

Museum Partner Observation #1

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It is an unfortunate reality that many small and local museums across the United States are suffering from a severe lack of funding, which causes them to be years behind larger museums in terms of technology, access, and interaction with visitors. The Yorktown Museum in Yorktown Heights, New York, is a small, local museum focused around the history of the town and surrounding areas, and hardly exempt from this standard. It has minimal outreach available to it from outside sources, is understaffed, and only open three days a week to the public.

There are no apps available to visitors and patrons of the Yorktown Museum, neither are there kiosks, computers, or other interactive means aside from going in and walking through. The website for the museum is visually unappealing for most and lacks frequent updates and maintenance, noticeable by several typos, inconsistencies in information, and a lack of patron friendly information that would assist their in person visits.

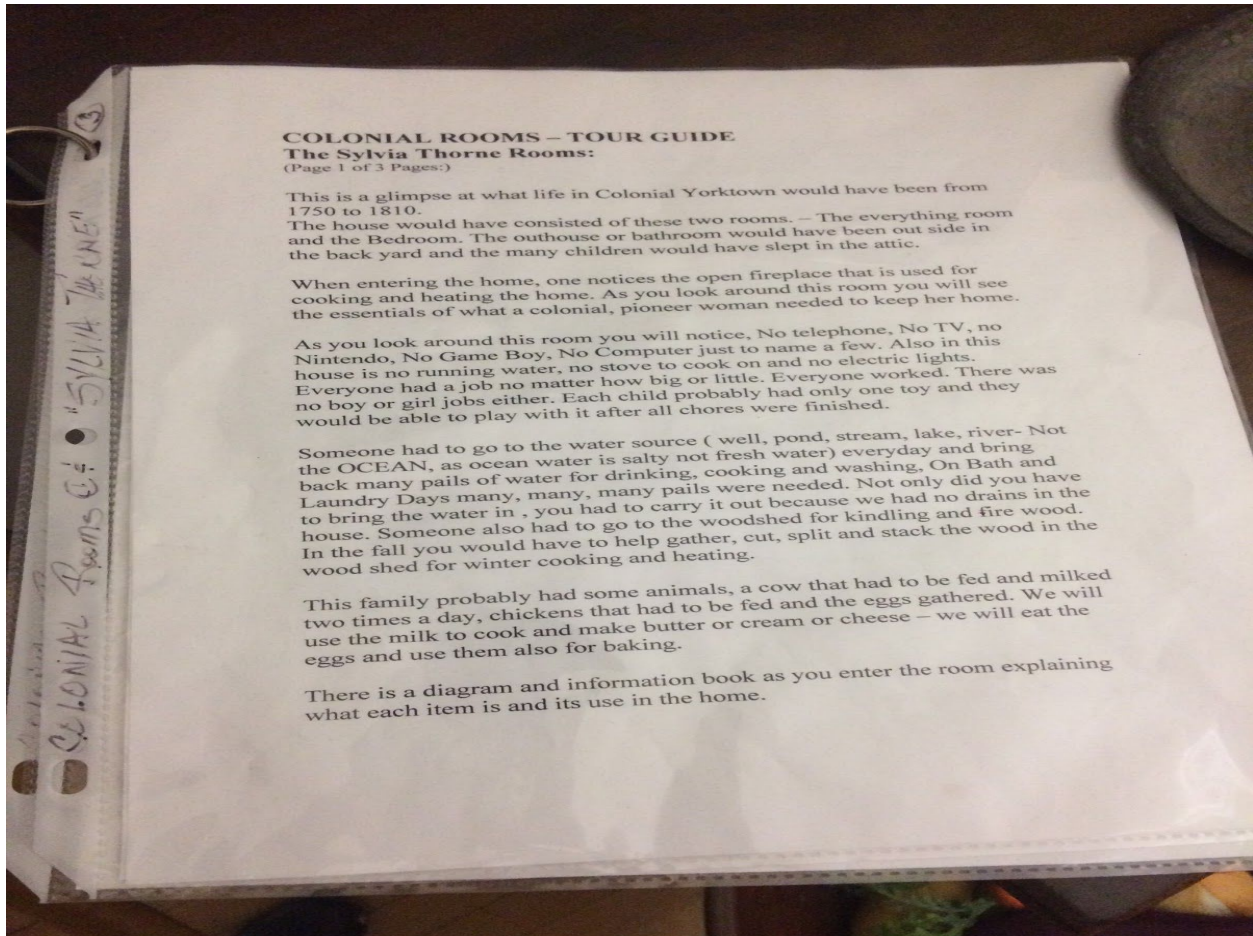
Screenshot of Yorktown Museum Home Page





Screenshot of "Exhibits" page on the Yorktown Museum website

Permanent exhibits are displayed on the website, but only provide a brief description and picture showing only a portion of each. Paired with each exhibit is a packet for self guided tours, as information plaques are minimal throughout the museum. These packets provide details on the objects within an exhibit and create a short little walkthrough for how a visitor can approach it. A staff/volunteer member is always available to provide tours, and the office is always open for those with questions on the exhibits.



Picture of Sylvia Thorne Room tour guide

One aspect of the Yorktown Museum that provides a great deal of access to its users is the Doris and Cortland Auser Research Room; this library and archive area is open to the public along with the museum and available through appointments when the library isn't open. This room "provides resource materials for delving into genealogy, local area history and antiques"¹. While the overall access for the Yorktown Museum is lacking in many ways, the availability of resources to the public gives it a unique quality.

¹ Yorktown Museum, "Museum Info": <http://www.yorktownmuseum.org/info.html>