Online Docent Training: Is It for Everyone?

North Carolina Museum of History
Volunteer Training
Tour Offerings

Self-Guided Tours

Discovery Tours
Tour Offerings

Guided Tours

Spotlight Carts
Transition to Carts

• Purpose: To teach history using touchable objects, when handling artifacts is impossible.

• Cart Basics: Themes, hardware, location, storage

• Items on a Cart: Size and number of items matters (6–9 items per per cart)

• Docent Input: Suggesting items and creating carts
Training Schedule

On September 28, new volunteers begin 2½ months of intensive training. During this process, the class meets each week and trainees are taught to use 9 carts and study 5–7 exhibits.

Since many volunteers are occasionally absent from class, museum staff record lessons on video for trainees to view later.
The Role of Technology

Sony U-matic Videocassette Player
(circa 1970s–1980s)

Panasonic VHS AG 185 Camcorder
(circa 1992–2009)
Welcome

Do you enjoy history? Do you like reading about people and what life was like for them during a certain period in the past? Do you enjoy sharing your love of history with others? If you answered “yes” to these questions, then you are in the right place. The North Carolina Museum of History welcomes you to its new online docent training program and hopes you will find it to be a useful tool for learning how to give Spotlight Tours. The program covers several exhibits, but emphasis is placed on the permanent chronological exhibit, The Story of North Carolina.
American Indian Cart Training

Early American Indian Tools and Weapons Gallery Cart

Purpose: This Gallery Cart offers visitors an understanding of the tools and weapons of early American Indians in North Carolina.

Objectives: The observer will
1. understand that North Carolina Indians created tools and weapons out of available resources;
2. be able to identify uses of reproduction artifacts on the Gallery Cart;
3. appreciate the ingenuity, resourcefulness, and creativity that early North Carolina Indians demonstrated in their everyday lives.

Developed by the Education Section
North Carolina Museum of History
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Objects on Gallery Cart

Stone ax heads (images of ax heads with handles)
These ax heads are actual artifacts, not reproductions. Although they have become blunt with time and use, the ax heads were never as sharp as those used today. They were used to make large dents in trees, a process known as girdling. The tree would die after girdling and either be burned or rot until the forest could be cleared for farmland.
American Indian Cart Training

Atlatl (image, piece of rivercane and projectile point to represent a dart)
Native Americans used this strange-looking tool for hunting and warfare before the bow and arrow, which was introduced about 2,000 years ago. The atlatl was developed to improve the effectiveness of throwing a lightweight spear or dart. It increased the dart’s force for greater penetration into the hide of large animals like deer. It also increased the range of the dart.

The oldest-known examples of atlatls are more than 20,000 years old. Indians were using atlatls when the Algonquian canoe was made in 700 BCE and when explorers landed on Roanoke Island in 1584.

The three main parts of an atlatl are the HANDLE, the SHAFT, and the SPUR. The atlatl also has a stone weight attached to it. (There is an atlatl weight featured in the exhibit.) The weight increases velocity and distance. It can be moved around to suit the needs of the person using the atlatl. Darts for the atlatl were made of a flexible piece of rivercane, with a flint projectile point attached to one end and turkey feathers attached to the other end. The darts were much like arrows, but longer.

Possible discussion question:
Why was it important to Native Americans to improve their weapons? (Tribes needed to provide more food for more people. Being able to kill from a greater distance was better and safer in hunting and warfare.)

Training Videos
American Indian Cart Part I
American Indian Cart Part II
American Indian Cart Video
Current Technology Needs

- Digital Camera or Camcorder with Tripod
- SDHC Memory Card for Camera
- Computer with Internet Connection
- Cameraman
- Web Page Manager
- Vimeo Account
Vimeo Home Page
Docent Training Vimeo Page

North Carolina Museum of History’s Videos

74 Videos   0 Appearances   74 Total

Sort: Date / Alphabetic / Plays / Likes / Comments / Duration

BROWSE VIDEOS

Here are all of the videos that North Carolina Museum of History has uploaded to Vimeo. Appearances are videos that North Carolina Museum of History has been credited in by others.

Also Check Out

More stuff from North Carolina Museum of History

74 Videos
1 Like
3 Collections
Costs

- Camera & SDHC Memory Card: $300–500
- Tripod: $100
- Computer with Internet Connection: varies
- Vimeo Account: $60 annually
- Staff/Interns

Sony NEX-5
Digital Camera
$900 in 2011
Suggestions for Further Research

• Volunteers
• Tech-Savvy Friends or Family
• Local College or University
• Museum Intern
• Community Organizations
Our Story

In 2011, Girl Scout Elizabeth Kelley raised the necessary funds to buy a camera; she then donated it to the museum's volunteer program.
Will Online Docent Training Work for My Museum?

**Pros**

- Provides resources for experienced docents to review.
- Helps docents learn new material if absent from weekly class.
- Serves as an archive for visiting speakers and exhibit content.

**Cons**

- May lead to poor volunteer retention if learning is solely virtual.
- Important social interaction is absent from training.
- Quality of video/audio may be compromised.
- Access to or comfort level with new technology may inhibit participation.
Docent Training Website
ncmuseumofhistory.org/Docent_Training

Vimeo Website
vimeo.com/ncmuseumofhistory