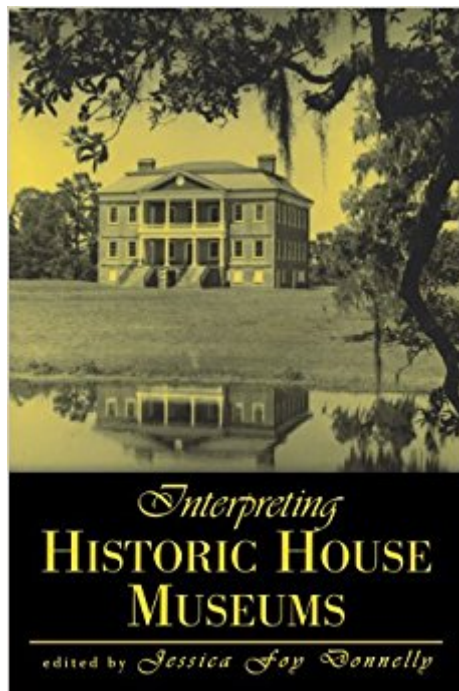


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# Interpreting Historic House Museums (American Association For State And Local History)



## Synopsis

Times are changing at historic house museums and no one is more aware of this than the fourteen contributors to *Interpreting Historic House Museums*. These respected museum professionals consider the history of house museums and the need to look at familiar issues from new perspectives and using new methods. If your site isn't using a comprehensive interpretive plan, how can you create one? While doing so, how do you address contemporary issues like race and gender? Don't forget the physical either—does your property need a landscape plan as well as a furnishings plan? And, when your visitors arrive to see all your hard work, how accessible is your property? If the answer is not very, what can and should you be doing to address that? Once inside, how good are your tours and guides, and does your furnishings plan allow visitors to maximize their experiences in areas without guides? *Interpreting Historic House Museums* captures the big picture and the important details. Its discussion of contemporary issues and successful programs, its practical guidelines and information, up-to-date references, and lively illustrations will make it useful and relevant for both students and practicing professionals.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The book is a volume in the American Association for State and Local History Book Series and will be of interest to museum professionals as well as anyone who enjoys visiting historic house

museums. (Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol.71 No. 3 Summer 2003)For those of us involved in interpreting house museums, this is the selection to make. . . . We now have a new body of guidance and encouragement as we work to locate a vital cultural niche for house museums in the twenty-first century. It is clear that if house museums are to remain viable, we must be able to assert their relevance and purpose to new audiences in a new century. Donnelly calls it a 'fundamental question of survival'. . . . Interpreting Historic House Museums highlights how crucial it will be to create and sustain a network of communication between people working with historic house museums in order to 'meet with vigor the interpretive challenges that lie ahead.'" (Patricia West, National Park Service The Public Historian)A collection of essays that achieves a balance between theories and their practical applications . . . Interpreting Historic House Museums covers a lot of territory and brings the profession up to speed on recent interpretive innovations. . . . The essays are thought-provoking and vivid illustrations of a variety of tours and educational programs. Interpreting Historic House Museums demonstrates just how diverse and exciting the stories of historic house museums can be. (Jennifer Pustz, Brucemore, Cedar Rapids The Annals Of Iowa, Vol. 62, No. 2, Spring 2003)Lively and relevant...a compendium of bright ideas for enlivening house museums...[has] novel contributions to the house museum literature. (Linda Young, University of Canberra Historic Environment, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2003)This book is a really practical resource for anyone involved in the interpretation of historic houses. It reminds us of the need to look at familiar issues with new perspectives and new methods to meet the sophisticated demands of today's visitors. The discussion of contemporary issues and successful programmes, practical guidelines and information make this a useful book for both students and practising professionals. (Ruth Taylor Interpretation, Vol. 8, Nr. 3, Autumn 2003)Donnelly's edited volume, Interpreting Historic House Museums, will no doubt become a valuable tool for historic house museum staff. . . I would recommend this book to museum studies students and to anyone considering establishing a historic house museum. . . the practical guidelines are useful and relevant. (Museums Australia Magazine)For those of us involved in interpreting house museums, this is the selection to make. . . . We now have a new body of guidance and encouragement as we work to locate a vital cultural niche for house museums in the twenty-first century.It is clear that if house museums are to remain viable, we must be able to assert their relevance and purpose to new audiences in a new century. Donnelly calls it a 'fundamental question of survival'. . . . Interpreting Historic House Museums highlights how crucial it will be to create and sustain a network of communication between people working with historic house museums in order to 'meet with vigor the interpretive challenges that lie ahead.' (Patricia West, National Park Service The Public Historian)Rich in case studies, this

book—like the symposia that spawned it—targets 'the small, understaffed, and underfunded' institution. It holds useful information for house museums of all types, however, while its integrative approach to interpretation renders many of its lessons pertinent to an assortment of historic sites. (Mary Munsell Abroe, Kendall College, Evanston, Illinois Journal Of The Illinois State Historical Society) The advice presented in these essays is less prescriptive than eminently practical, and clearly understands the realities likely to be met by those working with house museums. (Journal Of Museums Aotearoa)

Jessica Foy Donnelly was curator of collections at the McFaddin-Ward House for twelve years, during which time she co-edited *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services* and *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*. She is currently working on various house museum projects and previously worked for Old Salem, Inc., in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She received her B.A. in American studies and English from Salem College in Winston-Salem, and her M.A. in history museum studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program of the State University of New York at Oneonta.

Great reference. I got this book for my own interest in historical societies and for a project in one of my classes. I found it to be very helpful.

Son-in-law loved it

Yep, another book that I had to purchase for my Museum Interpretation class. There were three that I think are very important for my field, and this is one of them.

great book needed for class. thank you. great shape very informative. really a great read for those who like historic houses

This is a fantastic book and I highly recommend this book to anyone seeking to pursue a house museum whether not-for-profit, government entity or privately. It has information I never thought of and I found the book to be highly useful and credible.

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