

## Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Salem Maritime National Historic Site (NHS) visitors during July 1–28, 2013. A total of 646 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 301 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 46.6% response rate.

<b>Group size and type</b>	Forty-one percent of visitor groups consisted of two people and 38% were in groups of three or four. Eighty percent of visitor groups consisted of family groups.
<b>State or country of residence</b>	United States visitors were from 43 states and Puerto Rico and comprised 89% of total visitation during the survey period, with 23% from Massachusetts. Thirty-three percent of visitors from Massachusetts and adjacent states were from Essex County, MA. International visitors were from 13 countries and comprised 11% of total visitation during the survey period with 51% from Canada and 18% from the United Kingdom.
<b>Frequency of visits</b>	Ninety-one percent of visitors visited the park once in the past 12 months. For 79%, this was their first visit in their lifetime, while 12% had visited two or three times.
<b>Age, ethnicity, race, educational level, and income level</b>	Thirty percent of visitors were ages 46-60 years, 19% were 31-45 years old, 19% were ages 15 years or younger, and 17% were 61 years or older. Six percent were Hispanic or Latino. Ninety-three percent of visitors were White and 4% were Asian. Forty-four percent of respondents had completed a graduate degree and 32% had a bachelor's degree. Thirty-four percent of respondents reported an income level of \$50,000-\$99,999 and 33% had an income level of \$100,000-\$199,999.
<b>Physical conditions</b>	Four percent of visitor groups had members with physical conditions affecting their ability to access or participate in activities or services.
<b>Awareness of park prior to visit</b>	Thirty-one percent of visitor groups were aware that Salem Maritime NHS is a unit of the National Park System.
<b>Information sources</b>	Fifty-four percent of visitor groups obtained information about the park prior to their visit through friends/relatives/word of mouth (35%), maps/brochures (31%), and the Salem Maritime NHS website (29%). Most visitor groups (84%) received the information they needed. Seventy-four percent of visitor groups prefer to use the Salem Maritime NHS website to obtain information for a future visit and 38% prefer to use maps/brochures. Fifty-seven percent of visitor groups rated the information on the park website as "extremely helpful" or "very helpful" in planning their visit.
<b>Park as destination</b>	During the on-site interview 58% of visitor groups said the park was one of several destinations and for 24%, the park was their primary destination.
<b>Reasons for visiting the park</b>	The most common reasons for visiting the park were to learn about life in Salem in the 18 <sup>th</sup> century (68%) and to learn about 400 years of maritime history (33%).
<b>Reasons for visiting the Downtown Visitor Center</b>	The most common reasons for visiting the Downtown Visitor Center were to learn what to see and do in Salem (68%), learn about witches of Salem (49%), and learn about maritime history (33%).

## Executive Summary (continued)

<b>Length of visit</b>	Sixty-three percent of visitor groups spent up to two hours in the park, while 37% spent three or more hours. The average length of stay was 2.5 hours. Thirteen percent of visitor groups visited the park on more than one day.
<b>Time spent at park</b>	Thirty-four percent of visitor groups had a planned amount of time to spend at the park. Of those, 39% spent about the same amount of time as they planned, while 38% stayed longer than they had planned.
<b>Sites visited</b>	The most common sites visited in the park were Downtown Visitor Center (81%), Friendship of Salem (61%), and Derby Wharf (59%).
<b>Easter National bookstore</b>	Forty-one percent of visitor groups visited the Eastern National bookstore at the Downtown Visitor Center. Ninety-seven percent felt the bookstore space was adequate to view sales items. Eleven percent of visitor groups would like to purchase items that are not currently available.
<b>Activities on this visit</b>	The most common activities were visiting Downtown Visitor Center (74%), viewing indoor and outdoor exhibits/signs (68%), and visiting Friendship of Salem (52%). The most common activities that were the primary reason for visiting the park were visiting Friendship of Salem (24%) and visiting Downtown Visitor Center (13%).
<b>Ranger or volunteer-led talks/programs/tours</b>	Thirty-three percent of visitor groups participated in ranger or volunteer-led talks/programs/ tours on this visit. The most common reasons preventing visitor groups from participating in ranger or volunteer-led talks/programs/ tours were did not have time for this activity (48%), programs not offered at time of visit (25%), and not aware of ranger or volunteer-led activities (20%).
<b>Topics learned</b>	Fifty-nine percent of visitor groups learned about selected park topics on this visit. Sixty-four percent of visitor groups learned about 400 years of maritime history. Sixty-six percent learned about world trade in the 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> centuries. Eighty-four percent learned about life in Salem in the 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> centuries. Fifty-four percent learned about operation of 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> century ships.
<b>Visitor services and facilities</b>	The visitor services and facilities most often used by visitor groups were assistance from park staff (76%), Downtown Visitor Center - overall (74%), and restrooms (66%).
<b>Importance and quality ratings of visitor services and facilities</b>	The highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of visitor services and facilities was ranger-led talks/programs/tours (98%). The highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” ratings of visitor services and facilities was ranger-led talks/programs/tours (100%).
<b>Interaction with park staff</b>	Eighty-seven percent of visitor groups had personal interaction with park staff. The interaction receiving the highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” ratings was courteousness (96%).
<b>Ranger-led programs and tours on a future visit</b>	Sixty-eight percent of visitor groups were interested in a recreation trip on a boat/ship on a future visit and 82% were interested in a ranger-led program/tour on a boat/ship. Eighty-seven percent of visitor groups would be willing to pay \$10/adult (\$5/child) for a one hour trip on a boat/ship.

## Executive Summary (continued)

<b>Preferred length of ranger/volunteer-led program</b>	Sixty-two percent of visitor groups preferred a program length of 1/2 - 1 hour and 28% preferred a program length of under 1/2 hour.
<b>Preferred time of day to attend ranger/volunteer-led program</b>	Forty-seven percent of visitor groups preferred a program time of 10 am - noon, 24% preferred a program time of noon - 2 pm, and 13% preferred a program time of 2 pm -4 pm.
<b>Methods of learning about the park on a future visit</b>	Ninety-four percent of visitor groups were interested in learning about the park through printed materials (54%), self-guided tours (52%), indoor exhibits (52%), ranger-guided walks/talks (52%), and living history/costumed interpretive programs (52%).
<b>Overall quality</b>	Most visitor groups (90%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Salem Maritime NHS as “very good” or “good.” Two percent of groups rated the overall quality as “very poor” or “poor.”

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho at (208) 885-2585 or the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>.