A Proposal
for the
Sulphur Spring Community Heritage Project

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Issues in Heritage Tourism
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This project is part of an ongoing commitment by the University of South Florida (USF) designed to address the rising interest in, and need for, heritage management by communities, civic organizations, and other groups focused on preserving the past as a key cultural resource. These proposed deliverables respond to needs expressed by Sulphur Springs community representatives Norma Robinson (manager of the Sulphur Springs Museum and Gift shop in the Historic Harbor Club) and Joseph Robinson (Sulphur Springs Museum Executive Board) in consultation with Dr. Jackson and graduate students in her *Issues in Heritage Tourism* course at USF. This project and student efforts to complete deliverables as outlined in this document represent an initial step in an ongoing partnership between USF and the Sulphur Springs community to develop heritage resources aimed both at stimulating tourism and at enhancing general public knowledge about the rich and diverse history of one of Tampa’s once thriving spring communities. Deliverables consists of specific tasks to be performed in three main areas:

- Develop an ethnographic/ethnohistorical profile of the Sulphur Springs/Springhill community;
- Build oral history database (collect and catalog oral histories from community “old timers”); and
- Identify funding and grant opportunities for the Sulphur Springs Museum.

Work began this semester by USF students and faculty will continue to be developed by subsequent teams of interested students and faculty and coordinated through the USF Department of Anthropology *Heritage Research and Resource Management* lab.

**Ethnographic/Ethnohistorical Profile**

The class will conduct library and archival research into the communities of Sulphur Springs and Springhill. This research will include census data profiling; a search of the available historic maps, including the Sanborn Company’s fire insurance maps, street maps, and historical aerial photographs, and a check of available City directories.

As a means to support the mission of our clients, to celebrate and preserve the history of Sulphur Springs, the group will compose a historical and ethnographic profile describing the cultural and historical features of the community. This profile will be used in the development of the Sulphur Spring Museum. The emphasis of the profile will be on identifying the role African Americans and other underrepresented groups played in the history the Sulphur Springs and Springhill communities.

**Oral History Database**

The goal of collecting oral histories in the community of Sulphur Springs involves more than just gathering information about the past. We are seeking to work with the Museum to support their goals to celebrate and preserve the history of Sulphur Springs. Mr. and Mrs. Robinson expressed a desire that the oral histories to be a way for the elders of the community to speak to the community at large. Passing on the joys and struggles
of their lives in Sulphur Springs, so that many people inside and outside of the community can understand the past of Sulphur Springs and the potential of the area. The Springhill community will be a major focus for the project, collecting histories on the roles that African Americans and other underrepresented groups of people had in contributing to the community.

The collection of stories and perspectives from older citizens about the past, present and future shall assist in bringing about the goals of the Sulphur Springs Heritage Management Project. The oral history component to the project will consist of recorded interviews of residents of Sulphur Springs and Springhill with the purpose of collecting information about their memories and perspectives on the following topics:

- Earliest memories of the community
- Family background and family life
- Education
- Work
- Racial issues (past and present)
- Folk tales, myths, stories and anecdotes
- Customs and traditions (past and present)
- Perspectives or opinions about the past, present, and future.
- Advice

The format of the interviews will be open-ended questioning. The class will apply for an expedited Institutional Review Board (IRB) certification, and begin interviews after our certification is awarded. The IRB at USF ensures that research investigators are qualified to conduct research using human subjects. Specifically, the IRB is required to assure that investigators are aware of and accept their responsibilities for protecting the rights and welfare of the people they interview. The group will seek to obtain video recording equipment, and to record at least five interviews.

**Sulphur Spring Museum Project**

The group will explore support and funding options for the Sulphur Springs Museum. These options will include grants of various kinds, private funding sources, and loans of displays and interpretation materials.

An archive and catalog of items available to/in possession of the museum will be created. This archive will include the names of the contacts that possess them. Linda Hope, owner of the PennySaver magazine (931-3115) will be the primary contact for this information. These data will be cataloged in an Access database which can be sorted by keywords and by owners.

The website/logo development will continue on the website that has been started at [www.sulphurspringsmuseum.org](http://www.sulphurspringsmuseum.org). Examples of potential logos specific to the museum and the community will be proposed. These will include the logo currently used by the
Museum (a picture of the historic Sulphur Springs Water tower) and other potential images.

The initial background research into this project has indicated that substantial information about the distribution and function of Florida’s springs, including Sulphur Springs, is already available on the Internet. A summary of the natural history of Sulphur Springs is available through the USF Geography Department. These data and the existing video about the Springs should be incorporated into the Museum as an exhibit.

Seven buildings in the vicinity of Sulphur Springs have been listed on the Florida Master Site File, including the buildings and structures around the Spring itself (the water tower, gazebo, and pool). None have officially been evaluated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Preliminary discussions with the staff at the Florida Division of Historical Resources indicate that there would be substantial support for such a nomination. The Sulphur Springs Hotel and Apartments (aka the Sulphur Springs Arcade) was recorded on the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) in 1982 (HABS # FL-355). The building was torn-down in 1976. A preliminary evaluation of the potential for listing the Sulphur Springs and Springhill neighborhoods on the National Register of Historic Places will be made and coordinated with the Florida Division of Historical Resources. A brief description of the nomination process will be included in an evaluation of NRHP-eligibility.

**Deliverables**

- The results of the ethnographic/ethnohistorical profile will be compiled into a database which will feature complete references to all print sources, hyperlinks to Internet resources used in the profile, and a written report including past and present images and maps of the community.

- The deliverables from the Oral History database will include all the original tapes of the interviews.

- Funding opportunities for the Museum will be evaluated.

- A catalog/archive of the artifacts and historic materials in the possession of Linda Hope and/or the residents of the Sulphur Springs and Springhill communities will be compiled.

- A National Register of Historic Places preliminary evaluation of the Sulphur Springs and Springhill neighborhoods and a description of the review process.

- The website development will include links to other heritage museum websites.