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## **Have Objects, Will Travel: Object-Based Outreach to Solstice Independent Living at Fairport, New York**

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Have Objects, Will Travel:

Object-Based Outreach to Solstice Independent Living at Fairport, New York

A THESIS SUBMITTED  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE  
IN MUSEUM STUDIES

DEPARTMENTS OF PERFORMING ARTS AND VISUAL CULTURE AND HISTORY

BY

Taylor Carpenter

May 2020

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of Taylor Carpenter submitted on April 23, 2020.

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Finally, thank you to my grandfather, Vance Carpenter, for living at Solstice for six years and inspiring me. I love and miss you, and wish you could have attended.

## **Abstract**

This thesis details my process in designing and delivering a program, “The Evolution of the Erie Canal,” to residents of the Solstice Senior Living at Fairport, New York, utilizing objects from the Rochester Museum & Science Center’s teaching collection. Given the ever-increasing population of American adults aged 55 and older, it is more important than ever for museums to create engaging programs aimed at this sector of the population. The goal of this project was to create a meaningful object-based experience for participants through discussion and reminiscence. My sources include findings from similar projects, literature on working with adult audiences, and research-based best practices for presenting to an older audience. This paper details my process in choosing objects, doing research, creating a PowerPoint presentation, and organizing the program content. The findings reported in this thesis include an analysis of the participant evaluations and my own post-program assessment. These are then synthesized into recommendations for anyone interested in doing a similar project in the future.

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## **I. Introduction**

Decades of improvement by museum professionals means that current museum programming is more innovative and engaging than ever before. From scout sleepovers at the museum to twenty-one and over evening programs, to holiday-themed days and pop-up gallery activities for the day-to-day visitor, most museums consider “engaging the public” within the scope of their responsibilities. These programming efforts fall short when considering the senior demographic who may not physically be able to get to the museum. Many older adults either cannot, or choose not to, drive their own vehicles, and in places where public transportation is limited or non-existent, this leaves them reliant on others to transport them to a museum. Alternatively, some do not have children, or their children live prohibitively far distances to reasonably take a day or evening to attend the museum together. Some may even feel out of place in a traditional museum setting: they had one bad experience years ago and do not feel welcomed back. There are myriad other reasons to explain why older adults cannot attend a museum program—the important takeaway is that in order to reach this important section of the population, a segment which may contain future donors and benefactors, programming efforts must expand beyond the four walls of the museum.

For my thesis project I created a lesson plan utilizing objects from the teaching collection at the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC) for a program titled, “The Evolution of the Erie Canal.” The program was about the ongoing transformation of the Erie Canal corridor through downtown Rochester. While today the RMSC mainly focuses on their science collections, they also have objects related to “the history and industry of the Genesee Region,”

which were my main sources of information.<sup>1</sup> My program used the changes in Rochester, from Erie Canal to subway to interstate highway, as a historical backdrop for the main goal of facilitating group discussion and reflection.

In February of 2020, I led the program at the Solstice Independent Living community (Solstice) in Fairport, New York. Fairport, a suburb of Rochester, is a small, predominantly white town of about 5,300 residents, situated along the Erie Canal.<sup>2</sup> It boasts good schools, low crime rates, and almost half of the residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, as opposed to the national average of thirty-one percent.<sup>3</sup> Solstice is a two-story collection of joined apartments which open into shared hallways. Residents have access to a fitness center, library, several parlors, media and game rooms, and a large dining area. While the community offers meals, light housekeeping, and a full calendar of activities, residents are fully independent and do not have any advanced medical conditions that inhibit daily life.<sup>4</sup> This location was originally chosen because my grandfather was a resident, and I recognize that, in general, the Solstice residents have better access to museums and museum programming than other adults of similar age. There were no similar historical programs in the schedule of daily activities, so I believe residents were quite receptive to the idea of historical programming in their own community.

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<sup>1</sup> "Our Mission," Rochester Museum & Science Center, n.d., <https://rmsc.org/about/mission-statement>. It is worth noting that the RMSC adopted a new mission statement in January, 2020. This statement reads "The Mission of the Rochester Museum & Science Center is to inspire a better future for all through curiosity, exploration, and participation in science, culture, and the natural world." Since most of the prep work for this thesis was done during the fall semester of 2019, I used the old mission statement in both my literature review and later on in the design phase of the program. However, the program ended up supporting both the old and the new missions.

<sup>2</sup> "Fairport, New York," in *Wikipedia*, December 24, 2019, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairport,\\_New\\_York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairport,_New_York).

<sup>3</sup> "Living in Fairport," Niche, accessed January 28, 2020, <https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/fairport-monroe-ny/>.

<sup>4</sup> "Solstice at Fairport Senior Living Benefits, Amenities in Monroe County, NY," *Fairport Senior Living* (blog), accessed January 28, 2020, <https://solsticeseniorlivingfairport.com/our-community/benefits/>.



This paper details my process in designing “The Evolution of the Erie Canal,” how it was received by my audience, the results of the program, and a review of participant evaluations. It begins with a literature review which covers the relevance of my project to the museum field, working with older adults, writing lesson plans, and object-based learning. The paper then discusses key choices I made during the program design process and concludes with a review of participant evaluations and recommendations for similar programs in the future.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **A. Relevance of this Project to the Field**

Stephen Weil proclaimed in 1999 that museums are no longer about a topic; rather, they exist to serve the public.<sup>5</sup> His landmark publication chronicled the sea change in museums from World War Two, when museums were considered successful merely by surviving, to the turn of the 21st century, when museums had to produce tangible impacts and had donors who held them accountable.<sup>6</sup> Nearly a decade later, Edward and Mary Alexander echoed Weil’s claim, saying that “the conveyance of culture and a commitment to community or social welfare have grown to be important aims for the museum in the last century.”<sup>7</sup> Now, a decade hence, I believe it is more important than ever for museums to focus not only on the community of visitors who walk through their doors and pay admission, but on the community that surrounds them, especially those who may not be able to get to the museum on their own.

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen E. Weil, “From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum,” *Daedalus* 128, no. 3 (1999): 229.

<sup>6</sup> Weil, 238.

<sup>7</sup> Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 2nd ed, American Association for State and Local History Book Series (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2008), 10.

As older generations age and younger generations have fewer children on average, the United States is projected to have more adults aged 65 or older than children by the year 2060.<sup>8</sup> While the abilities and living situations of the elderly vary dramatically between each individual, it is reasonable to say that on average, there will be more people in nursing homes and independent living communities than ever before. The museum community must change current programming tactics and create outreach initiatives to serve this incredibly vital sector of the population.

## **B. Unique Aspects of Working with Older Adults**

In 2015 Mardi Maxwell of John F. Kennedy University and her colleagues created a community profile for the Palo Alto Art Center. They found that seniors—defined by Maxwell as those over 65—of Palo Alto, California, all desired physical comfort, personal and low-tech activities, activities which work around their busy schedules, and to feel welcomed as guests when they are in the Center. Her findings hold true regardless of demographics and financial situation.<sup>9</sup> They can be used as a starting point when designing programs for seniors in any geographical location. Maxwell also found that engaging with the senior audience “can increase attendance, revenues, and donor relations,” as well as help an institution achieve their mission.<sup>10</sup> According to their website, the RMSC “stimulates broad community interest and understanding of science and technology, and their impact — past, present, and future — on our lives.”<sup>11</sup> “The

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<sup>8</sup> US Census Bureau, “Older People Projected to Outnumber Children,” The United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2018/cb18-41-population-projections.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Mardi Maxwell, “Engaging Senior Audiences – Part I: Community Profile,” Western Museums Association, n.d., <https://westmuse.org/articles/engaging-senior-audiences-%E2%80%93-part-i-community-profile>.

<sup>10</sup> Maxwell.

<sup>11</sup> Rochester Museum & Science Center. “Our Mission,” <https://rMSC.org/about/mission-statement>.

Evolution of the Erie Canal” will not only adhere to this mission statement, but also increase the scope of the community it impacts.

In *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor*, authors Susie Wilkening and James Chung focused one chapter on working with older women and another chapter on older men. They assert that older women are “the lifeblood” of museums across the country, spending their time visiting and volunteering and their money donating to their favorite institutions.<sup>12</sup> These older women will visit a museum with their spouses, friends, children and grandchildren, or by themselves. They enjoy supporting their community and learning about history and art.<sup>13</sup> While the visitation habits of women are not as important for my project, since it essentially brings the museum to them, it is important to note that older women generally find museums to be social places, and they favor history and art over science, zoos, or aquariums.<sup>14</sup> During the program I expected female participants to be motivated to attend at least partially for the social interaction, given Wilkening and Chung’s findings.

Older men, according to Wilkening and Chung, enjoy individualized experiences with hands-on opportunities. They prefer to work at their own pace, not be rushed along or slowed by a facilitator or tour guide. My expectation was that being able to handle the objects would appeal to the older men in the audience, and satisfy their wish for an exclusive opportunity as well.<sup>15</sup> Older men find the museum a place to visit with a spouse but not their friends, so I might have expected couples to attend the program together. The last important thing Wilkening and Chung

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<sup>12</sup> Susie Wilkening and James Chung, *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor: Building Engagement over a Lifetime* (The AAM Press, 2009), 105.

<sup>13</sup> Wilkening and Chung, 107.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Wilkening and Chung, 135.

note about older men is that they generally have a lot of money and are “philanthropically driven.” These men often are members of museums they want to support financially. Outreach programs, such as mine, could be a good way for other museums to encourage philanthropic connections with such men.<sup>16</sup>

### **C. Creating a Program**

In “Presenting Information to Older Adults,” Roger W. Morrell and Katharina V. Echt lay out some tips for making museum exhibits accessible to those with common health issues, including low vision and age-related cognitive decline. Printing any text in at least twelve-point font is recommended, fourteen if possible. Presenting information “in an explicit and familiar manner” is also recommended, to ensure maximum comprehension.<sup>17</sup> Morrell and Echt say that writing in short statements that utilize simple words and active voice are preferable. Finally, they recommend the use of illustrations, which they say increase comprehension across all age groups.<sup>18</sup> Knowing these recommendations helped me when it came to writing the lesson plan and typing up the written post-program survey.

Similarly, “Education Programs for Older Adults” explains several ways to make seniors feel comfortable before beginning a program. Since there can be such a variety of educational levels, a program must be designed to have something for everyone.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, many older adults participate in an experience known as “life-review,” where they reflect on the accomplishments and disappointments of their lives. This makes both acknowledging and

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<sup>16</sup> Wilkening and Chung, 127.

<sup>17</sup> Roger W. Morrell and Katharina V. Echt, “Presenting Information to Older Adults,” *Journal of Museum Education* 26, no. 1 (December 2001): 11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10598650.2001.11510433>.

<sup>18</sup> Morrell and Echt.

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth M. Sharpe, “Education Programs for Older Adults,” *Roundtable Reports* 9, no. 4 (1984): 3.

incorporating prior knowledge and experiences of paramount importance.<sup>20</sup> I chose my narrative to be centered on historical objects in order to capitalize on this tendency, since it was likely that program participants would already be accustomed to looking to the past. If any participant is unable to fully participate physically, sharing one's prior experiences can be a fulfilling way to still participate in the program. The historical objects I chose, which relate to both the narrative of the program and participants' lives, provide a space for all of the above.

The author also recommends having a short introduction to a program, so the facilitator can gauge participants' ability, interests, and prior knowledge on the program topic. Finally, the most important quotation from this source has to be "physical disabilities are not an indicator of mental disability."<sup>21</sup> I, as the facilitator, must make sure not to make conscious or unconscious judgements about any participants, and make every effort to tailor the program to suit their needs and interests.

Equally as important is Lois Silverman's idea that "communication is a process" between the facilitator and the participant, and in order to effectively interpret an object or a time period, both parties must work together to construct meaning.<sup>22</sup> Given this idea, the program took the form of a chronological guided dialogue about the historical changes of the canal corridor and the participants' personal experiences with each iteration of it. The dialogue aspect of the program set out to be beneficial to participants as they constructed meaning from the objects and beneficial to me, as I hoped to learn about their experiences as well.

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<sup>20</sup> Sharpe, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Lois Silverman, "Making Meaning Together: Lessons from the Field of American History," *The Journal of Museum Education* 18, no. 3 (1993): 8.

“Passionate and Purposeful: Adult Learning Communities” describes how people are often prompted to reflect and adjust previously-held assumptions or ideas when transitioning to a “new season” of life. This article advises that while all program participants may be of similar age, they most likely are not experiencing the same season, so this only adds to the already extensive differences between older adults.<sup>23</sup> The authors hypothesize that adult learning occurs most effectively in three steps: “engagement,” “reflection, evaluation, and analysis,” and “application.”<sup>24</sup> The lesson gave participants time to engage with the content, the end-of-lesson question regarding the future of the canal provided a space to apply new skills, and the evaluation step after the program allowed participants to reflect.

#### **D. Object-Based Learning**

Lois Hendrickson makes the case in “Teaching with Artifacts and Special Collections,” that teaching with objects can “humanize” the past, giving students a physical connection to those who came before them.<sup>25</sup> Object-based lesson plans are suitable to those with different styles of learning and various levels of ability, she argues, and using objects can also encourage collaboration between students. Since there is often a wide range of ability among the elderly, object-based learning is a great way to still reach all participants, even if they are suffering from various forms of impairment.

Likewise, Helen Chatterjee, Sonjel Vreeland, and Guy Noble of University College London brought museum objects to bedridden people at the University College London Hospital.

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<sup>23</sup> Luke Baldwin et al., “Passionate and Purposeful: Adult Learning Communities,” *The Journal of Museum Education* 15, no. 1 (1990): 7.

<sup>24</sup> Baldwin et al, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Lois Hendrickson, “Teaching with Artifacts and Special Collections,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine; Baltimore* 90, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 13

This experiment was open-ended: they brought many objects to participants with not much program facilitation and used pre- and post-object surveys to evaluate the success of it. These surveys showed that their experiment was a success: interaction with objects boosted the moods of participants.<sup>26</sup> Due to their success, Chatterjee and her colleagues then argue that museums must participate in outreach programs such as theirs to justify their budgets, impact, and community engagement.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, Christina Smiraglia of Harvard's Graduate School of Education brought a local collection of photography objects to residents of retirement communities in the Boston area. These objects included "stereoscopes, stereographs, a ViewMaster, and 11 historic cameras."<sup>28</sup> In her program, participants handled these objects, shared their own memories about photos they brought with them, and then participated in an instant-camera activity, to have a memory to keep once the program was over.<sup>29</sup> Smiraglia recorded data about each participant and conducted post-program interviews with those who wanted to talk. Following the programs, she found that, as noted by Hendrickson, being able to touch objects "provides greater access to those with vision problems," or those with varying levels of ability.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, she also found that sound was important as well: participants wanted to be able to hear the facilitator and fellow participants. This was important to keep in mind when running the program. In Smiraglia's sessions, most memories shared were inspired by the objects, but often related to participants' friends or family

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<sup>26</sup> Helen Chatterjee, Sonjel Vreeland, and Guy Noble, "Museopathy: Exploring the Healing Potential of Handling Museum Objects," *Museum and Society* 7, no. 3 (2009): 165.

<sup>27</sup> Chatterjee et al, 165.

<sup>28</sup> Christina Smiraglia, "Qualities of the Participant Experience in an Object-Based Museum Outreach Program to Retirement Communities," *Educational Gerontology* 41, no. 3 (March 4, 2015): 239, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2014.954493>.

<sup>29</sup> Smiraglia, 239.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 241.

members. Finally, Smiraglia concluded that structuring her program around a central theme, hers being photography, was incredibly important.<sup>31</sup> When designing the program, I took this advice to heart.

### **III. Methodology**

#### **A. Choosing a Program Topic**

When I was doing research, I decided on “toys” as the central theme for my program. While specific toys may vary based on era and socio-economic background, every child plays with something while growing up. I believed the concept of toys would be universal and would tap into the memories of my audience, even if perhaps some of them were experiencing various stages of memory loss. Naturally, I wanted to work with The Strong National Museum of Play, since they are also located in Rochester and are known across the country for their collection of toys. After some networking and emails back and forth, The Strong informed me that they do not have a teaching collection that I could use for my project.

Once this original plan fell through, I reached out to Dr. Calvin Uzelmeier, Director of Featured Content, Exhibition Support & Special Projects at the RMSC. Dr. Uzelmeier is also an adjunct professor at RIT and taught Museum Education and Interpretation, which initially sparked my interest in working with older adults for my thesis project. Through various class projects he had my Museum Education class work on, I knew the RMSC had a teaching collection that could be taken off-site. Dr. Uzelmeier put me in touch with RMSC Youth Programs Supervisor Stephanie Hildreth, and she allowed me to come in to take a look and see what was available. Unfortunately, toys proved exceedingly difficult to research since many in

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<sup>31</sup> Smiraglia, 247.



the RMSC's teaching collection do not include serial numbers or a year they were manufactured. Additionally, I struggled to create a cohesive narrative and lesson plan using toys as a focus. These two problems rendered my original topic almost impossible to conceptualize, let alone actualize.

Next, I tried to think of a different topic that, while solving the two problems arising from the toys, was related to the RMSC collection. I settled upon the Erie Canal corridor in Rochester for a couple of reasons. First, it was much easier to research than the toys were, so creating a framework for my narrative and lesson plan was also easier. The canal, subway, and interstate highway are things that the Solstice residents would potentially be familiar with, since they are prominent features of western New York, specifically Rochester. Solstice is located less than a mile from both Interstate 490 and the current route of the canal, so it is likely the residents interact, at least superficially, with these structures on a regular basis. It also seemed likely they would identify with the canal topic more than a collection of random toys from the RMSC, and I hoped that some of them might remember when the subway existed. Knowing my audience would already be familiar with the basics of my topic allowed me some added flexibility and creativity when choosing objects and the narrative of the program.

When I was focused on the toy theme, I believed that I would find objects and then construct a program around the objects available to me. In between the toys idea and my final idea, I had to rethink how I could create a meaningful program if just starting with loosely related objects was not a good strategy. I talked with Dr. Juilee Decker and she suggested I create a basic outline of the story I wanted to tell, then identify places that could be strengthened by the presence of an object. It was after this conversation that I turned from an object-based strategy of creating the program to a narrative-based strategy.

For the Erie Canal corridor theme, I outlined the different historical eras that I had prior knowledge about and then did some quick research on Google to fill in specific dates: the canal was completed, for example, in 1825. Then I identified, as Dr. Decker suggested, places where an object might be useful, and I tried to brainstorm different objects the RMSC might have in their collection that would work with the story I wanted to tell. This worked in tandem with my visits to the RMSC to design the final version of the program, as seen in the next section.

## **B. Choosing Objects from the Rochester Museum & Science Center**

To choose the objects I would use, I made three site visits to the RMSC: once in the fall semester with the goal being toys, another in early January with the new goal of the Erie Canal, and finally in early February to sign the objects out and bring them with me to Solstice. During each of the preliminary visits, I took photos of every object I found which fit my goals and took notes about them on a notepad. The photos and notes were extremely helpful when trying to do work after I returned home, since I had a clear, precise record of everything I had done at the museum. After each of the preliminary visits, I attempted to outline the program utilizing the objects I had chosen. Each attempt brought me closer to my final product by identifying holes in the narrative which could be filled with objects or by changing the trajectory of the program.

The final, overarching theme of the program was the Erie Canal, but the true goal of the program lay in the interactions I wanted to elicit from the audience. Therefore, I focused on choosing objects which would invite discussion among the program participants, not necessarily objects that dated exactly to the time periods I was talking about. While the teaching collection at the RMSC was large, there was very little, if any, metadata about the objects in it, or at least none to which I had access. This made knowing exact dates of objects, for example a pair of ice

skates, nearly impossible, and I had to rethink my strategy. I chose to include ice skates because of old images I had seen of people skating on the canal and because they were an item in the RMSC's teaching collection. It would have been nice to have a pair of ice skates that dated exactly to the 1820s when the canal was brand new, but it was much more realistic and attainable to choose an old-looking pair of ice skates that may conjure up memories from the program participants.

Signing out the objects on my third and final visit was an incredibly easy process. I emailed Stephanie to coordinate and came in two days before the program happened. She unlocked the room for me and let me choose the objects I wanted. When I was finished, I brought them to her office. Stephanie wrote down what each of the objects were, accession numbers for each, a quick condition report, and had me sign and date the page. We mutually agreed that I would bring them all back that weekend, after the program happened. I am very thankful for the RMSC's assistance and cooperation regarding this thesis project, as without them it would not have been possible.

### **C. Designing the Program**

At the suggestion of one of my advisors, I created a statement of purpose for myself in regard to the program, and another for my audience. While they changed a few times during the process, I ultimately decided on two final statements. These statements were purely for my own use and did not show up in the final program. My personal statement of purpose was, "I want to create a positive experience for my audience in the context of a historical story that relates to the museum, but more specifically focuses on their memories." My statement of purpose for my audience was, "I want my audience to connect to the objects and the history, to me, to each other,

and to themselves.” These statements combined ideas from other case studies I had read, mainly the Smiraglia paper, as well as the mission statement of the RMSC and my own views on the project.<sup>32</sup> For the rest of my program design phase, I referred to these two statements whenever I had to make a crucial decision. When weighing my options, I would ask myself which option best supported my statements and chose the best option based on this. It was useful to have a written set of values against which I could measure the benefits and drawbacks of all my ideas.

According to Maxwell, seniors like to feel welcomed to a museum, and although they attended my program in the same building where they reside, I still wanted to open it by welcoming them.<sup>33</sup> I built five to ten minutes into the beginning of the program to introduce myself, and if there were not too many participants, for them to introduce themselves as well. Since a lot of the program was discussion-based, it seemed important to establish trust between the participants and me to ensure everyone would feel comfortable adding their voices to the conversation.

During one of my thesis board meetings, my advisors suggested I consider moving in a backwards chronological order for the presentation: starting with what people are most familiar with and building on their more recent memories to discuss the older concepts. While this idea of moving non-linearly through time was not a bad way to organize the presentation, I ultimately decided it made the most sense to arrange the presentation chronologically. I decided this partially because it was easier to conceptualize while creating it, and partially out of concern for those in the audience who may have trouble focusing or come in halfway through the program. It

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<sup>32</sup> Smiraglia, 238–48; “Our Mission.”

<sup>33</sup> Maxwell.

would be easier for them to re-immense themselves in the program if it followed the natural historical timeline.

Once I had the layout of the program and the objects chosen, it was just a matter of putting together a PowerPoint presentation and making a Word document with questions to correspond to each section. While the PowerPoint would be acting as a supplement to the discussion and objects, the Word document was intended to be notes for myself during the program and was not something that the participants would read or see themselves. I chose Microsoft Office software as a tool because I am familiar with it, and I already had both the Word and PowerPoint applications on my laptop. I considered making a Google Slides presentation, but I was unsure if I could access Wi-Fi while at Solstice and knew that Microsoft Office products do not require Wi-Fi. I utilized the Rochester Images Database on the website of the Rochester Public Library (RPL) to fill my PowerPoint with images.<sup>34</sup>

Each section of the PowerPoint – canal, subway, and interstate – had an image of a historical map so that those unfamiliar with downtown Rochester would have a basic idea of what I was talking about. Then I tried to choose images that captured the feel of the era, whether it be people skating in fur hats or women in full 1950s skirts boarding the subway. I also chose images of the same subway station before and after demolition, an aerial view of the “can of worms” merger between I-490 and I-590 in eastern Rochester, and an image of the RMSC’s “Rochester in 1838: Young Lion of the West” diorama to really tie things back to the museum. On the conclusion slide I included an image of the canal in the center of Fairport. Between including the maps and other images, I ended up with two to three slides per section. My two

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<sup>34</sup> “Monroe Country Library System, Rochester Images Database Search,” accessed February 6, 2020, <https://catalogplus.libraryweb.org/?section=search&term=Rochester%20Images%20digital%20collection>.

introduction slides and conclusion slide brought the total slide count to eleven. Eleven was an arbitrary number driven by the content I wanted to share and the slide layout I deemed best suited to impart said content during this phase of my project.

I purposely made the slides very image-heavy for a couple of reasons. First, image-heavy slides meant that I did not have to worry about the readability of the slides from a distance. The smallest font I used was 20-point, with most of the text in 28- and 40-point. The smaller the font, the less important the information it conveyed, such as my major and a written encouragement to stay after and talk, things I was going to cover verbally anyway. The main questions, titles of slides, and other important information were all in the largest font I could use while still have everything fit nicely on the slides. Additionally, I did not want the slides to take away from the discussion and objects. Since my focus was strengthening relationships and inspiring memories rather than imparting knowledge, I did not want a PowerPoint to be the sole focus, as it can often be in a classroom setting. The PowerPoint was necessary to jumpstart the conversations, as some people might have memories triggered by visual aids, and there were not enough objects to run the program with objects alone.

For the Word document I made, my advisor suggested that I create a laundry list of questions related to topics I wanted to cover. Once I had established the program framework, I inserted these questions into logical positions in it. I also kept the long list at the bottom of the plan for the program, in case I sensed that my audience wanted to go in a direction I had not planned for, or in case the questions I planned to use did not elicit the audience engagement I anticipated.

In her online blog, Nina Simon outlined challenges and opportunities for visitor participation in different types of museums. Her two main concerns regarding history museums were the museum's desire for "accuracy or authenticity" and making sure to avoid validating people's "hateful or offensive views."<sup>35</sup> Though I was more focused on creating a meaningful experience rather than distributing knowledge, I still made sure to check and double check my facts. I wanted to have enough facts on hand that if someone said something obviously incorrect (e.g.: "the canal was built in 1942, when I was 5") I would have some kind of response (e.g.: "no, the canal was completed in 1825, but perhaps they did work on it in the 1940s"). I was also slightly concerned about making sure to leave room for others' stories while not validating problematic viewpoints. The long list of questions, which could serve as ample opportunities to switch topics if need be, was another way to combat possible issues that arose from audience participation.

I organized each section of the Word document by slide, with each top-level bullet point listing the corresponding slide number. For example, "Slide 2: Welcome." Each lower-level bullet point was a quick note referring to important things I wanted to cover, for example, "Taylor, from RIT, doing my thesis re: outreach w/help from RMSC and library website." This was not a professional-looking document, but it did not matter since I was the only one who would see it. Prior to the program I printed this document, which came out to be three pages long, and brought it with me to reference throughout the duration of the presentation.

For an example of how I imagined the Word document, PowerPoint, discussion, and objects would work together, I will focus on the first section of the program after the

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<sup>35</sup> Nina Simon, "How Different Types of Museums Approach Participation," *Museum 2.0* (blog), February 9, 2010, <https://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2010/02/how-different-types-of-museums-approach.html>.

introduction and welcome slides: the Erie Canal. I had three slides for this section (see Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3). On the Word document (see Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3), my notes looked like this:

- Slide 4: Here's the canal in a map from 1900
  - Do you know what you're looking at here? Who's familiar with this area?
  - What can you notice about it? Is it in the same place the canal is today?
- Slide 5: Skating
  - What would ice skates have to do with the canal?
  - Have you used skates like these? Maybe while growing up?
  - Where would you skate?
- Slide 6: RMSC Diorama
  - Last question: What came after the canal?

My plan was to have the PowerPoint as a place to start the discussions, then as a backdrop once people began to feel comfortable and started participating. The photos on each slide were intended to trigger possible memories my audience might have, and I chose questions for each slide to assist with that. Then, once we had established a good rapport with the photographs on the slides, I planned to circulate the objects to further stimulate my audiences' memories.

#### **D. Designing the Evaluation**

Once I had completed most of the program design, I set out to design a succinct paper evaluation for participants that would answer questions which could not be provided by merely observing them throughout the program. The finished evaluation can be seen in the appendix in Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2. It was important to me that the entire evaluation fit on one page of paper for ease of use, and to leave enough space for any other responses participants wanted to record that I may not have anticipated. I also wanted to include an optional demographics section to see how closely my hypothesis of Fairport's average residents matched the actual attendees. The demographics section would be optional in case anyone felt uncomfortable writing down



that sort of information. I included a disclaimer stating this at the top of the demographic section to ensure that those who filled out the survey knew they did not have to record their name and that the surveys would be purely for my own use following the program. I printed twenty of these, double-sided, for use on the day of the program.

## **IV. Case Study**

### **A. Location-Based Preparations**

On January 31st, a week before I ran the program, I visited Solstice to inspect the room in which I was scheduled to present. I checked for outlets to charge my laptop during the presentation, the size of the room, how to get to the room from the front door, and a few other details. Were I to run this program regularly I do not believe I would need to visit the site a week prior every time. Since this was my first time running it, though, visiting the site and removing many of the unknowns from the situation helped relieve some of the nerves I felt the day I ran the program. I also got a chance see the size of the television I would be using to display my PowerPoint and start thinking of how I wanted to set up the chairs and tables. Prior to arriving the following week for the program, I knew exactly what I needed to bring and approximately how I would be arranging the chairs. This eliminated nearly all the unknowns and made program day go as smoothly as possible.

### **B. Running the Program**

Friday, February 7th my “assistant” and classmate, Brienna Johnson-Morris, and I drove through a snowstorm to Solstice and arrived very early, having overestimated the time to get there due to the snow. We pushed all the square tables together into one large rectangle and arranged twelve chairs around three sides of the table, with the fourth side reserved for the

objects, the television, and me. This seemed to be the best way to have all participants included, so they could look at one another and still see me and the television. Another way to set up the room would have been to have small groups at individual tables, but I thought that was less conducive to the large group dynamic I wanted to create. While we were setting up, two women came into the room and asked what was going on. I told them and invited them to come back in about half an hour when the program would begin. They seemed disappointed that we had not brought along snacks, so Brie and I went quickly to the local grocery store and picked up chocolate chip cookies, popcorn, and small water bottles.

We plugged my laptop into the television and set up the chairs so that I was seated at the table with the television behind me. Brie got her own chair underneath the television and she was in charge of changing the slides for me. It would have been helpful to have a slide advancing remote, but having Brie do the slides worked out fine. This also had the added benefit of preventing me from reading off the slides, forcing me to keep my attention entirely focused towards the participants. Brie also took some photos for me during the program, those can be found in the appendix, Figures 7, 8, and 9.

When we returned nearly all of the twelve chairs were filled, and smiles filled the room as we passed around the food and drinks. While the program was scheduled to start at 4:00 p.m., I waited until everyone had a chance to take some food and a few more people trickled into the room before beginning. My presentation began with an introduction about myself, and posed the question, “how can objects from the museum help us talk about the history of the canal in Rochester?” This question was my way of introducing the themes of the program and was intended as an overarching question for people to consider.

Following this introduction, I made time to do a group introduction. Since there were a lot of people, thirteen who stayed the entire time but seventeen total, I did not think it would be productive to do individual introductions. Instead, I asked questions such as “who grew up in the Rochester area?” and “who was around in the 1960s?” and participants chose to raise their hands as an answer. These questions were ones I had prepared on the Word document, but I ended up using them as the introduction rather than during the segment immediately after the introductions. Doing this not only established a beginning sense of community for the participants, but also allowed me to better understand my audience before diving into the bulk of the program. For example, over half, but not all, of the audience raised their hands to say they grew up in Rochester, so I knew that there were many people who may not have had first-hand experience with the Rochester subway. This meant I had to change my delivery slightly, rather than just assuming everyone would know what I was talking about, and explain the more recent history a little bit more. I had anticipated a smaller audience but all the prep-work I did prior to the program day in February enabled me to pick and choose options that seemed best suited to the audience in front of me.

The rest of the presentation moved chronologically, starting with the canal, then the subway, and finally ending with the interstate highways. Since my goal, as expressed in my personal mission statements, was to create a positive experience and strengthen a sense of community between audience members rather than to impart knowledge, I asked many open-ended questions throughout the duration of the program. Each different section of the presentation was accompanied by a historical map showing the canal corridor during the time period I was talking about. For the canal section, I asked questions such as “do you know what you’re looking at here?” and “who’s familiar with this area?” I gave people a chance to answer,

waited until several people answered, then built off their responses to further clarify the map for those who may have still been confused.

After we discussed a little about the canal, I asked them what ice skates might have to do with it and gestured to the two skates I had brought from the RMSC. One man suggested they might have been used for skating on the canal, jumpstarting the conversation. None of the participants had actually skated on the canal themselves, but we talked about skating during the winter in general and some people shared memories of skating while growing up. While this was going on the skates were being passed around, one in each direction around the table. The audience was visibly excited at the chance to handle the objects and as they passed them around small conversations broke out across the room. “Wow, that’s heavy!” and “oh my God, look at this!” were common pieces of conversation I could hear, as well as people comparing the two different skates and commenting on the materials from which they were made. The objects also triggered various memories and questions that I had not anticipated, such as one woman’s story about her ancestors who helped build the section of the canal near Palmyra and, “why don’t people still skate on the canal today?” These comments and questions indicate that the audience was connecting with the history and their personal experiences with the canal, rather than just the general facts. This was one indicator that my program mission statement, specifically “creat[ing] a positive experience for my audience” that “focuses on their memories,” was achieved.

After the skates and canal, we talked about the subway. Again, I began with a map and some questions, “do you remember your first subway ride?” and “did you/your parents ever use the Rochester subway?” This section was the only section for which I did not have a corresponding object and I believe the participants were slightly less focused due to this. During this part of the program there were several questions about the subway, such as why it was

removed, and what time period it existed in. I also learned that several people in the room were from Pennsylvania and one was from Connecticut, so they did not have a personal connection to the subway. Additionally, there were conversations about the food, such as “can you pass the popcorn?” and “eat your cookie!” which indicated to me they were not as immersed in the program as they had been during the canal section. One woman raised her hand to indicate she had taken the Rochester subway when she was younger, but either did not remember or did not want to share where she would take it to and from. Another woman shared that she and her friends would ride the subway for the sake of riding it, and a third woman said her first subway ride was only a few years ago when she was in her eighties. A man towards the back kept cupping his hand to his ear like he was having trouble hearing, so I did my best to speak up.

When the subway-related conversations began to diminish, we moved onto the third and final section about the interstate highways. For this section I had two yellow toy trucks from the museum. While passing them around I joked that Solstice would not let me bring full-size trucks into the room, so these would have to suffice, and several people laughed at that. I had planned that this would be the most robust section of the presentation, since Solstice is located in a suburban area so all the residents were much more likely to have used the highways than the canal or subway. However, they were not very talkative during this section. One woman had a conversation with her neighbors and brought out her wedding photo from 1950, while another man began to tell me about his time working for the jail in downtown Rochester. Here I was conflicted, as it seemed that no one wanted to talk about the highways, and several people were looking disinterested and bored, but at the same time there were some great memories being shared with me and people’s neighbors. This was the embodiment of the conflict between staying dedicated to my plan for the day and leaving space for participation. While I floundered

in the moment and switched to the final object I had brought to appease the folks who looked disengaged, I wish I had been able to hold the room in this space a bit longer. The memories and conversation, though only among several participants, were great contributions.

My final object, a tin cup, was the one object I had brought that I did not fully incorporate into the Word document plan. I had an idea of what I wanted to say with it but forgot to include it in the document and thus had to circle back to the canal after we had gone through the rest of the PowerPoint. The idea I wanted to cover with the cup stemmed from a conversation I had had with my advisors several weeks prior, about how the creation of the canal allowed for delicate and expensive items, like porcelain, to make their way upstate for a much lower cost. We talked about this and if anyone had noticed improvements in shipping during their own lifetimes while they passed around the cup. Similar to the other objects, people commented on the object as it made its way around the room, “wow, that would hold quite a bit!” One person commented, “the canal *would* be quicker than a stagecoach,” and others brought up some less related ideas, the song Pennsylvania 6-500 and the collection at the Fairport Museum. These kinds of conversations indicated that though they were not directly related to the cup, the participants were making their own connections and bringing up their own memories.

Once the cup made it back to my side of the table, I switched to the final slide. The final slide (Figure 1.11) had a photo of the canal in Fairport, an image of people ice skating, and an encouragement to stay after and talk, if they felt so inclined. I asked everyone to please stay and fill out an evaluation. Brie and I passed the evaluations and pens around and from what I could tell in that moment, everyone looked at them. One woman who had just arrived took one and put it in her pocket. Another woman finished hers and asked, “can we leave now?” to which I replied of course, and then slowly people trickled out. The program had finished.

## **V. Results**

### **A. Immediately After the Program**

Once most of the room had emptied, Brie and I picked up the objects, evaluations, and pens. We cleaned up the extra food and put the television back to its original channel. One woman was very talkative after the program and stayed to tell us about her experiences with the canal. Since it was nearing five-o'clock, we began resetting the tables while still listening to her. She did not help us move the tables but did tell us the correct arrangement of chairs per table, which was helpful. After about ten to fifteen minutes she left, and we finished packing up. We each took some notes of things we had noticed during the program, which were added to the shorthand notes I took during the program itself (Figures 5 and 6). I was very proud of how things had gone and left Solstice happily: the stress of this stage of my thesis was finally off my shoulders.

### **B. Analysis of the Participant Evaluations**

Despite nearly all seventeen program participants staying after the program to take an evaluation, I only received six back. Four of these were completely filled out, front and back (Figures 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6), and two were filled out only on the front side (Figures 4.1 and 4.3). The optional demographics section was on the back side, so I only received four demographic responses. Of these, two were filled out by men and two by women. Ages were fairly consistent, two responses were 70-79, one 80-89, and one 90-99. All four respondents had lived outside of Rochester. Education levels varied greatly: one high school, one associate degree, one bachelor's degree, and one "other." Two respondents were widowed, one was married, and one did not respond. Four responses are not indicative of the entire room,

unfortunately, but they gave me a good starting point. I would also like to note that with the exception of one woman who came in at nearly the end of the program, all the participants were either white or white-passing, which is consistent with my hypothesis based on Fairport's demographic information.

Overall, the evaluation responses were positive. People enjoyed the program, specifically the subway, "the speaker," and the history combined with discussion. It was interesting that they mentioned enjoying the subway section while I felt most of the audience being less engaged than they were during the first and last sections. Perhaps there were many varying interests and some people liked the sections that others disliked, or maybe my own perception of the presentation was different than the participants'. The most common complaint was that they anticipated it would focus more on the canal, which I can understand given the title, "The Evolution of the Erie Canal." Five out of six responses liked the inclusion of the museum objects and would have liked to see more. The sixth respondent left solely a question mark, which makes me think he was either unfamiliar with the term "object" or was one of the people who came in a little later and missed the bulk of the presentation. Half of the respondents had visited the RMSC before and four indicated they were now inspired to visit in the future. One respondent specifically stated they did not want to visit the museum. One left this question blank but indicated that he is an RMSC member. This is consistent with Wilkening and Chung's *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor* findings that men are often members of institutions they want to support financially. Two respondents indicated that they want Solstice to offer programming like this in the future, and the other four left the question blank.

While I would have liked a more thorough collection of evaluations from more than half the room, I am pleased with the responses I have. There is a possibility that the results are



positively skewed: only people who liked me and the presentation wanted to take the time to write out a response. The way to gauge a more accurate response from the room would be to make evaluations mandatory and continue running the program multiple more times to get a larger sample size. While this would be beneficial, especially for analysis, due to the constraints of this thesis, running the program once would have to be sufficient.

### **C. Reflections on the Program Design and Delivery**

While working through the program design process, I faced several challenges. First, it was difficult to find objects that worked with the story I wanted to tell. My first attempt, toys, was thwarted by the difficulty of constructing a narrative around it. My second and final attempt was hindered by limitations of the RMSC's teaching collection with regards to the narrative I wanted to tell. While the teaching collection includes a robust assortment of natural science and indigenous objects, there were not as many objects as I would have liked that related directly to my narrative. I remedied this by using the Rochester Images Database from RPL in the PowerPoint, which worked well to create my final product, but did not completely align with my original vision of creating a program based completely on objects.<sup>36</sup> Had I had access to the entire RMSC collection, perhaps my program could have been based completely on objects, but this is unrealistic due to object security and conservation concerns. It is here that I ran into complications that museum employees encounter often, balancing object-based activities with the long-term care of the collections.

Museums often exist to conserve objects for public appreciation, but the line between conserving for the sake of conserving and conserving for the public good can be a challenging

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<sup>36</sup> "Monroe Country Library System, Rochester Images Database Search."

one, and choices must be made. In an ideal world objects would not suffer damage when exposed to the elements or handled by the public, however this is unrealistic and in order to preserve history for future generations replicas, models, and photographs oftentimes must be used in place of the real objects. Therefore, I needed to choose objects from the limited teaching collection at the RMSC, and find creative ways, like the RPL images, to fill any spaces where the teaching collection was not sufficient. I am unsure if a different institution would have a more robust teaching collection, though it would be something to consider for future iterations of this program. Additionally, the topic of the program could be changed to better reflect the objects in the teaching collection at the RMSC so that the program could be more grounded in the objects.

#### **D. Recommendations for Similar Future Programs**

During the design phase the idea of running the program multiple times at other locations was brought up. While it was an intriguing idea and would have been rewarding to show what I have worked so hard on to more people, ultimately I only ran the program a single time. This decision was made in conjunction with my primary advisor after several conversations. Timing, amount of effort to coordinate new locations to present, length of this paper, and the reality that I have other projects outside of this class to work on were all contributing factors to this decision. That being said, I have many ideas of how this program could be improved, by me or someone else in the future, and they are listed below.

I would recommend that anyone doing a similar project, if possible, also visit the program location prior to the date the program is scheduled to run. It helped me to visualize how the room would be set up and how I would share the PowerPoint, which eliminated a lot of potential day-of logistical issues.

I would include only one slide per section because during the presentation there were not obvious places to move from one slide to the next within each section. Especially in the final section, the interstate highways, we did not move to the second slide of images because there were so many conversations between neighbors, and we went in a quite different direction than I had originally anticipated. Having only one slide per section would have prevented me from fumbling a bit while also trying to pay attention to people's memories and comments, which were the real reason I was there in the first place. While it was nice to have multiple images to encourage discussion, ultimately I think the slides could have been pared down to just one per section for ease of delivering the program and making it flow better.

Were I to do my program again, I would include a "flip this page over" arrow at the bottom of the evaluations. I had verbally told people the paper had two sides but there were still two people who skipped the back of the paper entirely, so verbally was not enough.<sup>37</sup> It might also be worth considering providing an incentive to filling out the evaluation, such as everyone who fills out the evaluation gets entered into a raffle or gets a small prize. This would increase the sample size at each location the program ran, which would improve the overall data I received.

Thinking back, many of the memories participants voiced were connected to places they had visited or things they had done when they were younger. Future programming to similar audiences may benefit from including more targeted objects and photographs that would further stimulate their memories. This would be somewhat difficult if using the same style of program

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<sup>37</sup> This reminds me of my seventh grade English teacher, Mrs. Metcalf, who told us if we only learned one thing from her that year, she wanted it to be "there are always two sides to every paper."

which I used. Repeated engagement with the same audience might be best, so the facilitator could know general likes and dislikes and plan accordingly.

For future iterations of this program I would want to choose a different location where the average population did not enjoy so many privileges in day-to-day life. My initial idea was to bring the museum to people who would not be able to make it to the museum on their own. Given Fairport's demographics, it is likely that if any of the people at Solstice wanted to visit the museum, they would be able in terms of affording the cost of admission. In the evaluations many people had already visited the museum, so although they did have a new, facilitated experience, I did not introduce the museum to as many people as I had originally wanted.

## **VI. Conclusion**

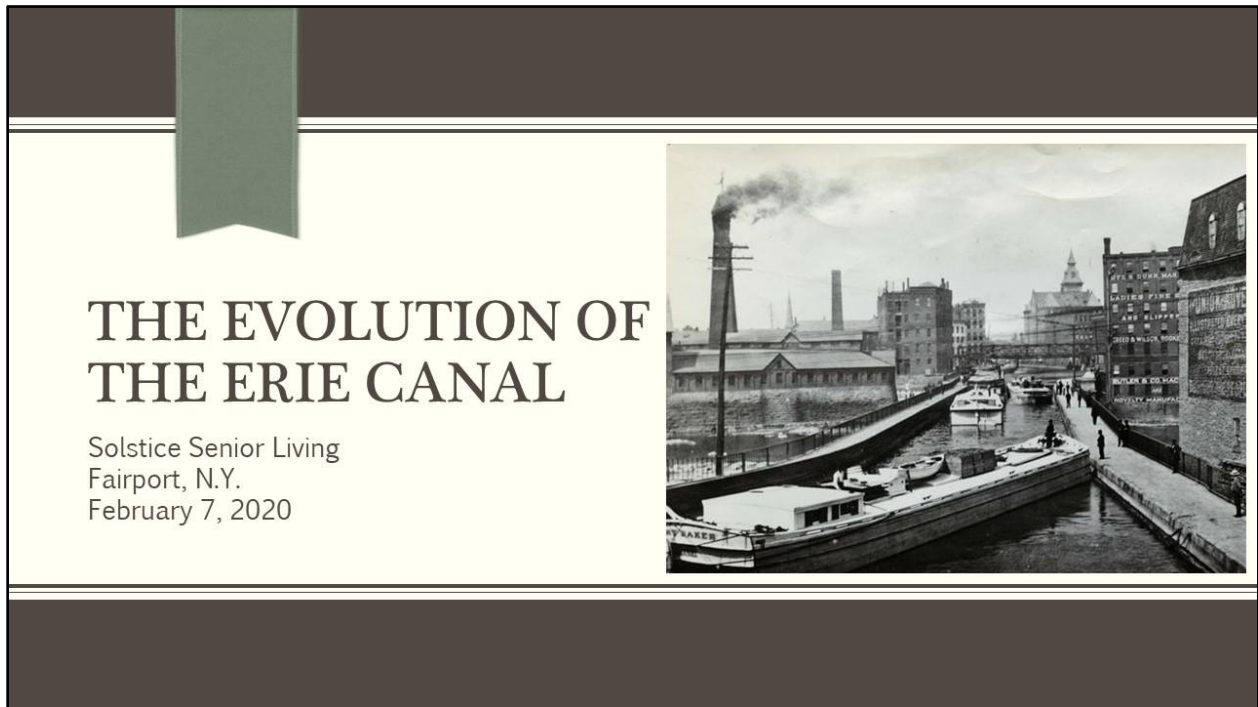
While I began the work for this project in the fall of 2019, by the time I got to putting finishing touches on this paper COVID-19 had spread globally, forcing millions to self-quarantine and further isolating older adults who may have already been feeling isolated in day-to-day life. It is a strange feeling to be writing about a project that, had I needed to deliver the program now, would be impossible to complete. My thesis project was relevant to older adults prior to COVID-19, but over the course of these past few weeks and months it has become increasingly significant to populations of all ages. In the early spring of 2020, the time I am writing this, we do not yet know what life after the virus will look like. There is a very good chance that museums, and other industries as well, will be forced to completely rethink their normal operations: how do you sustain a museum in a world where no one can visit one?

Additionally, many senior-living facilities across the country are dealing with the ramifications of the public not being allowed to visit their loved ones. In my case, how important

was my physical presence? How important were the objects? Would the program have had the same effect if there were just digital images of objects and a Zoom conversation instead of an in-person discussion? I would argue no, one of the benefits of this type of programming is connecting on a personal level with older adults, a benefit which is lost when forced digital. That being said, should we completely abandon all digital programming efforts for seniors? No! In times when people are feeling more isolated than they ever have been, reach out. Make that connect. Share your project, share your collection. Build something beautiful out of the rubbish circumstances we find ourselves in.

Completing this project has been enlightening in more ways than one, firstly, I have two full pages of what I would do differently next time. Additionally, I have gone through an unquantifiable amount of personal growth, both in designing the program, delivering it, and writing the longest paper of my school career to date. In a world where there are currently so many unknowns, I feel glad to have a head start on helping the museum field figure out what the future looks like.

## VII. Appendix



**Figure 1.1: Slide One from the PowerPoint.** This is the first slide out of eleven used in the author's PowerPoint presentation delivered at Solstice Senior Living. Screen capture courtesy of the author.

## Welcome!

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- Taylor Carpenter
  - Assisted by Brie Johnson
  - RIT, Museum Studies B.S.
- Help from Rochester Museum & Science Center
- Images from Rochester Images Digital Collection



**Figure 1.2: Slide Two from the PowerPoint.** Screen capture courtesy of the author.

## Welcome!

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- How can objects from the Museum help us talk about the history of the Canal in Rochester?



**Figure 1.3: Slide Three from the PowerPoint.** Screen capture courtesy of the author.



Figure 1.4. Slide Four from the PowerPoint. Screen capture courtesy of the author.



Figure 1.5. Slide Five from the PowerPoint. Screen capture courtesy of the author.



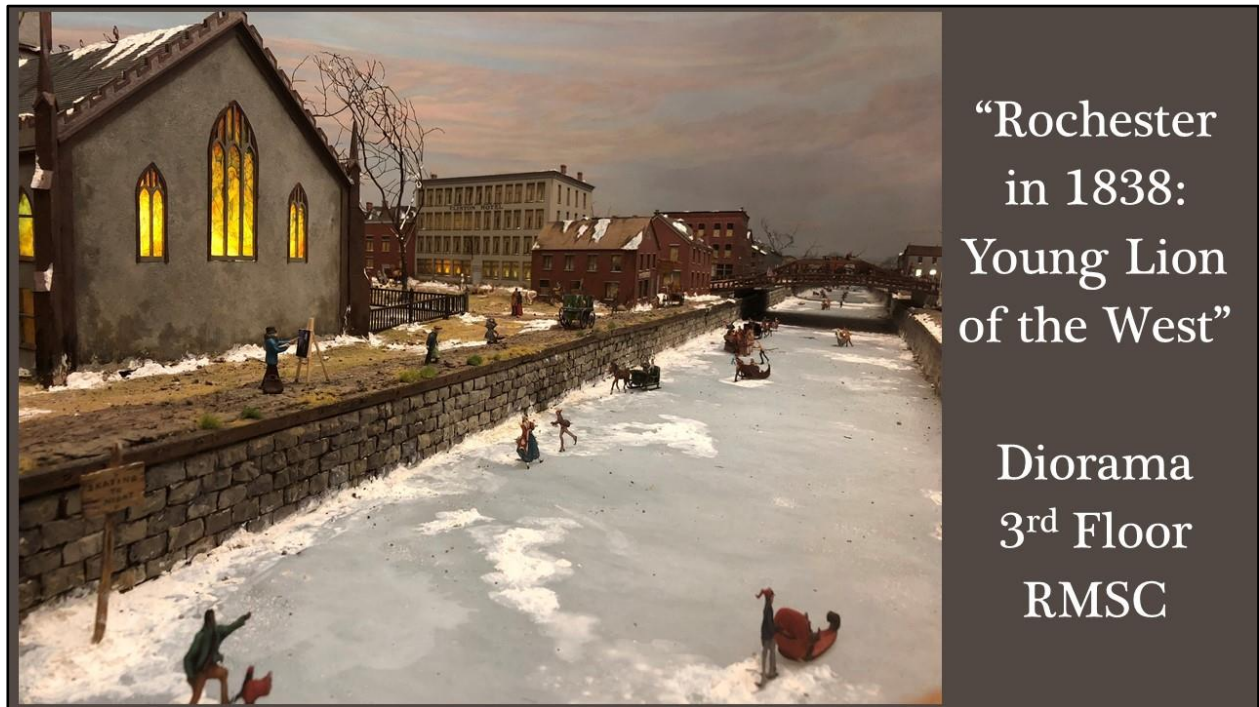


Figure 1.6. Slide Six from the PowerPoint. Screen capture courtesy of the author.

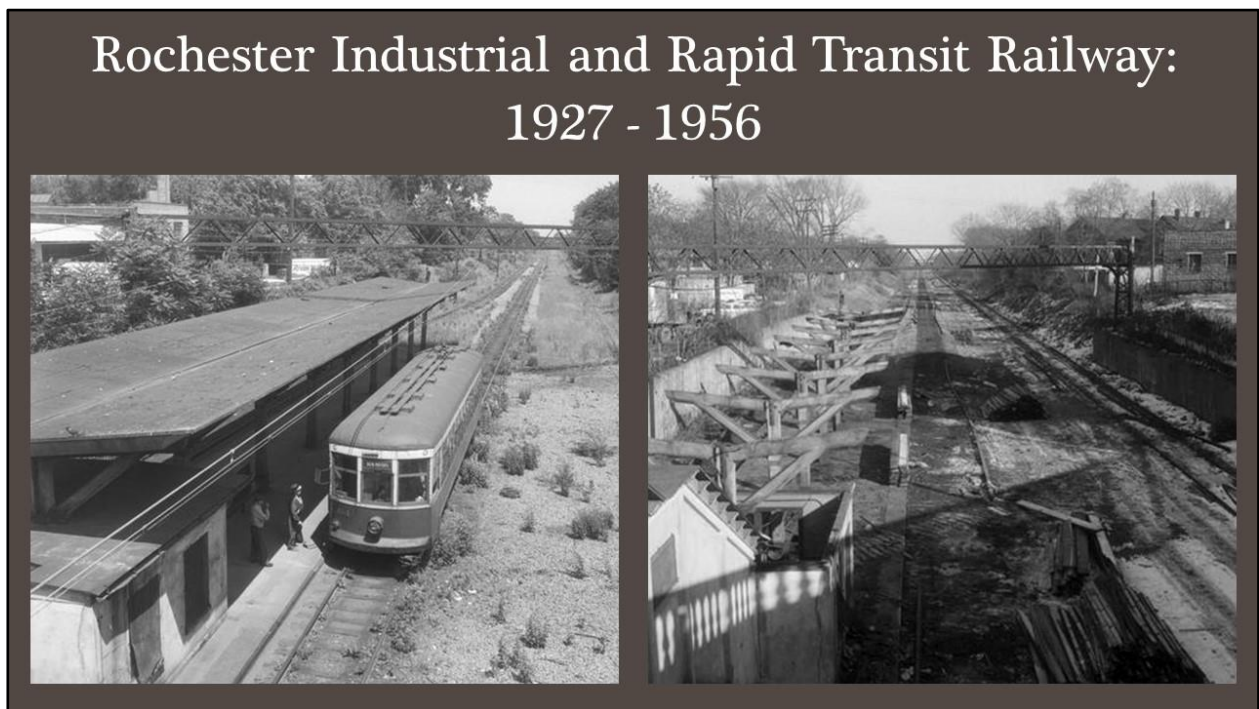


Figure 1.7. Slide Seven from the PowerPoint. Screen capture courtesy of the author.



Figure 1.8. Slide Eight from the PowerPoint. Screen capture courtesy of the author.



Figure 1.9. Slide Nine from the PowerPoint. Screen capture courtesy of the author.



Figure 1.10. Slide Ten from the PowerPoint. Screen capture courtesy of the author.

Thank you!

- End of formal program
  - If you didn't get a chance to say something, please come talk with me after!
- If you have the time, please fill out the evaluation!

The slide contains two photographs. The top right one is a color photograph of a canal with a bridge and a tall yellow brick chimney in the background. The bottom one is a black and white photograph of a group of about ten people ice skating on a frozen body of water.

Figure 1.11. Slide Eleven from the PowerPoint. Screen capture courtesy of the author.

**I want to create a positive experience for my audience in the context of a historical story that relates to the museum but more specifically focuses on their memories**

**I want my audience to connect to the objects/history, me, each other, and themselves.**

- Slide 2: Welcome
  - Taylor, from RIT, doing my thesis re: outreach w/help from RMSC and library website
  - Grandfather, Vance, used to live here
  - If less than 5 people, go around and ask for names
    - Otherwise, as people talk, ask for names
- Slide 3: Welcome 2
  - Today, going to explore how can objects from the museum help us talk about the history of the canal in Rochester?
  - Before we get too ahead of ourselves, want to know a little about you!
    - Show of hands or nods, how many of you are familiar with downtown Roc?
      - Maybe some of you grew up here?
    - How many of you are in your 50's? No one? Shocking!
    - How many of you were around in the 1960s?
      - 50s? 40s? 30s?
    - Okay so you may have been around when the subway was a thing
      - We'll get to this a little later
  - What about 1817?
- Slide 4: Here's the canal in a map from 1900
  - Do you know what you're looking at here? Who's familiar with this area?
  - What can you notice about it? Is it in the same place the canal is today?
- Slide 5: skating
  - What would ice skates have to do with the canal?
  - Have you used skates like these? Maybe while growing up?
  - Where would you skate?
- Slide 6: RMSC Diorama
  - Last question: What came after the canal?
- Slide 7 & 8: Subway
  - 1927 - 1956
    - Roc. Industrial and Rapid Transit Railway (RSB)
    - 2 miles thru downtown, 7 miles total
    - Dinosaur BBQ = Lehigh Valley RR, old subway station building
  - Do you remember your first subway ride?
  - What's your favorite subway you've ever taken?
  - Did you/your parents ever use the Roc subway?
    - Do you miss having it/think they should have kept it?
    - Roc = only US city to put in AND then take out subway system
- Slide 9: Highways
  - 490 and 590 went partly over the old subway beds

**Figure 2.1: Word Document used by author.** This was the first page of the Word document the author used as a guide when delivering the program to Solstice residents. This page includes the personal mission statements at the top of the page. Screen capture courtesy of the author.

- Do you remember going on a family road trip as a child?
- What do you use the highways for mostly? Work? Visit relatives? Vacation?
- Slide 10
  - Thank you!
  - I'll be around after to talk if you have anything else to say
  - Please fill out the anonymous evaluations, they will help me with writing my thesis
    - Brie has them
  - Thanks again!

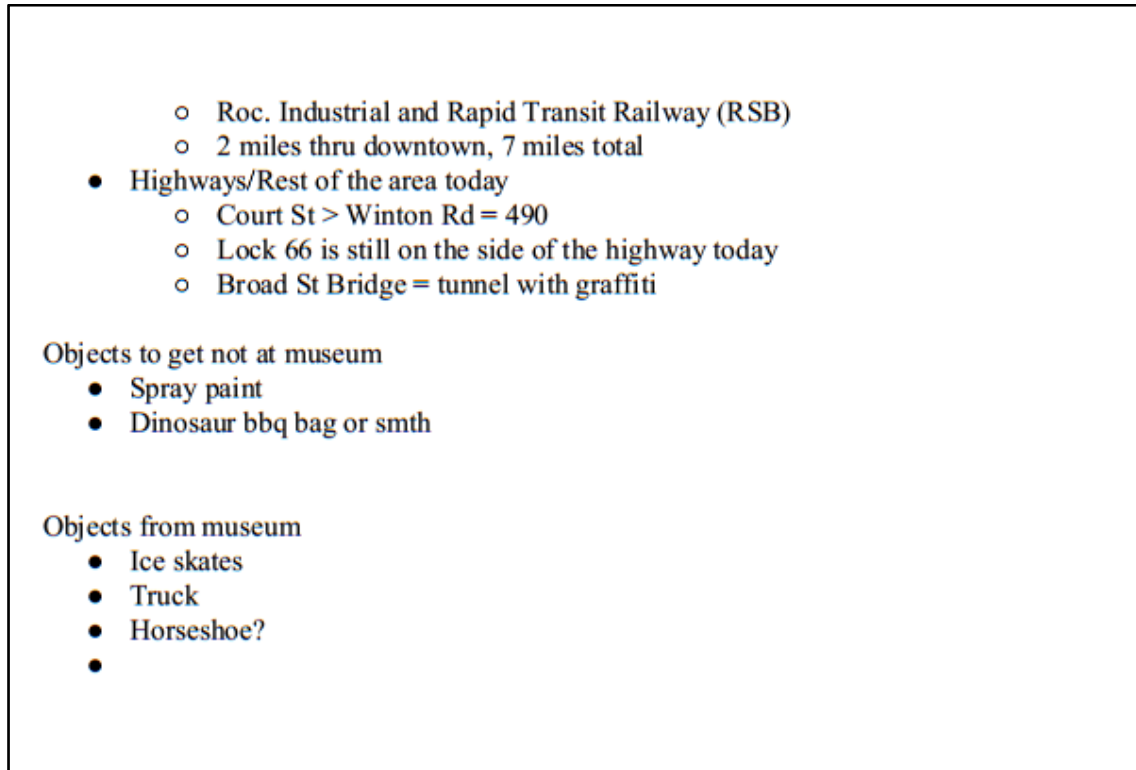
#### Questions

- What types of things could you not get here until better transportation arrived?
  - Tina: no lettuce in the 80s!
- Do you live within 25 miles of the canal?
- Do you live within 25 miles of a highway?
  - Why would it be beneficial to live within 25 miles of the canal?
- How did the canal help people not directly related to shipping/receiving business?
- Are there the same benefits to living close to the highway as there were to the canal?
- What's the function of the canal today?
  - Is it the same as the function of the canal 20, 30, 50 years ago?
- What's the function of the highway today?
  - Is it the same as 20, 50 years ago?
- What goods can you transport better over water vs roads?
- What types of goods would people in NYC want from upstate?
- What types of goods would people upstate want from NYC/the port that connects to Europe/the rest of the world?

#### Historical timeline

- Erie Canal
  - 1825
  - 8 years to build
  - When started, 1817, most NY residents lived in lower Hudson Valley (Taylor)
    - Only ~1 million residents (Taylor)
    - De Witt Clinton's ditch/ folly
    - Paid for entirely by the state
  - Why build a canal all the way up here, if most people live down there?
    - Today: Nearly 80% of upstate New York's population lives within 25 miles of the Erie Canal. (<http://www.canals.ny.gov/history/history.html>)
    - Rochester incorporated as city in 1834 (Wikipedia)
  - Because of the cost of transportation!
    - 1 ton of goods Europe > US = \$9 in 1816 (Taylor)
    - 1 ton of goods on land for \$9 = only 30 miles! (Taylor)
- Subway
  - 1927 - 1956

**Figure 2.2: Word Document used by author.** This was the second page of the Word document the author used as a guide when delivering the program to Solstice residents. Screen capture courtesy of the author.



**Figure 2.3: Word Document used by author.** This was the third and final page of the Word document the author used as a guide when delivering the program to Solstice residents. This page includes some bullet points for planning purposes that were never seen to fruition. Screen capture courtesy of the author.

*Please fill out all questions that feel relevant to you. The responses will be used as supporting material in Taylor's thesis. Please do **NOT** put your name on these - they are confidential.*

**What did you like most about this program?**

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**What did you not like about this program?**

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**What did you think of the museum objects? Did they add to the experience?**

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**Knowing the objects are from the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC), are you now inspired to attend the museum?**

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**Have you visited the RMSC before? Why/why not?**

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**Figure 3.1: Blank Evaluation.** This is the front page of the evaluation questionnaire the author passed out to Solstice residents after the program. Screen capture courtesy of the author.

**Does Solstice offer other programs like this regularly? If not, would you like them to?**

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**Optional demographic information: (Please circle all that apply to you)**

**Age:**  
50 - 59      60 - 69      70 - 79      80 - 89      90 - 99      100+

**Gender:**  
Male      Female      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Marital status:**  
Married      Single      Divorced      Widowed      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Highest level of education achieved:**  
High School/GED      Associates      Bachelors      Masters      PhD      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you lived anywhere other than Rochester? (Optional: list other locations)**  
No      Yes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please write any other comments below, thank you!**

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**Figure 3.2: Blank Evaluation.** This is the back page of the evaluation questionnaire the author passed out to Solstice residents after the program. Screen capture courtesy of the author.



Please fill out all questions that feel relevant to you. The responses will be used as supporting material in Taylor's thesis. Please do **NOT** put your name on these - they are confidential.

**What did you like most about this program?**  
N.Y. HISTORY

**What did you not like about this program?**  
NARRATIVE WAS VERY GOOD!

**What did you think of the museum objects? Did they add to the experience?**  
VERY OLD!

**Knowing the objects are from the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC), are you now inspired to attend the museum?**  
NO

**Have you visited the RMSC before? Why/why not?**  
NO - NOT FROM ROCHESTER

**Figure 4.1: Completed Evaluation.** This is the first of six completed evaluation questionnaires the author received back from Solstice residents after the program. This participant only filled out one side of the evaluation. Document scan courtesy of Thomas Flynn.

Please fill out all questions that feel relevant to you. The responses will be used as supporting material in Taylor's thesis. Please do **NOT** put your name on these - they are confidential.

**What did you like most about this program?**  
SUBWAY

**What did you not like about this program?**  
I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO BE MORE ABOUT BLDG  
THE CANAL

**What did you think of the museum objects? Did they add to the experience?**  
ICE SKATES WERE GREAT. YES

**Knowing the objects are from the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC), are you now inspired to attend the museum?**  
YES

**Have you visited the RMSC before? Why/why not?**  
NEW TO NY.

**Figure 4.2.1: Completed Evaluation.** This is the second of six completed evaluation questionnaires the author received back from Solstice residents after the program. Document scan courtesy of Thomas Flynn.

Does Solstice offer other programs like this regularly? If not, would you like them to?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Optional demographic information: (Please circle all that apply to you)**

**Age:**  
 50 - 59      60 - 69      70 - 79      80 - 89      90 - 99      100+

**Gender:**  
 Male      Female      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Marital status:**  
 Married      Single      Divorced      Widowed      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Highest level of education achieved:**  
High School/GED      Associates      Bachelors      Masters      PhD      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you lived anywhere other than Rochester? (Optional: list other locations)**  
 No      Yes PA UNTIL THIS YEAR

**Please write any other comments below, thank you!**

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Figure 4.2.2: Completed Evaluation.** This is the back of the second of six completed evaluation questionnaires the author received back from Solstice residents after the program. Document scan courtesy of Thomas Flynn.

Please fill out all questions that feel relevant to you. The responses will be used as supporting material in Taylor's thesis. Please do **NOT** put your name on these - they are confidential.

What did you like most about this program?

*The speaker was very good. She answered all questions, too.  
It was a very enjoyable session.*

What did you not like about this program?

*Too short.*

What did you think of the museum objects? Did they add to the experience?

*They were interesting--I would have enjoyed seeing more.*

Knowing the objects are from the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC), are you now inspired to attend the museum?

*Yes--I'd like to go there.*

Have you visited the RMSC before? Why/why not?

*No I haven't been there but I'd like to see it.*

**Figure 4.3: Completed Evaluation.** This is the third of six completed evaluation questionnaires the author received back from Solstice residents after the program. This participant only filled out one side of the evaluation. Document scan courtesy of Thomas Flynn.

Please fill out all questions that feel relevant to you. The responses will be used as supporting material in Taylor's thesis. Please do **NOT** put your name on these - they are confidential.

**What did you like most about this program?**  
MY COOKOUT WAS OF THE DOWNTOWN WORK AT THE MON. CO. FAIR.

**What did you not like about this program?**

**What did you think of the museum objects? Did they add to the experience?**  
YES

**Knowing the objects are from the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC), are you now inspired to attend the museum?**  
YES  
I CAN SEE WHY I'D WANT TO VISIT

**Have you visited the RMSC before? Why/why not?**  
YES

**Figure 4.4.1: Completed Evaluation.** This is the fourth of six completed evaluation questionnaires the author received back from Solstice residents after the program. Document scan courtesy of Thomas Flynn.

Does Solstice offer other programs like this regularly? If not, would you like them to?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Optional demographic information: (Please circle all that apply to you)

Age:

50 - 59      60 - 69      70 - 79      80 - 89      90 - 99      100+

Gender:

Male      Female      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status:

Married      Single      Divorced      Widowed      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of education achieved:

High School/GED      Associates      Bachelors      Masters      PhD      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you lived anywhere other than Rochester? (Optional: list other locations)

No      Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Please write any other comments below, thank you!

WORKED AT MON. CO. JAIL FOR 20 YRS.

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Figure 4.4.2: Completed Evaluation.** This is the back of the fourth of six completed evaluation questionnaires the author received back from Solstice residents after the program. Document scan courtesy of Thomas Flynn.

Please fill out all questions that feel relevant to you. The responses will be used as supporting material in Taylor's thesis. Please do **NOT** put your name on these - they are confidential.

**What did you like most about this program?**

*Discussion at the same time*

**What did you not like about this program?**

*More history of the building of the canal*

**What did you think of the museum objects? Did they add to the experience?**

*?*

**Knowing the objects are from the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC), are you now inspired to attend the museum?**

**Have you visited the RMSC before? Why/why not?**

*Yes a member*

**Figure 4.5.1: Completed Evaluation.** This is the fifth of six completed evaluation questionnaires the author received back from Solstice residents after the program. Document scan courtesy of Thomas Flynn.

Does Solstice offer other programs like this regularly? If not, would you like them to? *Yes*

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**Optional demographic information: (Please circle all that apply to you)**

Age: 50 - 59    60 - 69    70 - 79    80 - 89    90 - 99    100+

Gender: Male    Female    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status: Married    Single    Divorced    Widowed    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of education achieved: High School/GED    Associates    Bachelors *+ 1 yr. graduate school*    Masters    PhD    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you lived anywhere other than Rochester? (Optional: list other locations)

No    Yes: *grew up in Warnerville - 40 mi. west of Albany*

Please write any other comments below, thank you!

*More slides would help.*

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**Figure 4.5.2: Completed Evaluation.** This is the back of the fifth of six completed evaluation questionnaires the author received back from Solstice residents after the program. Document scan courtesy of Thomas Flynn.



Please fill out all questions that feel relevant to you. The responses will be used as supporting material in Taylor's thesis. Please do **NOT** put your name on these - they are confidential.

What did you like most about this program?

Very interesting on learn things  
I didn't know or remember.

What did you not like about this program?

What did you think of the museum objects? Did they add to the experience?

Yes! would have liked more

Knowing the objects are from the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC), are you now inspired to attend the museum?

Yes! and have been several times  
always learn or see something new  
every time

Have you visited the RMSC before? Why/why not?

Yes! with my children, with school  
groups, and I went on my  
own.

**Figure 4.6.1: Completed Evaluation.** This is the sixth of six completed evaluation questionnaires the author received back from Solstice residents after the program. Document scan courtesy of Thomas Flynn.

Does Solstice offer other programs like this regularly? If not, would you like them to?  
Yes! would like them Regularly

Optional demographic information: (Please circle all that apply to you)

Age:  
50 - 59    60 - 69    70 - 79    80 - 89    90 - 99    100+

Gender:  
Male    Female    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status:  
Married    Single    Divorced    Widowed    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of education achieved:  
High School/GED    Associates    Bachelors    Masters    PhD    Other: ✓

Have you lived anywhere other than Rochester? (Optional: list other locations)  
No    Yes: Palmyra NY Marion N.Y.

Please write any other comments below, thank you!

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**Figure 4.6.2: Completed Evaluation.** This is the back of the sixth of six completed evaluation questionnaires the author received back from Solstice residents after the program. Document scan courtesy of Thomas Flynn.

**Solstice notes:**

There were lots of side conversations between pairs and trios talking about memories that were triggered

16 people, only about 12 or 13 stayed for the whole time

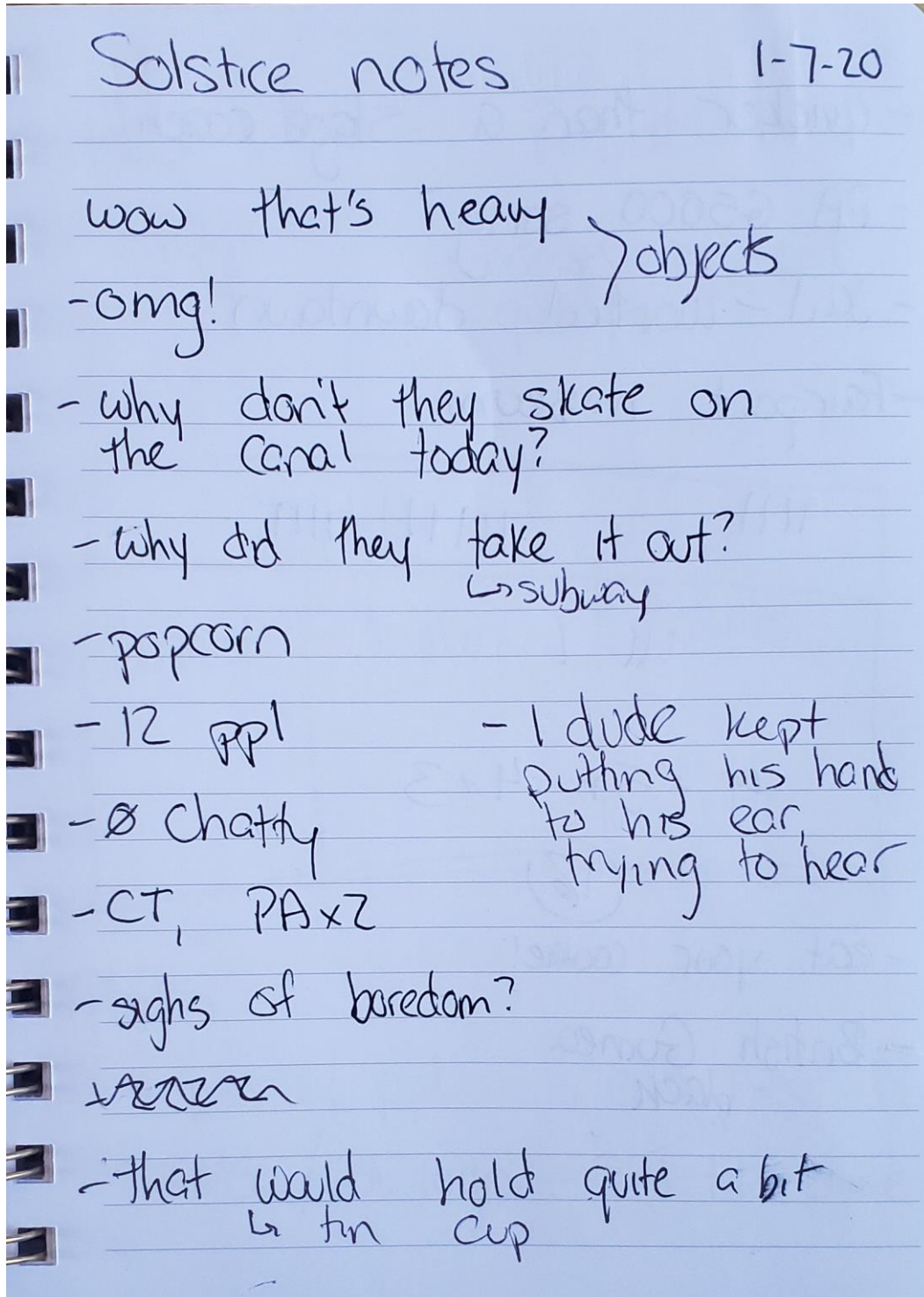
Not everyone was engaged in the conversation, nor did they want to talk

The ones that did liked bringing up memories and they seemed to enjoy the maps in the pp.

Definitely enjoyed the snacks

Took it as an opportunity to reminisce, even the ones who couldn't hear you very well or couldn't remember the details.

**Figure 5: Brienna's Notes.** The notes my assistant took during and after the program. Screen capture courtesy of Brienna Johnson-Morris.



**Figure 6.1: Author's Notes.** The notes the author took during and after the program. Image courtesy of the author.

- quicker than a stage coach!
- PA 65000 song?
- Jail - worked downtown
- Fairport museum

IIII                      IIIIII                      IIIII

III I

$$4 + 5 + 4 + 3$$

(16)

- eat your cookie!
- British Guinea
  - black

**Figure 6.2: Author's Notes.** The notes the author took during and after the program. Image courtesy of the author.



**Figure 7: Image of the program.** The author and program participants. Image courtesy of Brienna Johnson-Morris.



**Figure 8: Image of the program.** The author and program participants. Image courtesy of Brienna Johnson-Morris.



**Figure 9: Image of the program.** The author and program participants. Image courtesy of Brienna Johnson-Morris.

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