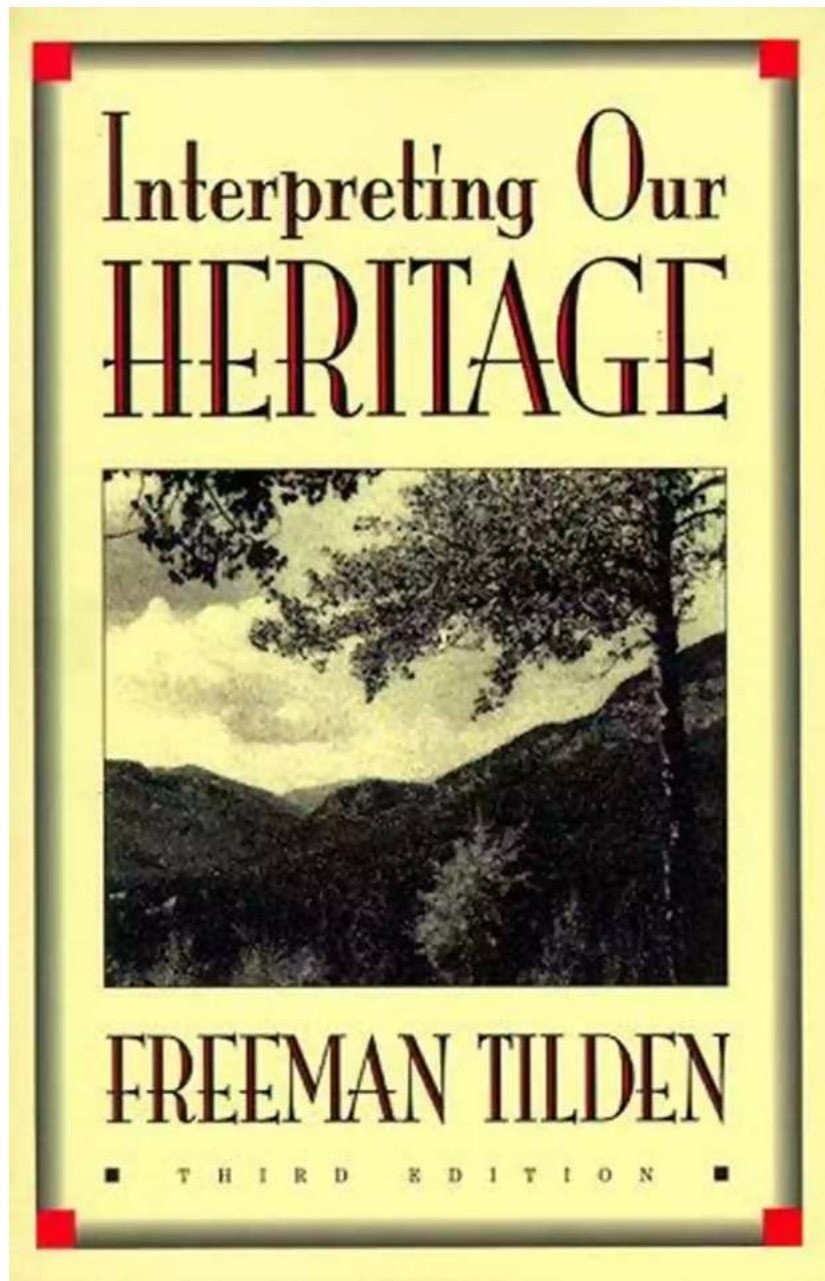


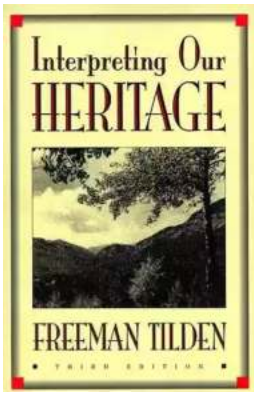
The Art of Interpreting Our Heritage: Unlocking the Past for Future Generations

Behind every historical site, artifact, or natural wonder lies a story waiting to be unfolded. It is the duty of interpreters to bring these stories to life, allowing visitors to not only see but understand the significance of these treasures. One of the pioneers in this field, Freeman Tilden, revolutionized the way we interpret our heritage, leaving behind a lasting legacy that continues to shape our approach today.



The Journey of Freeman Tilden

A renowned American writer, historian, and National Park Service employee, Freeman Tilden became a trailblazer in the field of heritage interpretation during the mid-20th century. His influential book, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, published in 1957, still serves as a go-to resource for interpreters worldwide.



Interpreting Our Heritage

by Freeman Tilden (4th Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 6659 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 224 pages



Tilden believed that interpretation should go beyond mere facts and figures. Instead, he argued that interpretation is an art form, through which the interpreter aims to provoke emotion, stimulate thought, and create a connection between the visitor and the subject matter.

Unlocking the Power of Interpretation

Tilden identified six principles that are key to successful interpretation:

1. **Relevance:** Make the interpretation meaningful and relevant to the visitor's own life.
2. **Relate:** Establish a connection between the visitor and the subject, creating a personal and emotional involvement.
3. **Reveal:** Uncover the essential qualities and stories behind the heritage site or artifact.
4. **Refine:** Focus on providing a clear and concise message, avoiding overwhelming the visitor with unnecessary information.

5. Relieve: Make the experience enjoyable and entertaining to maintain the visitor's interest.
6. Reverberate: Leave a lasting impression and encourage the visitor to further explore the subject matter on their own.

Tilden's principles can be seen as a framework for interpreters to effectively communicate the significance of the past to present and future generations.

The Importance of Interpretation

Interpretation plays a crucial role in preserving and safeguarding our heritage. By engaging visitors, it fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation for historical sites, artifacts, and natural wonders. It encourages people to become advocates for conservation and ensures that our collective heritage is protected for generations to come.

Through interpretation, visitors are given an opportunity to step back in time, to imagine what once was, and to learn from past experiences. It allows us to better understand our own history, cultures, and the environment we inhabit.

Continuing the Legacy

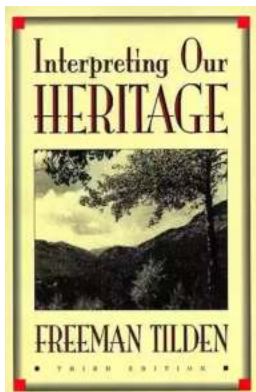
Tilden's philosophy and principles have had a lasting impact on the interpretation field. Many institutions, including national parks, museums, zoos, and botanical gardens, incorporate his techniques to engage and educate their visitors.

Contemporary interpretation not only relies on Tilden's foundations but also embraces new technologies and innovative approaches. Virtual reality, interactive exhibits, and storytelling techniques are used to enhance the visitor experience, bringing history to life in captivating ways.

As we move further into the digital age, the challenge lies in striking a balance between incorporating modern tools while staying true to Tilden's core principles. At the heart of interpretation still lies the art of storytelling, evoking emotions, sparking curiosity, and creating connections.

Freeman Tilden's dedication to interpreting our heritage has left an indelible mark on the way we engage with our collective past. His principles and teachings continue to guide interpreters worldwide, shaping the future of heritage interpretation.

Through effective interpretation, we unlock the wisdom of the past, enabling present and future generations to appreciate and protect all that our heritage has to offer. By embracing Tilden's ideals and adapting to the ever-changing world, we can ensure that our heritage remains alive, cherished, and safeguarded for years to come.



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Every year millions of Americans visit national parks and monuments, state and municipal parks, battlefields, historic houses, and museums. By means of guided

walks and talks, tours, exhibits, and signs, visitors experience these areas through a very special kind of communication technique known as "interpretation." For fifty years, Freeman Tilden's *Interpreting Our Heritage* has been an indispensable sourcebook for those who are responsible for developing and delivering interpretive programs. This expanded and revised anniversary edition includes not only Tilden's classic work but also an entirely new selection of accompanying photographs, five additional essays by Tilden on the art and craft of interpretation, a new foreword by former National Park Service director Russell Dickenson, and an by R. Bruce Craig that puts Tilden's writings into perspective for present and future generations.

Whether the challenge is to make a prehistoric site come to life; to explain the geological basis behind a particular rock formation; to touch the hearts and minds of visitors to battlefields, historic homes, and sites; or to teach a child about the wonders of the natural world, Tilden's book, with its explanation of the famed "six principles" of interpretation, provides a guiding hand.

For anyone interested in our natural and historic heritage--park volunteers and rangers, museum docents and educators, new and seasoned professional heritage interpreters, and those lovingly characterized by Tilden as "happy amateurs"--*Interpreting Our Heritage* and Tilden's later interpretive writings, included in this edition, collectively provide the essential foundation for bringing into focus the truths that lie beyond what the eye sees.



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