# From Instagram to Apps: Going Beyond House Museums

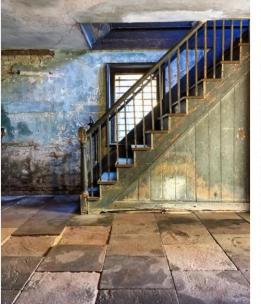
Lauren Northup – Director of Museums, Historic Charleston Foundation Jamie Mansbridge – Museums Coordinator, Historic Charleston Foundation

### Instagram -@historiccharlestonfoundation

- Started in 2013
- Now has 55,000 plus followers
- "Reverent irreverence"
- Demographics of Instagram followers



- Photo taken of the Aiken-Rhett House backstairs
- Photo used to tell the story of the enslaved people at the Aiken-Rhett House, especially the cooks, using specifics



historiccharlestonfounda Gov. William Aiken House

Follow

historiccharlestonfoundation In 1846, at least seven enslaved adults and their six children lived at the Aiken-Rhett House. Two women - Ann Greggs and Dorcas Richardson - lived here with their families, and one of these women may have been the Aikens' cook. This staircase was used primarily to bring food from the warming kitchen to the dining room upstairs. The surfaces and colors you see here survive more or less untouched from the time Ann and Dorcas walked these halls - notice in particular the vibrant blue wash on the plaster to the left. #preservedasfound #aikenrhetthouse #charleston #history #whotellsyourstory #historiccharlestonfoundation #tellthefullhistory macaulayshannon @lisaanddougthompso n old staircase AND Charleston history QQ 2.147 likes

Log in to like or comment.

17 comments and 2,147
 likes

- Photo taken of the Aiken-Rhett House decorated for Christmas
- 55 comments and 3,122
  likes



historiccharlestonfoundati... • Follow Gov. William Aiken House

historiccharlestonfoundation Because the holidays are not a time for restraint... // Come see the incredible floral installations (inspired by archival research) at the Aiken-Rhett House now through December. Thanks to @charlestonstems @gatheringevents @elisenuckolsart @charlestonflowerworkshop for their creativity, vision, and lack of restraint! See #deckthemuseum for more goodness. #historiccharlestonfoundation #christmasdecorations #christmasinthesouth #wearenotmessingaround #aikenrhetthouse #preservedasfound #explorecharleston

Load more comments

nell2316 Gorgeous♥♥♥ jaimiedewberry Absolutely Stunning!!!

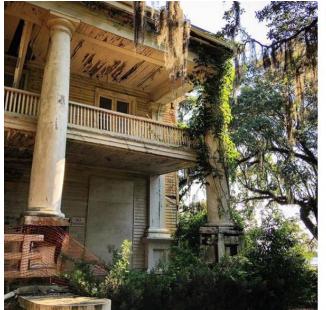
♥ Q 3,122 likes

DECEMBER 3, 2017

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- Photo taken of the former Charleston Naval Base
- Discussion of development in Charleston



historiccharlestonfoundati... • Follow North Charleston, South Carolina

historiccharlestonfoundation You better believe there's still plenty to preserve in the Lowcountry, including the Officer's Quarters Historic District on the old North Charleston Naval Base. We are busy working with the City of North Charleston on a redevelopment master plan for this site to include the Colonial Revival gem pictured here (Quarters A, built in 1905). Once completed, this incredible site will be tied into Riverfront park, providing a mixed-use paradise for millennials to Instagram their faces off while drinking craft beer (I assume). Most importantly: the city's preservation master plan aims to preserve approximately 24 contributing buildings. Win! #historiccharlestonfoundation #charleston #northcharleston #preservation #lowcountry #officersquarters

1,753 likes

Log in to like or comment.

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46 comments and
 1,753 likes

- Photo taken of a duck outside the Foundation's headquarters
- 46 comments and 2,104 likes



historiccharlestonfoundati... • Follow Historic Charleston Foundation

historiccharlestonfoundation Meet the newest resident of our harborside garden. She's been here every morning this week! What should we name her? #historiccharlestonfoundation #stopeverything #importantbreakingnews #theresaduckinthegarden View all 46 comments tonyarn416 @roselynn\_imbleau\_fineart my first thought was Gracie! Great minds! jj9828 Hampton! jj9828 Swamp Fox! @ kc\_vance Definitely Perdita paul.murray17 Susan

abbylease Just "Duck." Because I watch too much "Sarah & Duck" with my son.

falish1113 I was gonna say Gretchen!

♥ Q 2.104 likes

6 DAYS AGO

Log in to like or comment.

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- Instagram part of a giveaway promotion for Festival of House and Gardens
- 29 comments and2,664 likes



historiccharlestonfoundati... • Follow Charleston, South Carolina

historiccharlestonfoundation Ever wish you could go beyond the garden gate at your favorite historic house? Here's your chancel We've teamed up with local gals @charlestonsweekender @charlestonshopcurator and @hillheady follow them for your chance to win tickets to our Festival of Houses & Gardens happening now through April 21. Festival proceeds benefit our preservation initiatives! @ @libbywilliamsphotos #festivalofhousesandgardens #charleston #historiccharlestonfoundation

View all 29 comments

bnewillis15 Just got back from Charleston on Monday...always have withdraws @

caston\_says @mandycaston

charlestonweekender Can't wait to see who wins!!!

2,664 likes

Log in to like or comment.

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- Image of garden in the Nathaniel Russell House
- Using image to tell the story of Phillip Noisette



historiccharlestonfoundati... • Follow Nathaniel Russell House

historiccharlestonfoundation The first flush of the Rêve d'Or Noisette climbina rose is always the sweetest, and the blossoms smell like a crisp, sliced apple. Rêve d'Or means "dream of gold" in French, and Noisette is the name of the fellow who hybridized the first tea rose right here in Charleston in the 18th century (and basically changed gardening all over the world for the better, forever). Philippe Noisette's botanical contributions are legion, but his personal story is where it gets interesting. As a young man, Noisette emigrated to Haiti from his native France. He fell in love with a free woman of color named Celestine, and they married and had two children together. Forced to flee the island following the Haitian Revolution, they arrived in Charleston sometime around 1800 in search of a safe haven for

Q Q 1,411 likes

Log in to like or comment.

...

14 comments and
 1,411 likes

### What makes a successful Instagram?

- Have one voice death by committee
- Importance of a good photograph
- Importance of a good story
- What is not being told?
- Experiment!
- How to attract followers?



## Instagram & The App

- Context:
  - Declining visitation to our traditional restored house museum; the Nathaniel Russell House
  - Rising visitation to nontraditional house museums
     e.g. McLeod Plantation, the Aiken-Rhett House
  - Success of the Instagram account

- Thoughts:
  - Traditional docent-led tour of a restored historic house no longer working
  - Desire for a fuller picture of Charleston
  - Need to engage with audience in non-traditional ways

### The Plan...

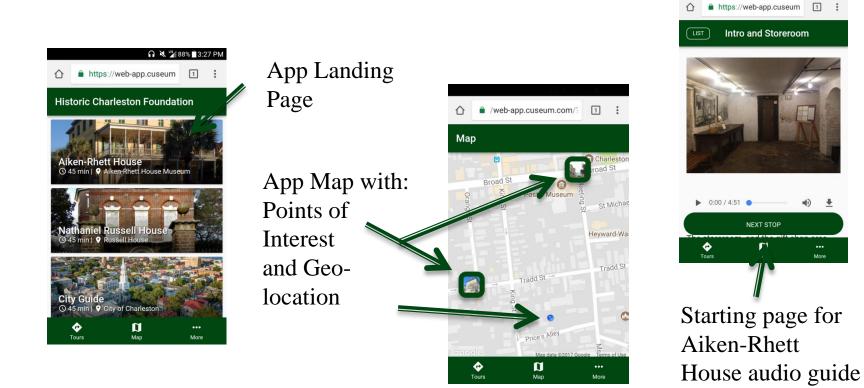
- Working with New York-based museum consulting company Museum Hack
- Approach is to disrupt the traditional museum model
- Develop the Historic Charleston Foundation App, free to download from the App Store
- Seek to include all the stories in the app, including African American history, women's history, working class history, stories missed out from the traditional tours of Charleston

## The App: An Overview

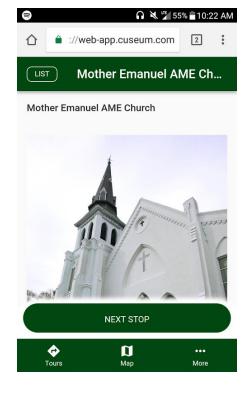
- Audio Guides
  - Three audio guides: one for each house museum plus one for Charleston looking at the city through the city's preservation
- Text Stop Guides
  - 300+ text stops on points of interest throughout the city
  - Geo-location on the app allows people to find the nearest points of interest

- App-based delivery
  - Devices available at the house museums, hope is that most people will download the app
  - Free guide to Charleston, allows us to draw people to our house museums
  - Free app with a donation button: "public radio model"

## **Preview of the App**



- Mother Emanuel AME Church
  - Telling the history of the oldest AME congregation in the US South
  - Discusses the murders on June 17, 2015
  - Uses both narrative and interviews with Dudley Gregorie, councilman for Charleston District 6 and trustee of Emanuel AME



- Cigar Factory
  - Telling the story of the Cigar Factory strike, where *We Shall Overcome* was first used as a Civil Rights anthem
  - Telling the story of the rehabilitation of the structure
  - Using both narrative and audio samples



- Grimke Sisters House
  - Telling the story of the Grimke Sisters, scions of a prominent planter, who became outspoken abolitionists
  - Telling the story through narrative





- James Missroon House
  - Now headquarters of Historic Charleston Foundation
  - Tells the story of Robert Scott Smalls, an enslaved pilot who escaped in 1862 and later became a politician
  - Tells the story of Historic Charleston Foundation
  - Uses both interviews and narrative



## The Challenges

- Museum Hack are storytellers, not historians
- Internal discussions over the direction of the organization
- Technology challenges such as providing WiFi and devices
- Institutional inertia "if it isn't broken don't fix it."

# **Any Questions?**

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