

Museums as Agents: Preserving the local memories in the U.S. museums

Izumi T. Harris¹

Resumo: Nos últimos anos, os museus americanos ganharam diversidade, incluindo vários grupos étnicos, raciais, sócio-econômicos culturais e religiosos. Isso indica que as relações entre museus e as comunidades representadas tornaram-se mais complexas. Quando os museus exibem eventos históricos há frequentemente conflitos por trás das exposições, pois as comunidades podem ter dificuldades para lidar com as memórias contempladas pela exposição.

Palavras chave: Museu, Memória, Diversidade, Comunidades locais, EUA.

Abstract: In recent years, U.S. museums have become more diverse, including various ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, cultural, and religious groups. This suggests that the relationships between museums and the communities represented in their exhibits have become even more complex. When museums exhibit historic events, there is often conflict behind the exhibits in those communities. Museums can play a role to preserve and reproduce their memories, which is often difficult for communities to deal with.

Keywords: Museum, Memory, Diversity, Local community, U.S.

Introduction

Although museums were considered as places to preserve their collections, today they are expected to open to the public as educational institutions. This is indicated in the transformation of museums as shrines to museums as forum [Cameron 1972]. Museums serve as research institutes for the public by collecting and investigating artifacts. Museums also contribute to local communities as educational centers by exhibiting and conducting programs. To maintain those museum activities, museums need support from their communities. Museums and communities are interdependent.

Museums have been influenced by mainstreams in their local communities. In the case of the United States, the European upper class and upper-middle class have been playing the key roles for museums in developing their collections and exhibits. Along with that background, museums tended to focus the mainstream's interests, which is their history and culture.

In 1960s and 1970s, the civil right movement improved African-Americans' social positions. This social change influenced museum organization as well. Museums started focusing on the history and culture of ethnic minorities such as African-Americans. Since museums have been demonstrating diversity, you can see more various ethnic groups in museum exhibits and programs. Does that mean that museums have become more diverse?

My prior research suggested that increasing ethnic diversity in 1990s resulted in the clustering of minorities into ethnic enclaves in the U.S. museums [Harris 2013]. This is also true for mainstreams. Although ethnic minorities finally had a chance to see their exhibits, mainstreams did not share their interests with minorities. Mainstreams were frustrated and raised the question "where is our exhibit?"

One issue today is how museums directed diversity in 2000s. Even more important is the issue of how museums serve their communities, including diverse exhibits and programs. I will explore recent multicultural exhibits to detect how to or

¹. PhD in Anthropology by University of Hiroshima. Professor in Indiana Japanese Language School. E-mail: izumi.t.harris@gmail.com

how not to connect with their communities. The way to connect with communities could show museums another step to be “forum.”

Diversity of Museum Exhibits

The origin of museums traces back to medieval Europe; it is called “Wunderkammer” which means “Cabinet of Curiosities” or “Cabinet of Wonder” [Hooper- Greenhill 1993]. The collections ranged from natural history to ethnography, and from science to art. Those were private collections for the ruling class, including royalties and the members of the nobility. Museum collections represented their rank and wealth in those societies.

Museums in modern Europe became close to the image of modern days’ museums. Along with travelers and government officers, missionaries who went another continent, such as Africa, shipped back artifacts from other cultures [Coombes 1994]. Their interests in other cultures included a lot of topics from everyday life, religion, and art. Those collections opened to the public in special exhibitions or church museums. Clifford observed that Pratt considered the museum to be a “contact zone” [Clifford 1997]. Clifford explained that contact zone is a social sphere where cultures that were divided geographically and historically meet each other through colonialism. In museums as contact zone, artifacts were chosen, collected, and interpreted by other cultures.

Museums have been criticized for producing unequal relationships between two cultures: people who present another culture and people from the other culture [Ames 1992]. To solve the problem, ethnological museums in Western societies started working with natives from other cultures. In the case of the U.S. museums, museums were influenced by mainstreams who were primarily upper or upper-middle class Euro-Americans [Wallace 1986]. Museum budgets came from wealthy families; Museum audiences were mainly from mainstreams. Museums had been preserving the mainstream history and culture.

Ethnic minorities’ cultures tended to be ignored in the exhibits and programs or represented through the mainstream’s perspectives [Leon and Piatt 1989]. The civil rights movement changed this attitude in U.S. museums. Museums began to focus more on minority cultures in their exhibits and hire minority group members as professionals such as curators, educators, and interpreters. Museums invited the minorities to serve as members of the museum committees as well.

During these decades, U.S. museums improved projecting minority cultures, even though more work needs to be done to expand diversity in museums. First, diversity is even more complicated today than it was in the past. Not only ethnic minorities, but also other socially disadvantaged groups claim their exclusion from exhibits and programs. Second, even within a minority group, there are differences of opinion. These problems make it difficult to develop the relationship between museums and communities. Next, I will describe local and global relationships between a museum and communities by examining the “Power of Children” exhibit of the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis in the U.S.

Representing communities: The case of “Power of Children” Exhibit.

The “Power of Children: Making a Difference” exhibit opened at the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis in 2007. The exhibit focuses on children’s struggles and courage against social prejudices. This exhibit includes three children’s experiences in various locations and eras, specifically Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and

Ryan White. Each story is developed through photographs, artifacts, video, and, digital or live performance in the exhibit room. I will explain their experiences and those impacts to communities through the display. What is most important is that how do the stories intermediate to connect museum to the communities.

The story of Anne Frank: Anne Frank was born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1929. While anti-Semitism was growing in the country, her father Otto and mother Edith decided to move to Amsterdam, Netherlands. In 1940, when Germany invaded the Netherlands, Margot, Anne's sister, received a call-up letter to the concentration camp. They moved into their hiding place and lived for two years until the place was unveiled in 1942.

The displays contain historic pictures and artifacts. The description encourages the audience to find artifacts in the photographs, for example, an SS cap, a Nazi Party armband, a Hitler Youth trumpet, and the Nazi propaganda children's book "Trust No Fox". Those displays warn audiences about the power of propaganda, especially for the young generation. As examples of anti-Semitism, the displays use artifacts such as the Star of David, a Dutch registration form, and historic photographs showing separation of Jews at schools, restaurants, and public transportations. The displays show that prejudice and discrimination by the Nazis included not only Jews, but also Roma, homosexuals, and those with mental and physical disabilities. It encourages the audience to think that the prejudice is not just someone else's problem.

The audience follows the next section of the display: reproduction of the Anne's room. In front of the picture of building, the display shows the mailman bringing the call-up letter to Anne's sister Margot. This mail made Anne's father Otto decide to move to a secret place. The display encourages its audience to think about Otto's decision: "Is it ever okay to disobey orders?" This makes the audience rethink what is justice and humanity.

In the reproduction of the Anne's room, you can see their dining table, the typewriter on the secretary desk, and the secret bookcase to the hiding rooms. Their helper brought their food, clothes, and books for two years. This space is also a hall for digital and live performance. The digital performance—a light and sound show—is mostly a monologue of Anne describing her experience under anti-Semitism to the audience. A projector screen in the room shows historical pictures. When Anne mentions her secret attic, spotlights guide the audience's attention to those displays including the secret bookcase to the hiding place, her favorite cinema actress pinups on the wall, and a chestnut tree in front of her window. The live performance is a role play of life in hiding rooms and the difficult experiences after arrest. In one case, Otto Frank describes the memory of his daughters, especially Anne's thoughts from her diary. After the performance, the actor takes the time for questions and answers with audience.

In 1942, the secret place was unveiled, and all the families in the hiding places were arrested. They were sent to multiple concentration camps; Otto Frank survived, but Anne, Margot, and their mother did not. Next, the audience sees the display on how hard the life in those concentration camps was. The display shows the camp uniform and historic photos.

When Otto Frank came back from the camp, he was informed that their rest of family members died in camps. He received Anne's diary from supporters who found the diary in the hiding place after the Franks' arrest. The display of Anne's diary shows the audience that Anne called her diary "Kitty." You can listen to part of her diary through audio speakers. The last display case contains her diary translated in many languages.

Although Anne Frank's experience in Amsterdam was more than a half century ago and far from museums in the U.S., prejudice and discrimination continue to be common problems in both communities today. The museum exhibit connects the Indiana children to another country in the last century in terms of the struggle against intolerance.

The story of Ruby Bridges: Closer to home for Indiana children is the story of Ruby Bridges, who experienced discrimination first-hand as an elementary student in the South. One display shows that court cases banning segregated schools culminated in 1954 with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, prohibiting "separate but equal" schools in Topeka. Six years later, four African-American students, including Ruby Bridges, enrolled in New Orleans schools in which all students had been Euro-American previously. Three of the four were transferred the same school, whereas Ruby went to William Franz Elementary School by herself. This was the era that resulted in the integration of African-American and Euro-American students at schools throughout the southern U.S.

Even though schools were becoming integrated, you still could see discrimination against African-Americans the South. One display shows two water fountains and two student's desks with historical photographs; one is obviously better than others. On the water fountain display, the audience can change the description followed by "If this fountain was for (whites/blacks), would this be fair?" This encourages them to feel discomfort when they are targets of discrimination.

The first day of integration of schools at New Orleans was November 14, 1960, under a court order. While U.S. Marshalls escorted Ruby, a large crowd gathered outside of the school; shouting and throwing objects. Some Euro-American parents were pulling their children from the school, and only one teacher, Mrs. Henry, agreed to teach Ruby. The first year of her elementary school was challenging both Ruby and her family. Ruby's mother sent her to an integrated school. The display also describes the way that the decision changed the family's life; her father lost his job, and local supermarket told the family to stay away. Supporters of the family helped by bringing them food.

At the entrance to the classroom recreation, there is a picture display of William Franz Elementary school surrounded by protesters. One girl is holding a cross. The explanation shows many incidents in which the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) had been burning the crosses in African-Americans' front yards.

One of the protestors threatened to poison Ruby, so she brought her lunch from home every morning. She had lunch alone in the classroom, because she was not allowed to use the cafeteria. She was scared to eat anything, then she hid her lunch in the cabinet. You can see the cabinet with her untouched lunch in the exhibit. The explanation beside the display indicates that Ruby thought she could go to cafeteria like other students if she did not eat her lunch.

The recreation of class room has digital show and live performance daily. The light and sound show tells the story of Ruby's experience in the school using monologues of Ruby and her teacher Mrs. Henry. The projector screen shows historical pictures. Ruby tells how she was horrified when a woman had an African-American doll within a coffin. Following her mother's advice, Ruby prayed for those protestors: "Please God, try to forgive these people. Because even if they say those bad things, they don't know what they're doing." The spotlights attract the audience's attention to displays such as the lunchbox during Ruby and Mrs. Henry's monologues. You can see shadows of those protestors or other students outside the window. It encourages the audience to share Ruby's feelings of danger or loneliness. The story continues by describing Mrs. Henry's passionate guidance to Ruby and Ruby's

successful achievement at end of year. The show highlights Ruby's continuous devotion for African-Americans communities and encourages the audience to stand up against prejudice. In the live performance, her teacher tells the story of Ruby's first year in the school. She insists that being different is not wrong, and you need to be willing to accept something new to you. After the performance, the performer encourages the audience to think and act against prejudice in everyday life.

Although Ruby's story describes conditions in the South, the exhibit also relates her experience to the history of the state of Indiana. Indiana also struggled with racism and civil rights. Indiana was known for the power of KKK in the 1920s. The political power of the KKK shows the depth of the opposition to African-Americans' civil rights. As a legacy of that history, schools in some Indiana cities were still segregated in the 1960s. Even though civil rights have been practiced for decades, there are still unsolved problem in this community. African-Americans families struggle with issues such as income, education, and employment.

Ruby's story shows that discrimination is not easy to remove. African-Americans still suffer from poverty, poor medical treatment, less education, and unemployment. The KKK is still active in Indiana, occasionally conducting rallies. The KKK display connected Indiana children to 1960 New Orleans.

The Story of Ryan White: Ryan White was known nationally by having been expelled from a middle school in Indiana because of his HIV infection. When his infection was diagnosed in 1984, people misunderstood AIDS. Many teachers and parents at his middle school disagreed with Ryan's return. After the legal decision, Ryan went back to his school in 1986-1987, but he had to deal with the prejudice against HIV/AIDS.

The display contains Ryan's baby blanket, baseball glove, along with the ReFacto-kit for blood transfusions. The transfusions that had saved Ryan's life as a hemophiliac also infected him with HIV/AIDS. The display shows "a mysterious new illness" in the 1980s news media.

The next display shows Ryan when he was ill, along with the Doctor's name badge and a letter from his nurse. Although medical professionals were very supportive, Ryan's high school teachers and students opposed his efforts to return to school. Ryan and his family successfully fought the superintendent's decision in court, so he returned to school. The story of Ryan's experience at the school shows that HIV/AIDS was poorly understood at the time, and it caused fear among the public. His locker in the hallway was scribbled with phrases such as "We hate you!" He had to use disposable trays and utensils at student's cafeteria, along with a separate water fountain with other students, and he was excluded from gym class.

Ryan moved and attended Hamilton Heights High School in 1987. Students had been learning about AIDS so that they were not afraid of having Ryan at the school. He found good friends, enjoyed skateboarding just like as other high school students. In 1990, he caught a respiratory infection and entered a hospital in Indianapolis. He passed away 10 days later. The display of his funeral shows many people had been supportive for Ryan and his family during their struggle. First Lady Barbara Bush, Michel Jackson and Elton John were at the funeral. Elton John visited Ryan just before his death, and he performed at his funeral. Elton had been Ryan's good friend and mental and economic supporter for his family.

The most remarkable display is the reproduction of Ryan's room. In this room, members of the audience see Ryan's everyday life. There are many toys that he grew up with on the shelves, including his GI Joe collection, along with posters of his favorite cars on the wall. His drum set, school sweatshirts, and heaters (he felt always

cold because of his disease) are also on display. His mother, Jeanne White-Ginder, contacted the Children's Museum of Indianapolis to explore possibilities to develop Ryan's exhibit. When the museum curators visited her house, they found that Jeanne had been kept entire his room for 10 years after his death. Ryan's belongings were received by the museum.

The light and sound show is mainly Ryan's monologue. He tells us about his normal life before HIV/AIDS and explains that even after that he was the same person except for his poor condition. The television and window of the display are also projector screens that show his pictures at the time. During his last days, he confessed that he was scared to fall asleep because he would not be awake any longer, so his mother put the lights on his guardian angel all the time. The day he passed away, his mother turn the lights off. You can see the guardian angel beside his bed. The live performances have been performed daily by performers, including one representing his best friend at his new high school. She confessed that she was nervous to have contact with him, even after she took an HIV/AIDS education class at the high school. But after breaking the ice, she was convinced that Ryan was a just regular guy, albeit with several celebrity friends.

Ryan's story includes discussion of the influence of the news media, taking a look at how the media reported about HIV/AIDS and how people reacted to those media stories. This shows that prejudice was created and extended from adults to their children. This encourages the audience to feel responsible for the fair attitudes and behavior of their children. Ryan's story is a part of local history, and this history is still fresh in locals' minds. Seeing the reproduction of his room full of his original clothes and collections makes it difficult to remain dispassionate. His story warns the audience that prejudice would be their tragedy. Ryan was considered to be mainstream before the infection, so that this case had conflict.

Some in his local community were against him, while others supported him. This is a story of splitting the communities. This is same issue as in Anne's and Ruby's stories. Anne's family survived for two years in their hiding place with helpers' efforts surrounding anti-Semitism. When Ruby's father lost his job and their grocery store refused to sell to them, some supporters brought food. These stories are inspiring as well as shameful. How do museums work for communities that carry such negative memory? I would like to examine museums' role regarding local communities.

Mediating the audience and the communities

After the civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s, ethnic diversity increased in the U.S. museums. African-Americans were focused on as a part of U.S. history in museums. Although minorities presented their history and culture in museums, mainstreams did not share the interest in minority exhibits. Like minorities, mainstream audiences looked for exhibits related to their own history and culture. The interests of the two groups did not coincide.

Since then, U.S. museums have become even more diverse in their exhibits. Did this development change the relationship between museums and local communities? In the case of the "Power of Children" exhibit, the museum has been successful in connecting the museum and diverse groups.

As long as museums are institutes used by diverse people, museums need to reach out to multiple minority groups in their communities, based not only on ethnicity but also on groupings such as religion, beliefs, gender, and generations. In the case of the "Power of Children" exhibit, you can find multiple reasons why Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and Ryan White are considered as minorities. They are Jewish,

African-Americans, or infected by disease, as well as being children. The exhibit focuses on prejudice based on racial, religious, historical, ethnic, HIV/AIDS background, so that the audience can internalize the difficulties that they had in working through their troubles.

The “Power of Children” exhibit implies that Ryan White, a member of the mainstream as a middle-class, Euro-American child, could become a minority. Anne also had a normal life initially, prior to the growth of anti-Semitism through Nazi propaganda. When the exhibit identifies “mainstream” as relative concept, it make it possible to include various minorities in the exhibit.

The key concept in these three stories is prejudice. Along with showing that the prejudice faced by Anne, Ruby, and Ryan still exists, the exhibit encourages the audience to stand up against intolerance². Such intolerance and prejudice survives and gains strength over time. The “Power of Children” exhibit helps to preserve the memory of the events with which those communities struggled.

Anti-Semitism has strong resistance in Amsterdam³ and throughout the world⁴. In the U.S. there are many museums and cultural centers regarding Jews and the Holocaust, in order to preserve their memory and educate people. Even so, the discrimination against Jews continues⁵, including some incidents in Indiana.

Although Anne’s memory is already globally preserved, the Sapling Project could make her memory even more relevant to local communities. The Anne Frank Center USA is a partner with the Anne Frank House, which is a non-profit organization that administrates the Anne Frank House Museum at Amsterdam. Along with exhibits and educational programs, the Center started the Sapling Project in 2009. While Anne was hiding and writing her diary, she admired the chestnut tree just outside the secret attic. The tree was old and diseased, so that neighbors wanted to cut it down⁶. The Anne Frank House had the permission of the tree’s owner to gather chestnuts, which were then sprouted and donated to schools and organizations around the world. The Center received eleven saplings. The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis is the one of eleven to be selected for the sapling site from many applicants. In 2013, the museum planted a sapling chestnut tree at the Anne Frank Pearce Park in the museum’s sculpture garden. This was another opportunity to develop the memory of Anne among Indiana’s children.

Along with Anne, both Ruby and Ryan had been nationally recognized in various media, including books, magazines, paintings, and movies. Even with this recognition, we need to make an effort to ensure that Ruby’s and Ryan’s memories are passed along to future generations.

John Steinbeck witnessed Ruby’s experience first-hand. Steinbeck was on a road trip with his dog Charlie in 1960 to see contemporary America. While on the road, he heard about the Ruby’s news, then he stopped by New Orleans to see the chaos at the William Franz Elementary School. His observation was in his 1962 book, “Travels with Charlie: In search of America.” This book inspired Norman Rockwell;

² The Children’s Museum created the Power of Children Awards (POCA) in 2005. It is given to youth who make significant contributions and create important projects to benefit others. <http://www.childrensmuseum.org/about/power-of-children-awards> (Last access on May 27, 2014)

³ “Unprecedented’ global study finds 1 in 4 adults anti-Semitic” <http://www.cnn.com/2014/05/14/world/anti-semitism-global-survey/> (Last access on May 27, 2014)

⁴ “Anti-Semitism on the rise in Amsterdam” http://vorige.nrc.nl/international/article2468489.ece/Anti-Semitism_on_the_rise_in_Amsterdam (Last access on May 27, 2014)

⁵ “Anti-Semitism in America: Down, but not out” <http://www.jta.org/2014/02/18/news-opinion/united-states/anti-semitism-in-america-today-down-but-not-out> (Last access on May 27, 2014)

⁶ In 2010, the chestnut tree was destroyed by a windstorm.

his painting “The Problem We All Live With” on the Life magazine was published in 1964. The painting shows Ruby with four U.S. Marshals on the way to school. On the wall behind them, you can see the racial slur graffiti and smashed tomatoes from the protesters.

Although the school has become a monument in the history of the civil rights movement, there is no indication of this historic event at the school site today, at least not outside on the school grounds. This differs from the Little Rock Central High School at Little Rock, Arkansas. The Little Rock Central High School is still in operation, but it is also registered as National Historic Site. There is a National Park Service visitor center with exhibits and a bookstore. There are many visitors, including school field trips, from visitors desiring to learn more. The display describes the experience of nine African-American students who desegregated the high by enrolling in 1957. The so-called Little Rock Nine were escorted by the troops of U.S. Army surround by protestors. One of the nationally famous historic photos was a young female student, Hazel Bryan Massery, who with a hateful expression, shouted to Elizabeth Eckford, one of the Little Rock Nine. This picture is on the display at the “Power of Children” exhibit, and the display also tells that later Hazel Bryan Massery apologized to Elizabeth Eckford.

William Franz Elementary School is in a residential neighborhood. Ruby Bridges, founder of the Ruby Bridges Foundation, fought to save the school, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places⁷. In 2005, the public school system planned to close the school, and then Hurricane Katrina caused serious damage. Using Louisiana's Recovery School District funds, the school undertook a rehabilitation project in 2010, and it reopen as the home of a public charter school, the Akili academy. The school preserves Ruby Bridges' first year classroom for special programs and events for the general public.

This shows that a national icon is not necessary appreciated in the local communities. It takes efforts to preserve and revive the memory and history to maintain them for future generations. Regarding this point, Ryan's case is more complicated. His hometown was nationally recognized when they rejected his return to the school. The town has not healed from the humiliation.

The Howard County Historical Society planned the oral history project that examined Ryan White story⁸. This project focused on the ban that prevented Ryan from attending Western Middle School in Howard County. This attracted attention and criticism from around the world. The project included interviews with people involved in the controversy, including other students, teachers, school board members, administrators as well as family members and friends. The goal was not just to decide right or wrong but to examine the negative and positive outcomes in the county⁹.

This project was criticized by the local residents¹⁰. The community seemed not to be ready for the project and felt that the project would tear up the community. Residents were still upset with the past reaction from outside the community and still

⁷ “New Life for the School Where Ruby Bridges Made History” in The Huffington Post on March 13, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/national-trust-for-historic-preservation/new-life-for-the-school-w_b_4956789.html (last access on May 27, 2014)

⁸ “Historical Society to tackle Ryan White story” in Kokomo Tribune; Kokomo, Indiana on Dec. 27, 2010. (last access on May 27, 2014)

⁹ “Howard County Historical Society Wins IHS's 2012 Indiana History Outstanding Project Award” in Howard County Historical Society website. <http://howardcountymuseum.org/news/state+award+for+hchs/35> (Last access on May 27, 2014)

¹⁰ “In Teen AIDS Activist's Hometown, Old Tensions Remain” in NPR on March 18, 2013. <http://www.npr.org/2013/03/25/174649756/in-teen-aids-activists-hometown-old-tensions-remain> (Last access on May 27, 2014)

did not talk about Ryan. Although this was a tough project, the Howard County Historical Society received the 2012 Indiana History Outstanding Project Award from the Indiana Historical Society.

The local memories of anti-Semitism, discrimination against African-Americans, and prejudice against HIV/AIDS are still bitter in local communities. The “Power of Children” exhibit explains that museums play a role in preserving the memory, even in cases in which the local communities try to forget. Museums collaborate with local communities, even taking the place of the communities in preserving negative memories that the communities find it difficult to deal with.

Museums are a place to recreate the memories as well. Jeanne White-Ginder, Ryan’s mother, visits the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis occasionally to share Ryan’s story. Ruby also visits the museum occasionally. In 2013, Ruby reunited at the museum with one of her escorts, Charles Burks, who is the only one still alive.¹¹ Ruby thanked him for performing a very difficult and unpopular task; he responded that it was a privilege to be have been able to do. Since 1960, they had reunited only once before, in 1995. The museum played the role to preserve, recreate, and share the memory with the audience.

Conclusion

In this article, I described museums as agents between audiences and the local communities being exhibited. Since the civil rights movement, museums have expanded their diversity. Exhibits and programs began to cover ethnic minorities. To developed those exhibits and programs, museums hired ethnic minorities as curators and interpreters. Although this was a step in the right direction, problems still remained. Minority professionals work for the projects related with their own cultural background, which makes them get into ethnic enclaves in museum activities.

In the case of the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, they refine their “diversity” not only according to ethnicity, but also race, religion, historic background, and illness. To keep those exhibits together, the museum use “prejudice” and “children” as a common theme to tie together three stories of Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and Ryan White. This approach provided an opportunity for the museum to connect with outside communities locally, nationally, and globally.

This exhibit explored the similarities and differences among the three communities. As an example of the anti-Semitism was rampant at the time, the Frank family hiding place became the Anne Frank House museum funded by Anne Frank Foundation in 1960. In contrast, even though the William Franz Elementary School is the icon of integration in Deep South, it was not easy to find the way to preserve it. Ironically Hurricane Katarina brought the chance to preserve the buildings by making grants available for reconstruction. Ryan’s hometown still experiences the bitter feelings for their reaction against HIV/AIDS. This came into the open with the oral history project conducted by the Hamilton County Historical Society.

Museums play a role in preserving memory for their communities. When that memory is not easy for residents to deal with, museums are the place to keep the memory instead of relying on the communities. Also, memory in museums provides an opportunity for them to recreate memory with their audiences and to ensure that it will be passed on to future generations. This engagement with communities is also a

¹¹ “Ruby Bridges meets with marshal who escorted her” in Associate Press on September 5th, 2013. <http://news.msn.com/us/ruby-bridges-meets-with-marshal-who-escorted-her> (Last access on May 27th, 2014)

way for museums to demonstrate their role as “forum.” Museums are able to play a role as agents to preserve and recreate the memory of historic events among audiences, exhibits’ subjects, and the communities behind the exhibits. This effort makes it possible for museums to collaborate with local communities. Perhaps equally important is the significant change from the past representation primarily of the mainstream in museums to one reflecting diversity.

References Cited

- Ames, M. M. 1992 *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*, UBC Press.
- Cameron, D. 1972 “The Museum: a temple or the forum”, *Journal of World History*, v. 4, n. 1, p. 189-202.
- Clifford, J. 1997 *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press.
- Coombes, A. E. 1994 *Reinventing Africa Museums: Material Culture and Popular Imagination*, Yale University Press.
- Harris, I. T. 2013 “Ethnic diversity or ethnic enclaves? Representing African American history in U.S. Museums” *Educação & Linguagem* vol. 16(2), pp.58-76, jul-dEz.
- Hooper- Greenhill, E. 1993 (1992) *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, Routledge.
- Leon, W. and M. Piatt 1989 Living History Museums In W. Leon and R. Rosenzweig, eds., *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, pp.64-97. University of Illinois Press.
- Wallace, M. 1986 Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States In S. P. Benson, S. Brier, and R. Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, pp.137-161. Temple University Press.

Recebido para publicação em 11-05-14; aceito em 15-07-14