Visitor Services Project

Frederick Douglass National Historic Site



Visitor Services Project Report 46 Cooperative Park Studies Unit





Visitor Services Project Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

Dwight L. Madison

Report 46

January 1993



Visitor Services Project Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Frederick Douglass National Historic Site during May 3-9, 1992. A total of 325 questionnaires were distributed and 197 returned, a 61% response rate.
- This report profiles Frederick Douglass visitors. A separate appendix has visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain a comment summary.
- Visitors were often in school and church groups (38%) or guided tour groups (35%). Fifty-two
 percent of visitors were 21-45 years old; 21% were aged 15 or younger. Most (82%) were first
 time visitors to Frederick Douglass.
- Visitors from foreign countries comprised 2% of the visitation. Thirty-eight percent of Americans came from Maryland, Virginia and Washington D.C., with smaller numbers from many other states.
- Visitors arrived at Frederick Douglass NHS by tour bus (43%), private vehicle (30%) and bus (21%). Ninety-two percent of visitors spent two hours or less at the site.
- Visitors most often used travel guide/tour books (26%), advice from friends and relatives (26%) and previous visits as sources of information about the site. Ninety-one percent of visitors did not feel that the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site was difficult to locate.
- Most visitors arrived at Frederick Douglass National Historic Site by traveling on 295 South, Martin Luther King Avenue, "V" or "W" Streets.
- Most visitors (92%) spent two hours or less at Frederick Douglass National Historic Site.
- Fifty-seven percent of visitors waited to take a tour of the Frederick Douglass home. A
 combination of first come, first served or advanced reservations would be preferred by visitors
 (42%) on a future visit.
- · Fifty-three percent of visitors were visiting an African-American historic site for the first time.
- The most used visitor services were the ranger-led tours, visitor center movies and visitor center exhibits. The visitor center movies, park brochure, visitor center exhibits and ranger-led tours received the highest quality ratings.
- · Visitors made many additional comments.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact
Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies
Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences,
Moscow, Idaho 83843-4199 or call (208)885-7129.

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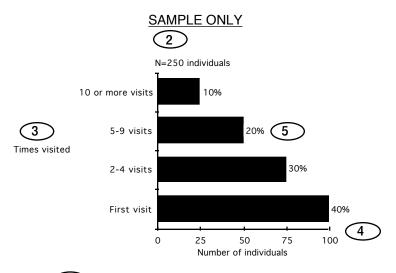
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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a study of visitors at Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (referred to as "Frederick Douglass"). This visitor study was conducted May 3-9, 1992 by the National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Services Project (VSP), part of the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho.

A <u>Methods</u> section discusses the procedures and limitations of the study. The <u>Results</u> section follows, including a summary of visitor comments. Next, a <u>Menu for Further Analysis</u> helps managers request additional analyses. The final section has a copy of the <u>Questionnaire</u>. The separate appendix includes a comment summary and the visitors' unedited comments.

Many of this report's graphs resemble the example below. The large numbers refer to explanations following the graph.



(1) Figure 4: Number of visits

- 1: The figure title describes the graph's information.
- 2: Listed above the graph, the 'N' shows the number of visitors responding and a description of the chart's information. Interpret data with an 'N' of less than 30 with CAUTION! as the results may be unreliable.
- 3: Vertical information describes categories.
- 4: Horizontal information shows the number or proportions in each category.
- 5: In most graphs, percentages provide additional information.

METHODS

General strategy

Interviews were conducted and questionnaires distributed to a sample of selected visitors visiting Frederick Douglass National Historic Site during May 3-9, 1992. Visitors completed the questionnaire during or after their trip and then returned it by mail.

Questionnaire design and administration

The questionnaire design used the standard format of previous Visitor Services Project studies. See the end of this report for a copy of the questionnaire.

Visitors were sampled as they exited the back of "Cedar Hill", the home of Frederick Douglass. Visitor groups were greeted, briefly introduced to the purpose of the study and asked to participate. If visitors agreed, the interview took approximately two minutes. These interviews included determining group size, group type and the age of the adult who would complete the questionnaire. This individual was asked his or her name, address and telephone number for the later mailing of a reminder-thank you postcard.

Two weeks following the survey, a reminder-thank you postcard was mailed to all participants. Replacement questionnaires were mailed to participants who had not returned their questionnaires four and six weeks after the survey.

Data analysis

Returned questionnaires were coded and the information entered into a computer. Frequency distributions and cross-tabulations were calculated using a standard statistical software package. Respondents' comments were summarized.

This study collected information on both visitor groups and individual Sample size, group members. Thus, the sample size ("N"), varies from figure to figure. For example, while Figure 1 shows information for 192 groups, Figure 3 presents data for 427 individuals. A note above each figure's graph specifies the information illustrated.

missing data and reporting errors

Occasionally, a respondent may not have answered all of the questions, or may have answered some incorrectly. Unanswered questions create missing data and cause the number in the sample to vary from figure to figure. For example, although 197 questionnaires were returned, Figure 1 shows data for only 192 respondents.

Questions answered incorrectly due to carelessness, misunderstanding directions and so forth, turn up in the data as reporting errors. These create small data inconsistencies.

Like all surveys, this study has limitations which should be considered when interpreting the results.

Limitations

- 1. It is not possible to know whether visitor responses reflect actual behavior. This disadvantage applies to all such studies and is reduced by having visitors fill out the questionnaire soon after they visit the park.
- 2. The data reflect visitor use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the study period of May 3-9, 1992. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors during other times of the year.
- 3. Caution is advised when interpreting any data with a sample size of less than 30, as the results may be unreliable. Whenever the sample size is less than 30, the word "CAUTION!" is included in the graph, figure or table.

RESULTS

Visitors contacted

Three hundred thirty-one visitor groups were contacted; 98% accepted questionnaires. One hundred ninety seven visitor groups completed and returned their questionnaires, a 61% response rate.

Table 1 compares information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted and the actual respondents who returned questionnaires. While the response rate was moderate the non-response bias was insignificant.

Table 1: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents

Variable	Total	sample		ctual ondents
	N	Avg.	N .	Avg.
Age of respondent (years)	319	40.4	180	42.2
Group size	328	32.8	192	31.4

Demographics

Figure 1 shows group sizes, which varied from one person to 33 people. Seventy percent of Frederick Douglass visitors came in groups of eleven people or more. Thirty-eight percent of visitors came in groups identified as "other" (mostly school tours and church groups) while 35% came in guided tour groups, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 3 shows varied age groups; the most common were visitors aged 21-45 (52%), with 21% of visitors 15 years old or younger. Most visitors (82%) were first-time visitors (see Figure 4).

Visitors from foreign countries comprised 2% of all visitation.

Map 2 and Table 3 show that the many of the American visitors came from Maryland, Virginia and Washington D.C.

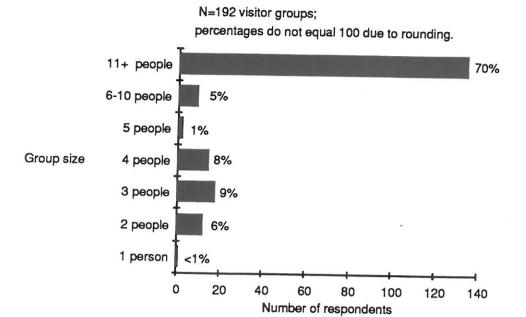


Figure 1: Visitor group sizes

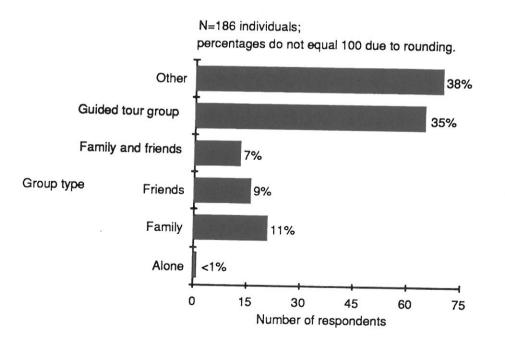


Figure 2: Visitor group types

N=427 individuals;

percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

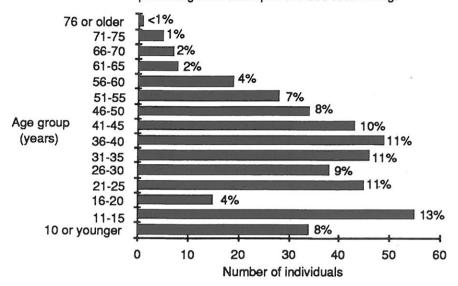


Figure 3: Visitor ages

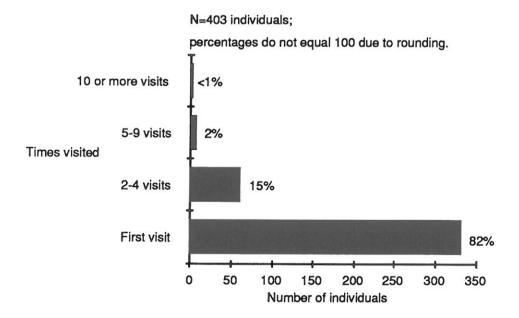
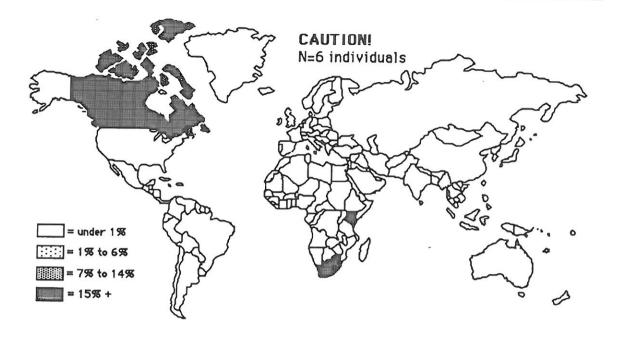


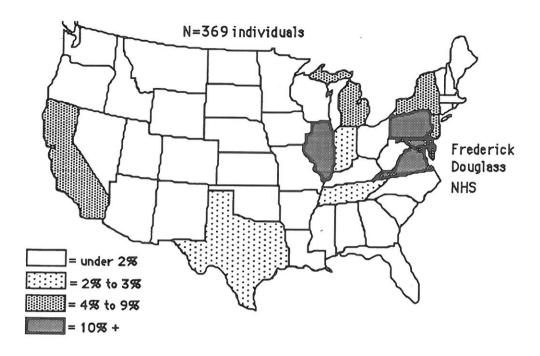
Figure 4: Number of visits



Map 1: Proportion of international visitors by country

Table 2: Visitors by country of residence
N=6 individuals
CAUTION!

Country	Number of individuals	% of visitors
Canada	2	33
Kenya	2	33
Bermuda	1	17
South Africa	1	17



Map 2: Proportion of visitors from each state

Table 3: Proportion of visitors from each state N=369 individuals; percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State				
	individuals	visitors		
Maryland	57	15		
Virginia	43	12		
Washington D.C.	41	11		
Indiana	38	10		
Pennsylvania	36	10		
New Jersey	30	8		
California	22	6		
Michigan	20	5		
Louisiana	16	4		
New York	15	4		
Tennessee	11	3		
Texas	11	3		
Illinois	8	2		
Other states (9)	21	6		

Most visitors to the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site arrived by tour bus (43%), private vehicle (30%), and bus (21%). Figure 5 shows the proportion of visitor groups that used each type of available transport.

Transportation type

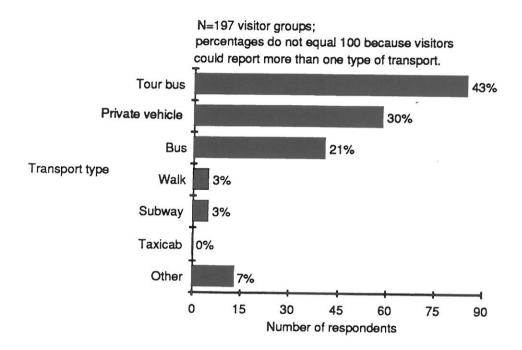


Figure 5: Proportion of visitor groups using each transport type

Length of stay

Ninety-two percent of visitors to Frederick Douglass National Historic Site stayed two hours or less (see Figure 6). Of the visitors who spent two hours or less, most (50%) spent one hour.

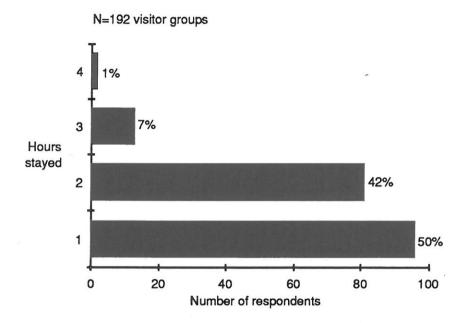
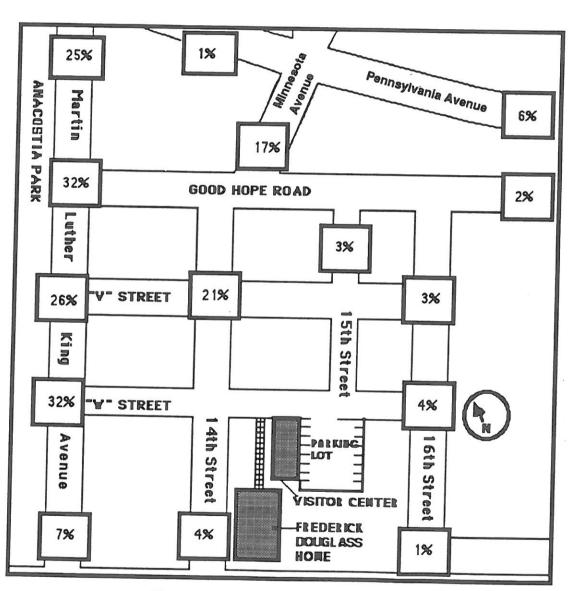


Figure 6: Length of stay

Visitors indicated routes they used to arrive at Frederick Douglass National Historic Site. Map 3 shows the proportion of visitors using each intersection to enter the Frederick Douglass site. Martin Luther King Boulevard, 295 South, "V" Street, and "W" Street were used most often.

Routes traveled



Map 3: Routes traveled by visitors

Sources of park information

The most often used sources of information about the park were travel guide/tour books (26%), advice from friends and relatives (26%), and previous visits (23%), as shown in Figure 7. "Other" sources included schools, travel agencies, and tour bus companies.

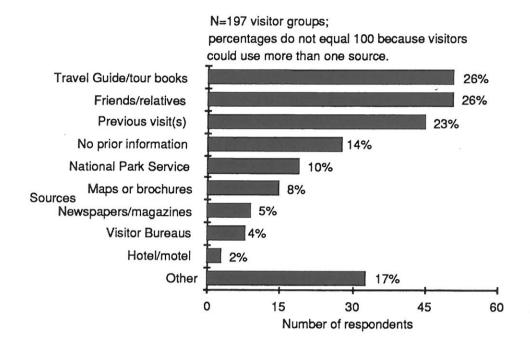


Figure 7: Sources of park information

The visitors were asked, "Did you and your group find it difficult to locate the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site?" Figure 8 shows that 91% site responded no. Those visitors who answered yes were also asked how could locating the park be improved. Most stated that placing more signs on the streets that lead to the site would be the best way to improve locating the park.

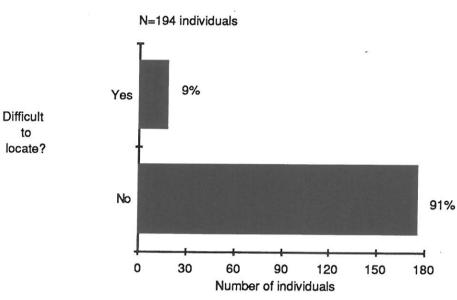


Figure 8: Site difficult to locate

Waiting for tour

The visitors to Frederick Douglass National Historic Site were asked "Did you take a tour of the Frederick Douglass Home?" Fifty-seven percent said they waited to take a tour of the home (see Figure 9). Those visitors who answered yes were also asked "What did you and your group do while you waited?" Most visitors said they watched the movie, visited the visitor center/museum, and browsed in the bookstore.

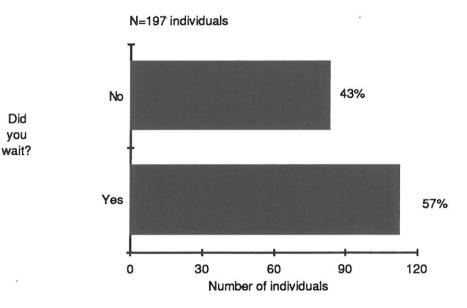


Figure 9: Visitors waiting for tour

Visitors were asked to choose between three tour alternatives for visiting the Frederick Douglass site in the future. Figure 10 shows that 42% were in favor of a combination of first-come, first-served and advanced reservations systems. An advanced reservation basis was preferred by 30%.

Future tour alternatives

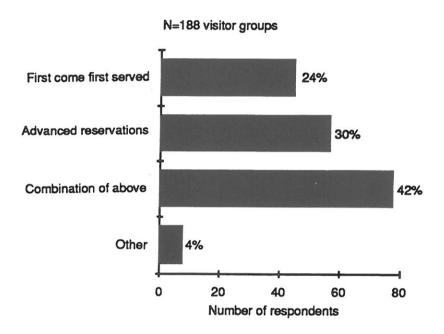


Figure 10: Future tour alternatives

First visit to African-American site?

Fifty-three percent of visitors to the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site said that this was their first visit to an African-American historic site, as shown in Figure 11.

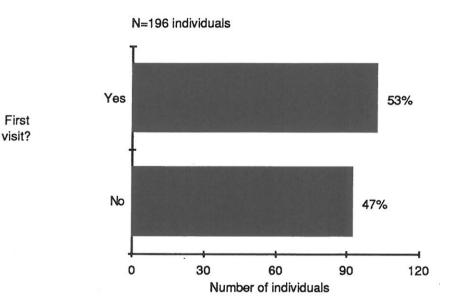


Figure 11: First visit to African-American historic site

The most commonly used visitor services were the ranger led tours (92%), visitor center movies (86%), visitor center exhibits (81%), and the bookstore (70%), as shown in Figure 12. The least used service was "other" (2%), which was identified by visitors as the wall quotes and private tour guides.

Visitor services: use and quality

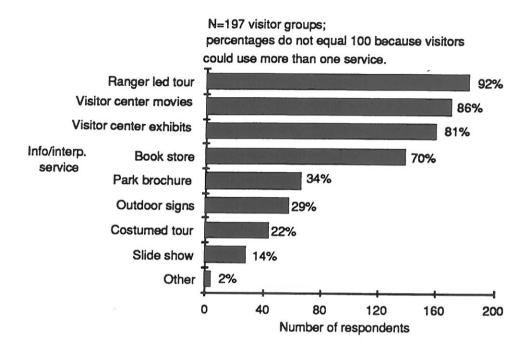


Figure 12: Use of visitor services

Visitors rated the quality of visitor services they used. They used a five point scale (see the box below).

QUALITY
1=very good
2=good
3=average
4=poor
5=very poor

Figures 13-21 show that several services were given high "good" to "very good" ratings: period costume tours (87%), visitor center movies (85%), park brochure (84%), visitor center exhibits (79%), and ranger-led tours (78%). The service receiving the highest "poor" to "very poor" ratings was the bookstore (10%).

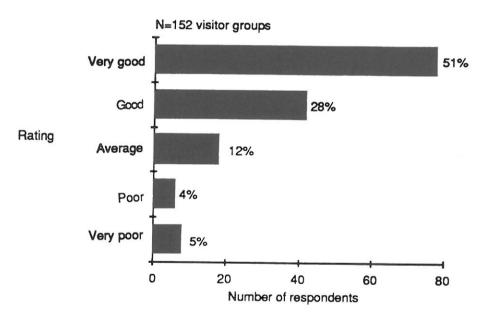


Figure 13: Quality of visitor center exhibits

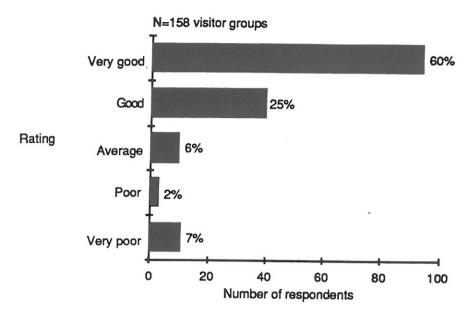


Figure 14: Quality of visitor center movies

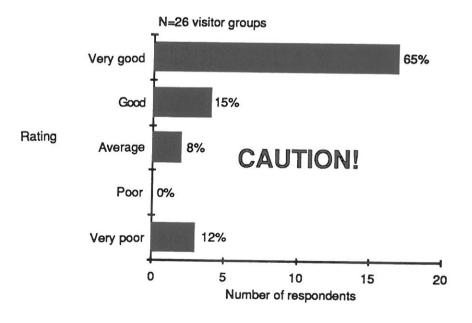


Figure 15: Quality of visitor center slide show

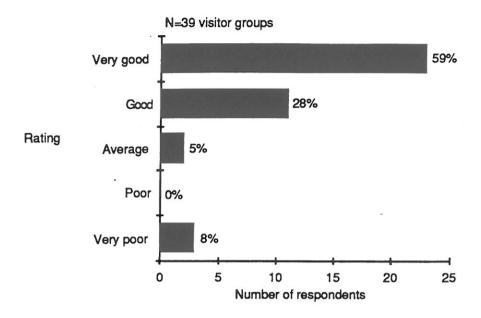


Figure 16: Quality of period costumed tour

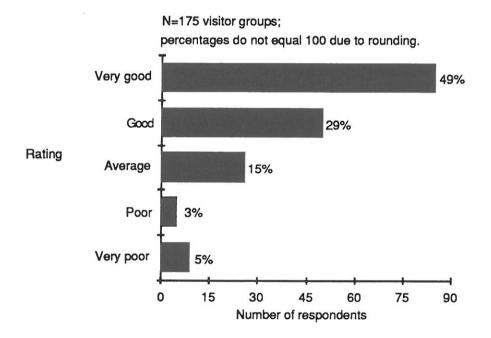


Figure 17: Quality of ranger led tours

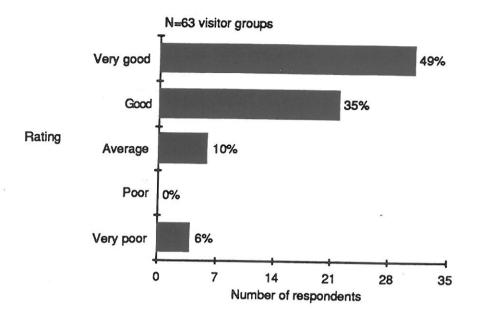


Figure 18: Quality of park brochure

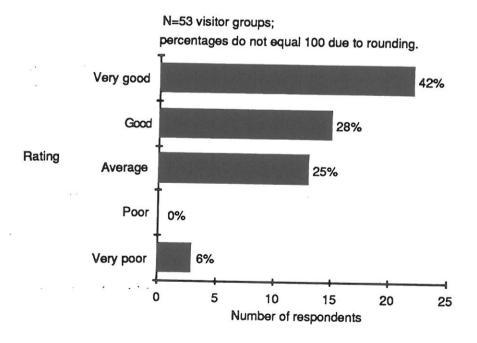


Figure 19: Quality of outdoor signs

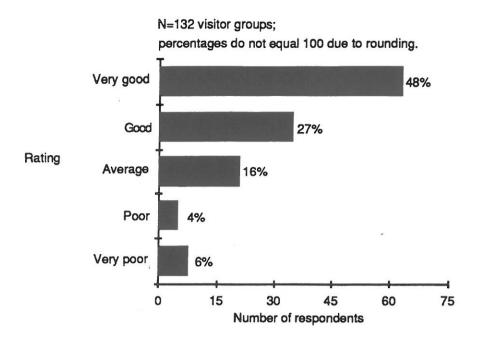


Figure 20: Quality of book store

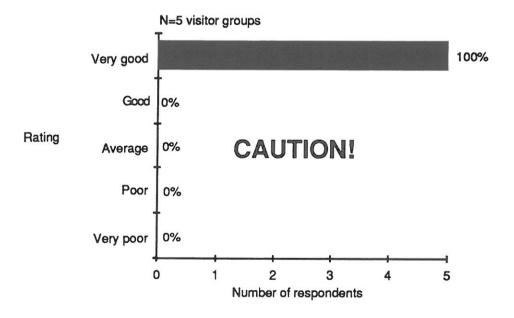


Figure 21: Quality of "other" interpretive/information services

Visitors were asked, "What did you enjoy most about your visit to the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site"? A summary of their comments appears below and in the appendix.

What visitors liked most

Visitors' likes N=343 comments; many visitors made more than one comment

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	×
National Park Service	
Rangers helpful/friendly Tour guide informative Staff at home helpful/friendly	30 16 6
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Liked tour of the home Enjoyed the film Exhibits interesting Visitor's center was informative	69 58 7 6
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
General Liked authentic look of house interior The home's interior well decorated Grounds well maintained	49 17 14
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Visit was educational and inspiring Enjoyed the overall visit Enjoyed bookstore Liked hearing about Douglass' life Exciting to be in his home Excerpts of speeches on wall informative Visit was nostalgic Other comments	30 15 9 5 4 3 2

What visitors liked least

Visitors were asked, "What did you like least about your visit to the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site"? A summary of their comments appears below and in the appendix.

Visitor dislikes

N= 107 comments; many visitors made more than one comment

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
National Park Service	
Rangers/ staff not helpful or friendly Other comments	14 4
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Tour not long enough Did not like the wait before tour Film needs to be remade Not enough time in tour to ask question Unable to hear lecture School children should be separated from others Children need more information on Douglass Tours should be oriented to school children Other comments	9 6 4 3 2 2 2 2 9
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
General	
Bathrooms too small Stairs not adapted for handicapped Other comments	2 2 2
POLICIES	
Reservation system needs to be better Hours need to be longer Other comments	6 3 2
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Climbing front steps a problem Weather was a problem Wanted to see the attic Too crowded	24 4 3 2

Many visitors wrote additional comments, which are included in the separate appendix of this report. Their comments are summarized below and in the appendix. Some comments offer specific suggestions on how to improve the park; others describe what visitors enjoyed or did not enjoy.

Comment Summary

Visitor comment summary

N=186 comments; many visitors made more than one comment

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
National Park Service	
Rangers helpful/ friendly Tour guides informative Guides in house were rude/uninformative Other comments	10 6 2 1
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Educational/Informative tour Liked tour Liked the film Film needs to be replaced with a newer version Other comments Need handouts on Frederick Douglass for children Tour guides should wear period costumes Other comments	24 14 4 3 3 2 2 10
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
General	
Please keep building maintained Handicapped access inadequate House and grounds kept up well Other comments	2 2 2 1
Policies	
More advertisement of site needed Other comments	12 2

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Inspiring/ Enlightening visit	14
Enjoyed the visit	13
Keep up the good work	12
Would like to visit again	12
Enjoyed hearing about the history of Douglas	9
Will encourage others to visit	9
Don't ever close this landmark	5
Hope more children are able to experience it	3
Highlight of the trip to D.C.	3
Promote more literature of Douglas in schools	2
Other comments	2

MENU FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

Park personnel who wish to see other tables, graphs, and maps to learn more about their visitors may request such information from the VSP. Two kinds of analyses are available:

- 1) Two-way comparisons compare two characteristics. For example, to learn about which information sources a particular age group consulted, request a comparison of information sources by age group, to learn about how the use of information sources varied among group types, request a comparison of information sources by group type.
- 2) Three-way comparisons compare a two-way comparison to a third characteristic. For example, to learn about what interpretive/information services were used by different visitor group types and sizes, request a comparison of interpretation/information services used by group type by group size; to learn about what interpretive/information services were used by different age groups by group type, request a comparison of interpretive/information services by age groups by group type.

Consult the list of characteristics for Frederick Douglass visitors; then complete the appropriate blanks on the order form. Make a copy of the order form which follows the example below.

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Visitor Services Project Analysis Order Form Frederick Douglass National Historic Site Report 46

Date of request:	<i></i>		
Person requesting analy	sis:		
Phone number (commer	cial):		
your park. Use this list t and three-way comparis	o find the characteristics ons. Be as specific as p	for which you want to ossible	sitor survey conducted in request additional two-way listed in the questionnaire.
Group size	Information source	es	 Number times visited
 Group type 	 Interpretive/info s 	ervices used	 Length of stay
• Age	 Interpretive/info s 	ervices quality	 Wait to take a tour
State residence	 First visit to Africa 	n-American site	• Difficult to locate site
Country residence	 Preferred reserva 	tion choices	 Routes traveled
Two-way comparisons (write in the appropriate v		
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	by	by	
	by	by	
Special instructions			
- p			

Mail to:

Visitor Services Project, CPSU
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83843-4199

QUESTIONNAIRE

Visitor Services Project Publications

Reports 1-4 (pilot studies) are available from the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit. All VSP reports listed below are available from the parks where the studies were conducted.

1985

5. North Cascades National Park Service Complex

1986

6. Crater Lake National Park

1987

- 7. Gettysburg National Military Park
- 8. Independence National Historical Park
- 9. Valley Forge National Historical Park
- 10. Colonial National Historical Park
- 11. Grand Teton National Park
- 12. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
- 13. Mesa Verde National Park
- 14. Shenandoah National Park
- 15. Yellowstone National Park
- 16. Independence National Historical Park: Four Seasons Study

1988

- 17. Glen Canyon National Recreational Area
- 18. Denali National Park and Preserve
- 19. Bryce Canyon National Park
- 20. Craters of the Moon National Monument

1989

- 21. Everglades National Park
- 22. Statue of Liberty National Monument
- 23. The White House Tours, President's Park
- 24. Lincoln Home National Historical Site
- 25. Yellowstone National Park
- 26. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
- 27. Muir Woods National Monument

For more information about the Visitor Services Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, Univ Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife Moscow, Idaho 83843-4199 or call (20

1990

- 28. Canyonlands National Park
- 29. White Sands National Monument
- 30. National Monuments
- 31. Kenai Fjords National Park
- 32. Gateway National Recreation Area
- 33. Petersburg National Battlefield
- 34. Death Valley National Monument
- 35. Glacier National Park
- 36. Scott's Bluff National Monument
- 37. John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

1991

- 38. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park
- 39. Joshua Tree National Monument
- 40. The White House Tours, President's Park
- 41. Natchez Trace Parkway
- 42. Stehekin-North Cascades National Park/Lake Chelan National Rec. Area
- 43. City of Rocks National Reserve
- 44. The White House Tours, President's Park

1992

- 45. Big Bend National Park
- 46. Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

NPS D 17 January 1993

1

Visitor Services Project

Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

Appendix

1

Visitor Services Project

Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

Appendix

Dwight L. Madison

Report 46

January 1993

Dwight Madison is VSP Eastern Coordinator, National Park Service based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank the staff at Frederick Douglass National Historic Site for their assistance with this study. The VSP acknowledges the Public Opinion Lab of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, Washington State University, for its technical assistance.

Visitors' likes

N=343 comments; many visitors made more than one comment

Comment			Number of times mentioned		
PERSO	NNEL				
Nationa	ıl Park Service				
	Rangers helpful/friendly Tour guide informative Staff at home helpful/friendly	30	16 6		
INTERP	PRETIVE SERVICES				
	Liked tour of the home Enjoyed the film Exhibits interesting Visitor's center was informative	58	69 7 6		
FACILIT	TIES AND MAINTENANCE				
	I Liked authentic look of house interior The home's interior well decorated Grounds well maintained		49 17 14		
GENER	GENERAL IMPRESSIONS				
	Visit was educational and inspiring Enjoyed the overall visit Enjoyed bookstore Liked hearing about Douglass' life Exciting to be in his home Excerpts of speeches on wall informative Visit was nostalgic Other comments	15	30 9 5 4 3 2 3		

Visitor dislikes

N= 107 comments; many visitors made more than one comment

Comment		entioned	es
PERSONNEL			
National Park Service			
Rangers/ staff not helpful or friendly Other comments		14 4	
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES			
Tour not long enough Did not like the wait before tour Film needs to be remade Not enough time in tour to ask question Unable to hear lecture School children should be separated from others Children need more information on Douglass Tours should be oriented to school children Other comments	s 2	9 6 4 3 2 2 2 9	
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE			
General			
Bathrooms too small Stairs not adapted for handicapped Other comments		2 2 2	
POLICIES			
Reservation system needs to be better Hours need to be longer Other comments	3	6 2	
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS			
Climbing front steps a problem Weather was a problem Wanted to see the attic	4 3	24	
Too crowded		2	

Visitor comment summary
N=186 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment

Comment		Number of times mentioned	
PERSO	NNEL		
Nationa	ıl Park Service		
	Rangers helpful/ friendly Tour guides informative Guides in house were rude/uninformative Other comments	10 6	2 1
INTERP	PRETIVE SERVICES		
	Educational/Informative tour Liked tour Liked the film Film needs to be replaced with a newer version Other comments Need handouts on Frederick Douglass for children Tour guides should wear period costumes Other comments		24 14 4 3 3 2 2 10
FACILIT	TIES AND MAINTENANCE		
Genera	I		
	Please keep building maintained Handicapped access inadequate House and grounds kept up well Other comments	2 2	2
Policies	S		
	More advertisement of site needed Other comments		12 2
GENER	AL IMPRESSIONS		
	Inspiring/ Enlightening visit Enjoyed the visit Keep up the good work Would like to visit again Enjoyed hearing about the history of Douglas Will encourage others to visit Don't ever close this landmark Hope more children are able to experience it Highlight of the trip to D.C. Promote more literature of Douglas in schools Other comments	12	14 13 12 9 9 5 3 3 2

Symbol

USDI Symbol NPS

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of o lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, propreserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for electronic outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their interest of all our people. The department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by excitizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting citizen participation in their care. The department also hamerican Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

NPS D-17

January 1993



Carnell Poole Site Manager Frederick Douglass Home NHS 1411 "W" Street S.E. Washington DC, 20020

Minnesota Avenue

Pennsylvania Avenue

Printing Instructions for Frederick Douglass NHS Report & Appendix

Frederick Douglass Report

I need 27 copies: 26 bound copies and 1 copy unbound.

All copies should have a gray front & back cover

*Note-There is now items printed on the inside of the front & back covers.

Inside Title page should be xeroxed on white paper (single page). Report Summary page should be xeroxed on <u>blue</u> paper (single page). Table of contents page should be xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Pages 1-27 should be duplexed on white paper.

Analysis order forms should be xeroxed on white paper (single page each)

Page 28 (Questionnaire title page) should be xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Questionnaire section duplex on white paper

Publications page on white paper should face inside back cover page.

Frederick Douglass NHS Appendix Section

I need 9 copies: 8 bound copies and 1 copy unbound.

All copies should have a gray front & back cover.

*Note-There is now items printed on the inside of the front & back covers.

Inside Title page should be xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Pages 1-3 (Visitor Likes, dislikes & comment summary) duplex on <u>blue paper</u>.

Visitor comment pages duplex on white paper.

Publications page on white paper should face inside back cover page.

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** NPS D 17 January 1993 page should be facing back cover page (the one that has the publications listed)

Frederick Douglass Appendix Section

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