



Kinship with the Past



The quarterly newsletter
of the NAI
Cultural Interpretation
& Living History Section

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Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario
Photo by Andrew A. Kling

Kinship with the Past
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Rungs from the Chair ***John C.F. Luzader***

C h a n g e s

When I was a young boy starting out in costumed interpretation, the field as a profession was relatively new to many national agencies and to the nation as a whole. The observance of the Centennial of the American Civil War was a primary instigator in the growth of costumed historical interpretation. Individuals, groups and agencies throughout the United States geared up for the great four year "celebration." Plans included numerous battle "re-enactments," living history camps, fancy balls, shooting contests, the formation of Civil War Roundtables, parties, parades, school programs and pageants and a variety of money making endeavors from buttons, cookbooks, beard growing contests, uniform and costume sales, to history books, food, drinks and lodging.

See "Rungs," p. 2.

Upcoming Events

November 11-15, 2003

National Interpreters Workshop

Sparks, Nevada

Contact:

Bill Lindemann, (530)525-3341(w)

(916) 525-3380 (fax)

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(775) 684-8116 (w)

(775) 687-8972 (fax)

mkimbrough@parks.state.nv.us

March 8-11, 2004

Region 4 Workshop

"Rooted in Our Past,

Branching Toward Our Future"

Bradford Woods, Martinsville, Indiana

Contact:

Vicki Loveland

(812) 335-1393

vickiml@bluemarble.net

**October 29, November 2, 9,
23, and December 7, 2003**

Certified Interpretive Guide Course

Carson Nature Center

Littleton, Colorado

Contact:

Information: Phil Waltz (x10)

or Skot Latona (x14)

at (303) 730-1022.

Register: (303) 347-5999

November 16-20, 2004

National Interpreters Workshop

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Tim Krynak

440-734-6660

Tjk@clevelandmetroparks.com

Sarah Reding

(269) 381-1574 ext. 17

sreding@naturecenter.org

Ann Bugada

(440) 256-2102

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"Rungs" from p. 1.

1961 found my family living in Sharpsburg, Maryland, site of the bloodiest battle in American history and the battle that gave Lincoln the "victory" he needed to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. (Oddly I am writing this on the anniversary of that battle). The town was abuzz with all types of groups preparing for the centennial celebrations and the great "kick off" event of the summer of 1961, the First Battle of Bull Run in Manassas, Virginia, a town I would later live in for eleven years.

Needless to say, all of us in the only school in town at the time were keyed up and in the middle of all the excitement. Local living history groups were recruiting drummer boys from the school, girls were designing and sewing dresses for various parties and parades, and the school was planning pageants.

We were blessed with a great deal of primary resource materials to pull from as well as a cadre of National Park Service personnel and historians that assisted in much of the planning and organization of many events, talks, events and programs.

We also had a ton of material that we could find and buy that would assist in our re-creations.

Down the hill from my home was a small gift shop that sold snacks, drinks, post cards, and battlefield debris - minie balls, original gun caps, uniforms and Civil War

rifles, pistols, swords and muskets. It was Mecca for all the boys and many men in town. At the time I was receiving a grand total of 25 cents a week allowance for regular chores and 5 cents per extra jobs around the house (watching my little brother, carrying groceries, washing the car, etc.) as well as a bit more when I mowed the neighbor's yard. These monies came into play in my endeavors of becoming a bone fide Civil War "soldier."

Minie balls cost a grand fee of five cents a piece for unmarred and unfired bullets, two for a nickel for fired and flattened bullets, and three for a nickel for the ones that soldiers had "foolishly" flattened into poker chips and carved into figures. Original gun caps were ten for a dollar and various battlefield "pick ups" - buttons, coins, shrapnel, horse harnesses, brass pieces, etc. - ran from five cents to one or two dollars. In the corner the shop had a rack of muskets that we all coveted. Their prices of \$25-\$50 dollars were beyond most of our means but not out of our dreams. The ultimate and most desired were the "Springfield" muskets. But the grand-daddy of all desires was the pistols and swords. They were fetching \$35-\$75 each, a fortune to us all.

I would regularly go into the shop with my week's allowance and strut out as the proud owner of a bottle of Coke, a box of Cracker Jacks (an army must be fed) and one or two complete minie balls, or gun caps, or some odd and unusual battlefield find. These were tucked away and saved for

See "Rungs," p. 3.

"Rungs" from p. 2.

the special events I knew I would attend. But most of all I wanted one of the muskets so that I might be a "real soldier."

The next two and one half years passed with my attending any Civil War event that Dad would be kind enough to attend, or that my Great Uncle Charles would be willing to take me to, or that the school or scout group was attending. I played simple drum tunes for Company B of the 5th Virginia Infantry, from Manassas to Antietam, to Fredericksburg, to Gettysburg, and finally Appomattox Court House.

In early 1963 Dad was being transferred to Washington, D.C. and we were to move to Manassas, Virginia. I had yet to acquire the coveted musket from the gift shop, but I had saved almost \$17 and I had a box full of caps, minie balls, battlefield finds, grape shot and "junk," as my older sister was fond of pointing out. In desperation I made what I thought would be my last trip to the gift shop. I approached the owner and asked what great weapon might be bought for \$17. He slowly (this is for dramatic effect, or maybe it just seemed a slow motion situation, like a car wreck) moved to the back of the room towards the gun rack. But he passed that by and instead went to the very rear corner of the building to a bunch of barrels we derisively called the "junk stuff." He took something out and brought it to the counter. There sat a rusty, dirty, beat up old Harpers Ferry pattern 1842 musket in the need of a great deal of care - the

least desirable of Civil War muskets to my cadre of friends and classmates. He said, "I can let you have it for \$15 since your Daddy is such a good friend and I'll throw in a pocket full of minie balls and caps. It doesn't look real pretty but it is safe to shoot." (All conversation is speculated upon due to the passing of many years and the fact that all I really heard was \$15 and free stuff to boot). Done! I walked out of the store with the musket, my pockets filled with minie balls, gun caps and my other hand toting a bag with two bottles of Coke and three Cracker Jacks and change!

I took my treasures home and tucked them away knowing that Mother would not want to worry about where they could be packed in the moving van. (Bull! I knew she would make me take the gun back and curse my Dad for rearing such a monstrous child.) On moving day I put the gun in the moving van when I volunteered to take my dad's hunting rifle and shotgun into the back ledge of the van. All were wrapped in an old army blanket. All the rest of my treasures were packed in a box with the rest of my "junk."

There was a great deal of heated discussion when the musket came to light in Manassas, but it was allowed to stay as Sharpsburg was nearly a two hour drive and it was "his money to do with as he wishes." That musket went with me for over ten years to events, battle recreations and shooting events. It was the first firearm I took apart, refinished and restored. It never won any shooting events, but it put me in a number of second and third

places. (An aside - in the early stages of my shooting events, bullet molds for Civil War muskets were costly and difficult to find, as were the percussion caps. With original musket balls running at three for a nickel and the caps at ten cents a piece, many of us used these original bullets and caps when shooting. I might mention that this included a number of NPS personnel and famous historians).

The old musket was joined by a number of other original firearms throughout the years and one year I was approached by someone new to living history at the Cedar Mountain event in Virginia and asked, "Would you be interested in selling that old gun?" Thus the musket was passed on. My investment of \$15 brought a return of \$175.

What a change in economics. But the field had changed as well. From using a great many original weapons, equipment, uniforms and materials, the field was now replete with reproductions that were not available in the 1960s. Attitudes about the preservation of the original materials had changed as well as having "re-enactments" on the hollowed land where the original battles took place. No longer did we have to use original bullets and caps in our shooting competitions; we could mold our own bullets or buy them at numerous sporting good stores as well as the black powder and caps needed to have the gun function. The field had taken a great deal of criticism:

*"We had the impression that
See "Rungs," p. 5.*

Archeology for Interpreters: a guide to knowledge of the resource National Park Service

America's archeological resources embody a rich heritage of human experiences and cultural identities. They tell us about people from the past and establish important connections to the present that interpreters help the public to understand. A great place to start learning about how to use archeology as an interpretive tool is the online guide, *Archeology for Interpreters: A Guide to the Resource* by the Archeology and Ethnography Program of the National Park Service. Created to help NPS interpreters discuss archeological resources with the public, interpreters at other sites can also benefit from using this guide to learn about incorporating archeology into their programs. The guide

answers questions about archeological methods, interpretation with archeological data, sensitivity in cultural resource matters, and encouragement of a sense of stewardship in youth.

Archeology for Interpreters is primarily designed for self-motivated learning. The goal is to increase your base of knowledge about the effective interpretation of archeological resources each time you visit the online guide. Through web links and suggested interpretive strategies offered in the For Your Information, Case Study, For Your Information, Try It Yourself, and Use What You Know, this guide presents examples of how archeological resources may be

effectively interpreted. A case study about the Hooe Dependency Site at Manassas National Battlefield Park in Manassas, VA applies the knowledge and skills of *Archeology for Interpreters* to a real-life excavation as an example of how to integrate the material into an interpretive presentation.

The Archeology Program of the National Park Service welcomes you to take advantage of this training guide at www.cr.nps.gov/aad/AFORI/Index.htm.

While you're there, please explore the features and other interesting items on the web site.

**We can lick gravity, but sometimes the paperwork is overwhelming.
-- Wernher von Braun**

Advertise in future issues of *"Kinship with the Past"*

"Kinship With the Past" welcomes paid advertisements from business and individuals related to our readers' interests. Ad copy needs to be camera ready.

Ad Deadlines are:

November 15, 2003 for the
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Spring 2004 issue
May 15, 2004 for the
Summer 2004 issue
August 15, 2004 for the
Fall 2004 issue

Fees:

		<u>NAI/CILH Members</u>		<u>Non- Members</u>	
		1x	4x (one year)	1x	4x
Business card	\$15	\$50	\$30	\$100	
1/4 page	\$25	\$85	\$50	\$170	
1/2 page	\$50	\$175	\$100	\$250	
Full page	\$100	\$350	\$200	\$700	

** Checks payable to NAI/CILH **

"Rungs" from p. 3 .

the park interpretive program lacks balance--that too much time of personnel is spent on fadism, the demonstration of musket use that in itself contributes little to visitor understanding of the park and its significance."

- Historians Robert Utley, Roy Appleman, and John Luzader

and even the emphasis had changed in interest from the American Civil War to the preparation of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution. Changes ... more sites, museums and schools were using costumed interpretation as a support to their messages and missions and as an educational tool. But many of the basics of the field remained.

With the advent of the American Bicentennial activities, more people became involved in cultural and costumed interpretation until by the 1990s, it was the largest group of interpretive volunteers in the world. And by the turn of the 21st century, the field took many changes, better costuming research, better reproductions, more affordable accessibility to reproductions, the Web as a research tool, more programs, better materials, more books, more sites and more desire for participation.

But some of the criticisms from the 1960s still apply. Too many sites, museums and agencies still use the field as a "dog and pony show" with little regard to having cos-

tumed and cultural interpretation fit the whole needs of the site or activity. It is often used unprofessionally and with little regard to the effect it has on the public and the interpreters. It is too often used as an attendance draw. Too often the same old formats are being used with little or no growth. The "It worked in the past, it must be OK" attitude has stifled a great deal of growth and professionalism in the field. I often wonder what the outcry would be if nature interpretation was treated in the same manner - the public wants bears; I know we don't have bears, but dress some dogs up as bears so we can show them bears. Let's have a bear escort the visitor through the park...

Programs have become stagnant and attendance is dropping at many sites, large and small. The public wants something better, something innovative and educational as well as entertaining. Accuracy is a desired outcome by the public; they do not want to find out that what they witnessed or experienced was wrong. They want their money's worth.

And so it is time for more change ... *progressive* change. I no longer use original bullets, percussion caps, and equipment on the field and would not think of doing so. The uniforms and reproductions I now use are greatly researched and authenticated. I have changed and my interpretations and programs have changed.

It is time that individuals, sites,

museums, agencies, schools and administrators have the courage, responsibility and ethics to change the field for the better. It is time to explore when to and when not to use costumed and cultural interpretation as just a hook to bring in people but to recognize that it is a hook that can benefit the locale and the public. It is time to move away from Candles, Butter and Soap demonstrations and costumed guides, inappropriate and inaccurate portrayals and move towards better representations of our collective heritages and pasts.

It is time for change.

Thus I have come to the "final rung" of my Chairmanship. I have taken a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction in being the Chair of the CILH section and strongly believe that the need for such a section and our expertise and abilities has been well demonstrated. I feel that the section has contributed a better understanding of the professionalism of our field to other interpreters, sites, and agencies and that the section has contributed to the professionalism and growth to NAI.

Keep up the good work and strive for better interpretive methods, ideas and programs. Remember the Passion!

I now climb down from the last rung. - JCFL



Interpretation, -ists and -ologies

Andrew A. Kling

I'm sure many of us have had the problem of explaining our profession to (excuse the term) outsiders, whether they be family, friends, or complete strangers. Just exactly what do "interpretation" and "interpreter" mean to the general public? Unfortunately, it seems, not much - not, at least, in the context of our profession.

The term "interpreter" connotes one who performs translation from a foreign language, but that in of itself is not a bad thing; in fact, I've used that to my advantage in programs. After introducing myself and saying, "I'm an interpreter," I then say, "People often say, 'Oh, what language do you speak?' Hopefully, I speak *your* language," and then go on to explain how interpreters research and then present information in a way that (hopefully) connects with our audience.

How many other professions have such a problem? I can't think of many, and I think it relates to -ists and -ologies. We know that a geologist is one who studies geology; similarly, we have biologists, pharmacists, psychologists, and so on. In some cases, specialists within a field have a larger category upon

which they can fall back; a pathologist can always say "I'm a doctor" without having to go into the intricacies of the profession. Even professions such as "historian" or "librarian" have, at their root, keys to what the individual does. But while we have individuals in our field who excel at living history or costumed presentation or historical research, these are sub-sections of a larger, and still little-known, occupation.

I think what our profession needs is an -ist or an -ology. We need a term we can use to both tweak the interest of our audience and to demonstrate we work in a specialized field.

Certainly the English language is flexible enough to allow us to create something that fits the bill. Certainly, new words are added to the language every year - who had heard of "blogging" a few years ago? As an example, let me tell you about a field that, not too long ago, literally created an -ology for itself. A gentleman who studied flags - their history, their design, their significance - felt that his passion needed an -ology, and reached back into Latin to find the word *vexillum*, meaning "flag" or "ban-

ner." This led him to coin the term "vexilliology" - the study of flags. This -ology, like so many others, can be transformed further into "vexillilogist" or "vexillilological," and once you know the root -ology, the rest are fairly straightforward.

Wouldn't it be great if interpretation had something similar? Imagine you're in a room of complete strangers, or on a flight somewhere, and someone asks you what you do, and you use interpretation's very own -ology, and suddenly the other person is confronted with a new word and wants to know more. What better way to spread the word (pardon the pun) about our special talents?

I do not pretend to know enough about Latin, or Greek, or any other root languages from which English descends, to offer a suggestion for our profession's own -ology. But certainly there must be many different possibilities. Maybe, at some future NIW, representatives of our art will gather to discuss a slate of options and vote on them. Maybe then, we can become practitioners of a profession with its own -ology and we can all be -ists of one specialty or another. 🌀

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The Language Police by Diane Ravitch

Book review by Bob Carter

**Instructor in Outdoor & Environmental Education, Department of Teaching and Learning
College of Education
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Editor's note:

This review originally appeared in the September 2003 "Buffalo Bull" (Region V's newsletter), and is reprinted here with the permission of the author.

Recently, while rummaging through our regional website, I read Tony Bormann's review [of *Indian Givers* by Jack Weatherford] and it inspired a thought to write a review ... of a book with broader relevance to interpreters as a part of the larger family of educational professionals; a work which deals directly with truth in education and the assault on it from both the fundamentalist right and the ultra-liberal left, an attack which is resulting in a revisionist policy for textbook and test publishers in this country. If people like those described in this book are left to wield their political power, no students will know of, much less read the likes of *Indian Givers* or [Ronald Wright's] *Stolen Continents*. That book is

The Language Police by Diane Ravitch. First let me say that I have not always been in agreement with Diane Ravitch. Although there are a few things she has written in this book I take issue with, there is much more right here than there is wrong. Who is Diane Ravitch? Currently she is Research Professor of Education at New York

University and a Fellow at the Brookings Institution. She has held posts under the presidencies of both George H. Bush and Bill Clinton.

What is so great about this book? Ravitch brings the skills of a talented researcher to the task of uncovering the subjugation of vitality, emotion, accuracy, and

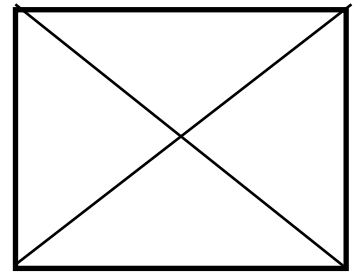
Why is this book important for interpreters? The issues raised in this book directly affect the largest part of the client base for many of us: students in grades K-12. As interpreters we may be visiting or hosting children who are not allowed to read about the very things we may be interpreting: the Underground Railroad, the Holocaust, the Trail of Tears, Hiroshima, the Great Depression, the chemistry and motion of the atmosphere, Mark Twain or Benjamin Franklin and Henry David Thoreau.

truth in K -12 text books and tests to the political and religious demands of powerful individuals and groups who have no business whatsoever poking their noses into education. Yet they do so regularly and obnoxiously. Ravitch documents the watering down or elimination of historical narratives from history books because they are

"controversial" or might upset children. One hopes that the Holocaust would upset any sane person but the "language police" don't want children exposed to that sort of imagery. The story of a blind mountain climber making it to the top of Mt. Everest was stricken from a literature text book because to imply that the feat was heroic, as the story does, implies that blind persons are less capable than sighted climbers. Never mind the fact that it is heroic for anybody to top Everest.

Instances of classic literature being altered to suit the "sensibilities" of pressure groups are rampant. Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, Anton Chekhov, Charles Dickens, and even Shakespeare, have been edited, altered, or eliminated in a campaign to sterilize and homogenize what children read in or out of school. These are only brief examples of the blatant and savage attacks on truth and originality in literature, history, science, and the arts.

Why is this book important for interpreters? The issues raised in this book directly affect the largest part of the client base for many of us: students in grades K-12. As interpreters we may be visiting or hosting children who are not
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allowed to read about the very things we may be interpreting: the Underground Railroad, the Holocaust, the Trail of Tears, Hiroshima, the Great Depression (these will make somebody feel bad); the chemistry and motion of the atmosphere, (global warming and ozone depletion will scare somebody); famous figures like Mark Twain (he used "bad" language) or Benjamin Franklin (questionable personal life) and Henry David Thoreau (he preached and practiced civil disobedience).

The list is as endless as it is shocking and disgusting.

I know and appreciate the reading, writing, and general work load all interpreters and interpretive managers face today, but this is a book I highly recommend to anybody concerned with education, good education. It blows the whistle on an insidious disease undermining the efforts of people who prefer the enlightened perspective of someone who has read the likes of *Indian Givers*, *Stolen Continents*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Huckleberry*

Finn, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *Walden*. The text portion of the book is only 170 pages and it is an easy read. I hope you find some time to give to it, and I hope what it has to say makes you angry.

The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn. (2003). Diane Ravitch. Alfred A. Knopf Publishing. 📖

The English Language
Anonymous

Why is it that writers write but fingers don't fang, grocers don't groce,
and hammers don't ham? Have you ever run into someone who was combobulated, grunted,
ruly or peccable? And where are all those people who are spring chickens or who actually *would* hurt a fly?