Recap

Last time we covered:
- Why being interpretive is worth it
- What universals are and how to incorporate them into your exhibits
- What a theme is
- How to write a theme

(Courtesy of Wittliff Collections)
Remember This?

Colleen Dilenschneider, “Average visitor brain wave activity over time,” Know Your Own Bone

Thematic Structures

Overarching Theme: “Mustang Island has always been a place where people learned to adapt to the environment, and to adapt the environment to their needs.”

Idea #1: The native people who lived here, the Karankawa, thrived in part because they adapted their diet to their coastal environment.

Idea #2: Anglo-American settlers made Corpus Christi a successful commercial hub by deepening Aransas Pass to accommodate deepwater ships.

Idea #3: Businessmen capitalized on Mustang Island’s natural beauty and developed it into a tourist destination that still draws visitors today.
A Reputation for Excellence

For more than a century, people have chosen to call Highland Park "home" because of its distinctive atmosphere and one-of-a-kind amenities. Close to Dallas but far from the city, Highland Park was built to be a haven for families. The town continues that tradition today by carrying the founders’ vision into the future.

Thematic Structures

Car Culture

As a shopping center, the Highland Park Village, Highland Park and Parish made some crucial decisions that would form into a groundbreaking innovation. They modeled their shopping center on Texas courthouse squares, with a central parking area surrounded by boutiques on all four sides. By setting aside parking spaces for more than 600 cars, the Village was the first shopping center in the world to be built around the defining feature of suburban life: the automobile.

Town Hall, Highland Park, TX
As farmers and ranchers in Fannin County, the Rayburns made their living from the soil, just like many of their neighbors. As times changed and science advanced, the Rayburn Family brought new technologies onto its farms, proving that science could help farmers prosper. Even mindful of his roots, Sam Rayburn – Mr. Sam to his friends – made sure to help his neighbors along, too, encouraging them to modernize and better their own circumstances as well.
Thematic Structures

Layering Information

Type of Visitor

- Streakers: Read top-level information (titles, subtitles)
- Strollers: Read introductory text, skim text blocks & captions
- Studiers: Read every last word

Implications for Your Planning

- You need a snappy but informative title that’s going to hook them fast.
- Keep your summary text and captions concise (50 words)
- Even though they’ll dig the deepest, you still want to cap word count at 250 words per panel

Adapted from Exhibit Makeovers: A Do-It-Yourself Workbook for Small Museums by Alice Parman and Jeffrey Jane
Layering Information

Wagons Merge on the Prairie

Wagons from the Oregon and California Trails Independence meeting at the Hills and developed a trail to this location. Others passed across the prairie from St. Joseph, and Fort Laramie. All of these trails merged here at the junction of the Independence and St. Joe Roads. From this point the shared route became known as the Oregon Trail. The wagon would share the same route from here until they reached modern Wyoming, where they would depart. In 1869, the Pony Express and the Overland Stage would follow this route as well.

Trails Junction wayside, Kansas

Layering Information

Job-rated 1951 DODGE EXPRESS TRUCK

WORK WHEELS

Sam Rayburn House State Historic Site, Bonham, TX
Layering Information

Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, TX
Join us next week for:

Give ‘Em Something to Talk (and Think) About: Strategies for Engaging and Provoking Exhibit Audiences
Thursday, August 6, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

Find this week’s resource sheet at:

https://www.thc.texas.gov/local-exhibits

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