

→ Worth Another Look

Gathered here are some items of interest to public historians taken from blog postings, articles, and other updates that have spiraled through the Internet during the past few months. Special thanks to the American Association of Museums “Dispatches from the Future of Museums” <http://www.futureofmuseums.org/reading/dispatches.cfm>, the public history blogs listed on NCPH’s “Off the Wall” blog at <http://ncphoffthewall.blogspot.com/p/other-public-history-blogs.html>, the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s “PreservationNation” blog, and the American Historical Association’s “AHA Today” blog at <http://blog.historians.org/>

What to Do in the Next Economic Crisis

According to Susan Raymond’s 2010 book, *Nonprofit Finance for Hard Times*, it’s important to react fast, engage supporters, engage and expand the board, communicate more, look for opportunities to collaborate, and position the organization for the climb out. <http://bit.ly/axAf4G>

In Case of Fire, Call a Historian

Patricia Limerick argues for applying the “skills, talents, and approaches” of historians and bringing their historical perspective to bear on current dilemmas. Check out “Fire Alarm: Historians, and Thorstein Veblen, to the Rescue,” in a past issue of *Forest History Today*. <http://bit.ly/rukP1V>

Are Our Built and Cultural Resources Ready for Climate Change?

A contributor to The National Trust’s PreservationNation blog finds few examples of climate change adaptation action plans. <http://bit.ly/q6fiYS>

An Aptly Named Book: *American History Now*

The American Historical Association, through Temple University Press, has published a follow up to *The New American History*, an examination of the current state of American historiography. It edits out specializations that have fallen out of favor and emphasizes emerging historiographic trends. Edited by Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr. <http://bit.ly/ogjM28>

Letting Go? Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World

Edited by Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene, and Laura Koloski, *Letting Go?*, according to its publisher, Left Coast Press, “investigates path-breaking public history practices at a time when the traditional expertise of museums seems challenged at every turn—by the Web and digital media, by community-based programming, by new trends in oral history and by contemporary art.” <http://bit.ly/njrVrh>

More Crowdsourced Scholarship: Citizen History at the U.S. Holocaust Museum

This essay on the AAM website highlights an experiment in trusting visitors “to bring their diverse perspectives and boundless

enthusiasm into the research work of the museum and share our authority.” <http://bit.ly/nmlOuj>

Why Crowdsourcing? Why Scripto?

The Center for History and New Media has launched Scripto, an open source tool that allows thousands of interested volunteers—historians, students, genealogists, teachers—to contribute transcriptions to online documentary projects. <http://scripto.org/?p=77>

Historypin Compares the World Today to How It Used to Look

A British nonprofit’s Google-supported site, Historypin, allows people to link old photos and stories to a location on Google Maps. The map can be searched by place or time. <http://www.historypin.com/>

Visualizing U.S. Expansion through Post Offices

Given the U.S. Postal Service’s recent decision to consider closing 3,700 of its branches, this next item is particularly interesting. An intrepid geographer has plotted all post offices established from 1700 to 1900 on dynamic, animated map, which you can view as a movie of U.S. territorial expansion across North America. <http://bit.ly/qTGpSr>

Visualizing U.S. Expansion through Newspapers

Stanford’s Rural West Initiative has done the same with 140,000 newspapers published over three centuries in the United States. The data comes from the Library of Congress’s “Chronicling America” project, which maintains a regularly updated directory of newspapers. (See next item.) <http://bit.ly/q8dsUD>

Thousands of Historic Newspapers at Your Fingertips

Search America’s historic newspapers pages from 1836-1922 or use the U.S. Newspaper Directory to find information about American newspapers published between 1690-present. Chronicling America is sponsored jointly by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>



New York Public Library. Courtesy of Flickr user melanzane1013.

What big media can learn from the New York Public Library

The *Atlantic Monthly* examines why the New York Public Library is flourishing, putting out some of the most innovative online projects in the country. “On the stuff you can measure — library visitors, website visitors, digital gallery images viewed — the numbers are up across the board compared with five years ago. On the stuff you can’t, like conceptual leadership, the NYPL is killing it.” <http://bit.ly/miaJln>

Five Strategies to Revive Civic Communication

CIRCLE, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University, has released a new policy paper. It calls on community and elected leaders to adopt sensible strategies to strengthen civic communication and citizen engagement. <http://bit.ly/imKkEG>

4Humanities

This Canadian website offers various resources, such as digital tools, collaboration methods, and best practices, to “provide support for humanists and others who would like to participate in creating effective advocacy for the humanities.” <http://humanistica.ualberta.ca/>

Future of Libraries ‘Confronted’ in New Report

The American Library Association’s latest policy brief explores how emerging technologies combined with challenges, such as financial constraints as well as shifts in the nature and needs of library users, require

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President's Comments



Marty Blatt
marty_blatt@nps.gov

Planning and Capacity

The NCPH Long Range Planning Committee has been hard at work developing a draft strategic plan and subsequently soliciting input regarding the draft from a wide array of public historians. The draft plan defines an exciting vision for our organization: NCPH will be the “go to” organization for public history that professionals turn to daily, annually, throughout their careers – an organization that expands the public history community, supports innovative professional practice, invites reflection, and advocates for history in the wider world.

To implement this vision, the proposed goals for NCPH from 2012-2017 are to

- I. Build a more inclusive membership and public history community.
- II. Engage and sustain members at different stages of their careers.
- III. Encourage collective conversation/taking stock of boundaries and future directions of the field.
- IV. Be a strong voice for the interests of public history practitioners and an advocate for applying/connecting history to contemporary issues.

The fifth goal is critical to the success of the first four:

- V. Increase NCPH's financial capacity to pursue its goals.

Without sufficient capacity, it will not be possible to realize the goals that we establish for ourselves. Now capacity can and does mean drawing on the labor, creativity, and energy of hundreds of our members. Capacity, however, also means additional financial resources. So, this fall you will be receiving the annual appeal for funds under my signature as your president. Please respond as generously as you possibly can.

So that you can think about exactly what your contribution will be paying for as NCPH moves forward into the future, please take

a moment to consider some of what is involved in implementing each of the first four goals. Clearly, our collective determination and imagination and efforts will be critical in the realization of this plan. However, a significant amount of this activity requires financial resources to be successful.

Goal I –

- Bringing together practitioners, scholars, and public audiences;
- Meeting the needs of newcomers in the field, early, mid-, and advanced career professionals alike;
- Creating a thriving social network that operates year-round – in person through annual meetings and regional gatherings and virtually through digital media.

Goal II –

- Sharing best practices and building skill sets that enable professional success;
- Encouraging experimentation and the incubation of new ideas that reinvent public history practice;
- Transcending disciplinary boundaries to demonstrate the power of the past in public life.

Goal III –

- Exploring historical precedents, present-day dilemmas, and future directions;
- Prizing open-ended questions, conversation, and debate;
- Resisting easy answers and, while prizing tradition, embracing the uncertainty of the new.

Goal IV –

- Encouraging connections between issues from the past and contemporary questions;
- Opening conversations among policy-makers, strategists, and historians to discuss paths to the future;
- Urging that historical resources be safely preserved and publicly accessible;
- Mobilizing support for funding history museums, historic sites, and history education.

We will be presenting a new draft of the plan to NCPH members for comment later this fall. Please let us know what you think.

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libraries to evolve rapidly and make strategic decisions today that will influence their future for decades to come.

<http://bit.ly/kNod3w>

Getting Free of the IRB: A Call to Action for Oral History

As AHA's Robert Townsend explains, the Department of Health and Human Services is reevaluating rules governing human-subject research and may be softening the strictness of institutional review boards which have been the bane of many oral historians.

<http://bit.ly/po8ldp>

U.S. State and Territory Online Encyclopedias

The National Endowment for the Humanities EDSITEment website offers a “collection of free, authoritative source information about the history, politics, geography, and culture of the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia and the territories of Puerto Rico and Guam; updated regularly to ensure that they are accurate and accessible. New states and territories will be added when they become available.” <http://1.usa.gov/IXylCn>

The Historical Thinking Project

“Promoting critical historical literacy for the 21st century...”, this initiative of the University of British Columbia's Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, was launched in partnership with the Historical Foundation, and has received support from the Canadian Council on Learning, and the Canadian Studies Program, Department of Canadian Heritage.

<http://www.historicalthinking.ca/>