

Ten Questions to Ask at a Historic Site by Dr. James Loewen

1. When did this location become a historic site? (When was the marker or monument put up? Or the house interpreted?) How did that time differ from ours? from the time of the event or person commemorated.
2. Who sponsored it? Representing which participant group's point of view? What was their position in social structure when the event occurred? When the site went up?
3. What were their ideological needs and the social purposes? What were their values?
4. Who is intended audience for the site? What values were they trying to leave for us, today? What does the site ask us to go and do or think about?
5. Did the sponsors have government support? At what level?
6. Who is left out? How would the story differ if a different group told it? Another political party? Race? Sex? Class? religious group?
7. Are there problematic words or symbols that would not be used today, or by other groups?
8. How is the site used today? Do traditional rituals continue to connect today's public to it? Or it is ignored? Why?
9. Is the presentation accurate? What actually happened? What historical sources tell of the event, people, or period commemorated at the site?
10. How does this site fit in with others that treat the same era? Or subject? What other people lived and events happened then but are not commemorated? Why?

Source: Prof. James Loewen, University of Vermont

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