exactly what type of audio we want to use, but rather whether or not we even want audio and how soon/in what phase – group confirmed they do want it
- Another question to think about with audio is whether or not it is free – SoundaboutPhilly is a free download

Recommendations:

- #1 Develop a byway brochure: Brochure is requirement of scenic byway designation; made more interesting with sidebars, special profiles, etc.
- #2 Produce tear-off map pads
- #3 Don't necessarily need own website, but rather a section on an already existing site
- #4 Need to keep in mind that the Southern Maryland Heritage Area includes three counties, but the byway only covers two
- #5 Develop suggested itineraries
- #6 Develop a byway press kit
- #7 Plan a media tour: Once articles are printed after media tour, ask if article can appear on byway site – need to gather testimonials, reviews, etc.
- #8 Promote group tours: Have an outsider to a test drive of group tour routes and remember that routes and parking facilities must accommodate various vehicle sizes and types
- #9 Develop radio trade-out promotions
- #10 Develop strategies for cross promotion: Need people on both sides to connect and be able to talk about what is happening on other side

Comments from Committee on recommendations:

- Ann Kyle encouraged tour for frontline staff as well as tour writers
- Cathy advocated map pads – good way to blanket area
- Website development is a priority
- Also want audio at some point
- Committee pointed out need to check with churches and other sites to see what they are willing to do – may not want exhibit and committee not sure that church is the place for public art ...
- Committee questioned the appropriateness of public art: what constitutes public art? And does it fit in with byway themes? Might it be too expensive?
- Jim Klein clarified status of interpretive wayside signage: proposal for interpretive plan has been submitted – this does not cover actual construction, but concept development, language, developing the “look,” etc.
- Peter suggested using the National Park Service standards – more economic than custom and already have a family of options available
- Ros pointed out that use of NPS standard may be tied to funding

Marketing Approach:

Phase I

1. Interpretive panels
2. Brochures
3. Map pads
4. Website development

Phase II

1. Further internet development
2. Audio option
- (3. Perhaps explore small exhibits in Phase II – small, interchangeable parts -- see NPS Harper's Ferry)

Phase III

1. Guide book
2. Training guides
3. Public Art

Additional Comments/Questions:

- Jim Klein mentioned previous discussion about conducting a lecture series and other types of program
- Terri pointed out that April is Archeology Month and sites often do special programs then
- Special events and programs include re-enactments, cemetery tours, open houses, etc.
- Jim Gibb suggested opportunities for co-funding a lecture series
- Vidal was concerned that we were skipping steps – how can we talk about marketing if we are still developing our themes. Carolyn B. and Jim Klein explained that the two go together.
- Jim Gibb questioned the national significance of the byway. Peter explained that Southern Maryland is one of the four original colonial settlements. But Jim pointed out that it is hard to find a structure from before 1900 in Southern Maryland. Will people be willing to drive 300 miles to read a sign in front of the location where a building once stood but no longer stands? Peter explained that although the structures and settlements are so ephemeral, the landscape has remained constant. We must focus on what is unique to this place.
- Cathy pointed out need to differentiate Southern Maryland from Jamestown. Need to emphasize manor system and religious conflict.

Next meeting: January 31, 2008
1:30 – 3:30 pm
Charlotte Hall Library
Topic: Transportation and Wayfinding