LISTENING TO THE LAND

History and Interpretation of Montpelier’s Cultural Landscape

HISP 711: Final Project Presentation by Carissa Demore
This Presentation
is NOT about:

James Madison’s Montpelier

OR

Montpelier, Vermont
RESEARCH PROBLEM:

Since the mid-20th century, Montpelier has offered interpretation to visitors based almost entirely on the lifestyle of the original family who owned the property and within the limited context of the mansion.

While this interpretive approach has been successful in attracting a particular audience with specific interests in the mansion’s architecture or original owners, it is less appealing to a contemporary group of potential supporters, who are diverse in age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. This broader group is critically important to the development of successful and sustainable preservation efforts.

Understanding and incorporating the physical and cultural landscape into Montpelier’s interpretive strategy will enhance the relevance of the site’s history to a contemporary audience, aligning the preservation of the site with twenty-first century values and asserting its importance in the ongoing dialogue about the relevance of historic fabric to contemporary life.
TONIGHT’S PRESENTATION

- Approach/Methodology
- Periods of Development
- Brief Summary of Research
- Interpretation
## Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>What are the boundaries and characteristics of this period of development?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Whose story is being told? How are people relating to the landscape?</td>
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<td>Environmental</td>
<td>How do humans influence biodiversity and ecological processes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>What is the surrounding context? How does Montpelier relate?</td>
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PERIODS OF DEVELOPMENT

- Wilderness
  - 12,000BP-1658
- Plantation
  - 1658-1888
- Country Manor
  - 1888-1961
- House Museum
  - 1961-Present
PERIOD I: WILDERNESS
(12,000BP-1658)
PERIOD I: WILDERNESS (12,000BP-1658)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Years BP</th>
<th>Subsistence</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paleoindian</td>
<td>12,000BP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hunting and Gathering</td>
<td>Dispersed Bands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Archaic</td>
<td>Early Archaic</td>
<td>10,000BP</td>
<td>Hunting and Gathering</td>
<td>Bands</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Middle Archaic</td>
<td>8,500 BP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Late Archaic</td>
<td>5,000BP</td>
<td>Intensified Hunting and Gathering</td>
<td>Bands/Tribes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woodland</td>
<td>Early Woodland</td>
<td>3,200BP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle Woodland</td>
<td>2,500BP</td>
<td>Hunting and Gathering with Incipient Horticulture</td>
<td>Tribes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Late Woodland</td>
<td>1,100BP</td>
<td>Horticulture with Hunting and Gathering</td>
<td>Tribes/Chiefdoms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>400BP-0</td>
<td></td>
<td>European Contact and Colonization</td>
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</tbody>
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**PERIOD I: WILDERNESS (12,000BP-1658)**
PERIOD II: PLANTATION
(1658-1888)
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- 1669, Richard Snowden I purchases 500 acres called “Iron Mine”
- Builds Birmingham Manor
- Develops Snowden Ironworks

Snowden Ironworks (current condition)
PERIOD II: PLANTATION (1658-1888)
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PERIOD III: COUNTRY MANOR
(1888-1961)
“like a pearl in a pigsty”

-Eleanor Fitzgibbon, 1916
PERIOD III: COUNTRY MANOR (1888-1961)

Montpelier Manor Farms
LAUREL, MD.
ELEANOR FITZGIBBON, Owner

Purebred STOCK

Montpelier Jerseys
Snow Hill Berkshires
White Leghorns
PERIOD III: COUNTRY MANOR (1888-1961)
PERIOD IV: HOUSE MUSEUM
(1961-TODAY)
INTERPRETING FOR THE PUBLIC

MONTPELIER’S
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE
A Self-Guided Walking Tour