

Tips, Advice, and Frequently Asked Questions for First-Time Attendees at the 2014 NCPH Annual Meeting

Before the Conference

When should I arrive? The Conference kicks off with a full slate of activities on Wednesday, March 19, so we suggest arriving on Tuesday or early Wednesday. Attendees have the option of flying with Monterey Regional Airport (MRY), Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC), or San Francisco International Airport (SFO). **Be sure you don't accidentally book a flight to Monterrey, Mexico!** Travel information is available on page 7 of the conference [Program](#) and includes information on transportation from SJC and SFO to Monterey. If you're looking to share a ride locally or from an airport, post offers and requests on our [ride-share board](#).

Where should I stay? This year, NCPH has reserved discounted room blocks at three area hotels with rates ranging from \$139 to \$179 a night. See page 6 of the [Program](#) for information and rates.

Tip: Sharing a room with one or more people can be an effective way to keep down costs at the conference. In general, there are many attendees who are eager to share a room, so don't give up if you can't find someone you know to room with. Post requests and offers to the [room share discussion board](#) in our Public History Commons.

What does my Conference Registration Include? A full conference registration includes access to all working groups and sessions, the exhibit hall, public plenary, digital drop in, and other events. Registrants also receive a conference packet and badge. Special opportunities such as workshops, field trips, and meal events require payment of additional fees. Visit the [NCPH Annual Conference webpage](#) for more information on registration rates.

Tip: If you already registered but want to add a tour, workshop, or meal event to your registration it's easy! Simply [log in to your registration](#), select, "My Events" from the left menu, and then "Add Sessions." Some tours, workshops, and event tickets may be available for sale onsite, but pre-purchasing your tickets is the only way to guarantee your space.

Can I bring my spouse or a guest to an evening event? Absolutely! Evening event tickets and tour tickets can be purchased without attending the full conference, simply add extra tickets onto your own registration when you get to the shopping cart summary.

Why is my name not on the conference participant list? During the registration process, every attendee was asked whether or not they wanted to omit their name, affiliation, location, and email address from the final participant list. If you selected this box, you were not included. This does not mean you are not registered to attend the conference, however. Be sure to check your email inbox for your receipt of purchase for the conference, which should have been sent once your registration was completed. If you cannot locate your email confirmation, please email ncph@iupui.edu or call (317) 274-2716.

Where can I acquire funding for the Conference? NCPH recognizes excellence in the field of public history through several awards that promote professionalism and best practices in the field. To learn more about potential cash prizes and travel grants, consult the [NCPH awards page](#). Additionally, students should contact their advisor, department chair, student government, or other campus associations to find out if they provide travel grants for attending conferences. Professionals should consult their employers for available funding opportunities. Be sure to register during the [early bird registration period](#), which lasts until February 12, 2014 to save on registration costs.

What should I wear/pack? In general, the dress code for conference events is business casual. Some evening events, like the Opening Reception, can be more formal. Be sure to dress in layers; conference centers often range from drafty to stuffy, so be ready to change dress accordingly.

Monterey's climate is temperate year-round, but greatly influenced by the marine environment. March is technically still the rainy season, with rainfall averages of 3.3 inches. The average low temperature is 45°F (7°C), while the highs average 61°F (16°C) in March. Packing for changeable weather and dressing in layers is highly recommended.

Tip: Walking Tours and Field Trips will take place rain or shine, so if you sign up for one, bring comfortable shoes, a coat, and an umbrella.

During the Conference

Make sure to give yourself enough time on your first to day to register and pick up your conference program and badge. Expect a line at registration, especially if you plan to arrive on Wednesday or Thursday. Registration hours and workshop/session start times can be found in the conference [Program](#).

Be sure to check meeting times closely. The final conference *Program* you'll receive after check-in lists times and locations for all conference sessions, workshops, tours and other events. Times and locations, however, occasionally shift after the *Program* is printed; check your Errata sheet for updates.

Tip: Use the Schedule-at-a-Glance at the beginning of the *Program* to plan out your schedule.

What should I bring? In addition to bringing business cards and/or resumes, bring healthy snacks and a refillable water bottle. Laptops and smartphones are allowed to be used during session activities, but be sure to silence your settings! Also make sure to charge all electronics the night before.

What is going on? There are four basic types of activities: Sessions, Working Groups, Workshops, and Field Trips. All topics and presenters are listed in the conference program. Generally, conference sessions last for 90 minutes, but be sure to check your *Program* if you're unsure.

- **Sessions** feature 3-6 speakers and generally have room for 40-50 seated attendees. You do not have to sign up ahead of time to attend a session and can leave for another session depending on your interest level. If you choose to leave a session, please be courteous as you exit. Some sessions feature scholars presenting a paper or a case study, while others are composed of practitioners in the field reflecting on a project or problem-solution they have encountered. All

sessions should include time for questions and discussion. Everyone is welcome to ask questions! If a speaker is an expert in a subject related to your field of study or research, take this opportunity (after the discussion) to meet them and establish a formal connection. Conferences provide an excellent opportunity to network with other public history professionals and discuss different topics of interest to you.

- **Working groups** are sessions designed to facilitate substantive, focused, and extended conversations on a particular topic. They feature a group of approximately 10-15 discussants who come together to explore and address potential problems and/or solutions to a subject of shared concern. Participants are selected well before the date of the conference. Each participant prepares a case statement from their research to share with the group. These case statements are circulated and discussed among participants in advance—therefore, the conversation has already begun prior to the group’s meeting at the conference and everyone is prepared to participate actively in the topic of discussion. Working groups are open to other conference-goers (unless otherwise noted) who would like to sit in on the discussions, but we ask that they respect the co-chair’s need to potentially limit participation from the audience.
- **Workshops** feature outside presenters giving a “how-to” talk on a specific topic. Be sure to note that these sessions usually require additional fees. Workshops are generally longer than a typical conference session, but they vary in length depending on the topic (often 2 - 3 hours or more). Please check the [conference Program](#) for workshop details.
- **Field trips and tours** are off-site ventures organized by the Local Arrangements Committee to take participants to points of interest in the Monterey community. Field trips range between a few hours to whole-day commitments and require advance registration and additional fees. Field trips often take a limited number of participants and spaces can fill up quickly, so consider this when you are registering for the conference. The list of field trips and tours is in the [conference Program](#).

Do I have to attend each session? No, you do not need to attend each session. In every time-slot, there are several sessions occurring concurrently, so it’s impossible to go to each one. You should consult your *Program* ahead of time to make a schedule of the sessions that are most appealing to you. It’s entirely possible that you can get just as much benefit from using a break to interact and network with other public historians as you would from attending a session during each time-slot.

Do I have to pay for each session? Normal sessions, such as panels and working groups, are included with your conference registration. Other events require an extra fee. These include field trips, workshops, and meal events. Some of these special events, such as Speed Networking and the Poster Session (see below) are free but require you to sign up in advance of the conference.

What is Speed Networking? Speed networking is a fun, easy, and low-pressure way to meet with fellow public historians and exchange ideas and experiences. The event is set up a bit like speed dating, but with different ends. Each participant will have a chance to talk and network with established public

history practitioners. These seasoned professionals remain seated at the same table during the duration of the event while a pair of participants rotates in fifteen-minute intervals from one table to the next. The event provides graduate students with the opportunity to connect with public history professionals and to learn about the variety of careers available to public historians. To participate you will have to sign up in advance (with no charge) using the print or online conference registration form. Once registration fills up, applicants for speed networking will be placed on a waiting list.

What events should I be sure to attend? NCPH offers several special events to help conference attendees' network with professionals and graduate students in the field. On Wednesday, March 19, a first time attendee and mentor/mentee pre-reception will take place at 5:30PM and is included with the \$10 fee to attend the Opening Reception (attendees will first meet at the Monterey Conference Center with NCPH Board members and established conference-goers and then walk together to the Museum of Monterey). Later that evening the opening reception is scheduled for 6:30 (tickets costing \$10 are required to attend).

On Thursday, March 20, NCPH will host a New Member Breakfast at 7:30 am (\$35 ticket required). This breakfast provides an opportunity to meet new and old members of the organization and learn more about NCPH, the conference, and the field of public history.

Where do I get business cards? One of the most important aspects of attending the conference is the opportunity to network with academics, professionals in the field, and other graduate students. Having business cards is highly recommended. If you are a graduate student, you may want to order some business cards online in advance of the conference. Several graduate students have been pleased with the prices, speed, and selection of [123Print](#) and [VistaPrint](#).

The conference is an opportunity to network for potential interviews in the future, not a job interview. Keep in mind that the professionals you want to meet will have many people they want to meet as well. Be tactful in handing out your business cards and resume. After sessions, or talks, most presenters linger, providing an excellent opportunity to meet them. Another useful approach is to introduce yourself to the person you would like to meet and get their card. Then, if you want to pursue a conversation, you can contact them a few days later.

Tweet to #NCPH2014! If you're enjoying a particular session or event, let other people know about it. Attendees who don't have a Twitter account can still follow conference discussions online in real time.

After the Conference

Follow up with your new contacts. Send an email to those you've networked with. You can present a question or discussion, or simply send a thank-you note for taking time to speak with you.

Complete the post-conference survey. NCPH emails a post-conference survey to all registrants. Please take a few minutes to share your experiences and offer suggestions on how NCPH can improve its annual conference.

How can I present next year? The deadline for submitting a proposal for the 2015 annual conference in Nashville is July 15, 2014. Finding session participants can be done either through networking or by putting a call out through a listserv or the NCPH LinkedIn Group. If you are interested in presenting next year, make the most of the conference by making contacts with potential presenters through the various social events and by contacting this year's speakers. Check your *Program* in Monterey for more information on the NCPH 2015 Call for Proposals.

Where can I learn more about attending Conferences? There are many online links that provide additional information on attending conferences, here are just a few:

- [ProfHacker](#) has a comprehensive collection of articles on preparing for, attending, and live-tweeting conferences.
- [Christopher Bartneck, "Academic Conference Travel Guide"](#)
- [Tessa Lau, "How to Attend an Academic Conference"](#)
- [Twitter, "Live-Tweeting Best Practices"](#)
- [Ernesto Priego, "Live-Tweeting at Academic Conferences: 10 Rules of Thumb"](#)
- [American Historical Association, "The Dos and Don'ts of Live-Tweeting at an Academic Conference: A Working Draft"](#)