Tips, Advice, and Frequently Asked Questions for First-Time Attendees at the 2016 NCPH Annual Meeting

Before the Conference

Q: When should I arrive?

A: The conference kicks off with a full slate of workshops and an opening reception on Wednesday, March 16, so we suggest arriving on Tuesday or early Wednesday. Information for air, car, and rail travel is located on page 6 of the conference *Program*. If you're looking to share a ride locally or from the airport, post offers and requests on our rideshare board.

Tip: If you plan to drive, the mobile app Waze (available for Apple and Android devices) can help you navigate and will also show real-time traffic information to help you find the best gas prices and avoid construction zones, delays, and accidents.

Q: Where should I stay?

A: This year, NCPH has reserved a discounted room block at the Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel at a rate of $184 a night. Parking at the hotel is $28 per day. Book your room by Tuesday, February 23, 2016 to take advantage of NCPH's group rate, but be aware that space fills up quickly, so the earlier you book, the better. Because the conference is being held at the Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel, it is advantageous See page 5 of the *Program* for additional information.

Tip: Sharing a room with one or more people can be an effective way to keep down costs at the conference. Post requests and offers to the room share discussion board.

Q: What does my conference registration include?

A: A full conference registration includes access to all working groups and sessions, the exhibit hall, public plenary, poster session and other non-ticketed events. Registration also includes access to SHFG (Society for History in the Federal Government) sessions and the SHFG awards event on Thursday of the conference. Registrants also receive a conference program and badge.

 Special opportunities such as workshops, tours, and meal events may require additional fees. Visit the NCPH Annual Meeting webpage for more information on registration rates. Registration for the conference opens in early November.

For other questions on registration, see our General Registration FAQ.

Q: Can I bring my spouse or a guest to an evening event?

A: Yes. Guest registrations and tickets to select events can be purchased for non-public historians who would not otherwise attend the conference. See the website for details.

Q: Why is my name not on the conference participant list?

A: During the registration process, every attendee is asked if they want to omit their personal information from the participant list. If you choose this option, you will still be registered for the

conference but will not be listed. Be sure to check your email for your confirmation. If you cannot locate your confirmation, please email ncph@iupui.edu or call (317) 274-2716.

Q: Where can I acquire funding for the Conference?

A: To learn about potential cash prizes and travel grants, consult the NCPH awards page. Award nominations must be received by December 1, 2015 (November 1, 2015 for the Book and Kelley Awards). Students should contact their advisor, department, student government, or other campus associations to find out if they provide travel grants for conference attendance. Professionals should consult their employers for available funding opportunities.

To save on registration costs, be sure to register during the early bird registration period, which lasts until February 3, 2016. NCPH also offers a limited amount of volunteer spots. Conference volunteers receive free registrations, but since space is limited, register early. See [volunteer URL here] for more details.

Q: What should I wear/pack?

A: In general, the dress code for conference events is business casual. Some evening events, like the Opening Reception, may be more formal. Be sure to dress in layers; conference centers often range from drafty to stuffy, so be ready to change dress accordingly. There is no need to bring a full suit.

Although winter is relatively mild in the Baltimore area, snow and ice are possible in March. If spring arrives early, average high temperatures range from 50 – 70°F (10 – 20°C). Rain and wind are likely, so check the forecast before you pack.

Tip: Walking Tours and Field Trips will take place rain or shine, so be prepared to bring a coat and umbrella.

During the Conference

Q: Where do I check in on the first day?

A: Registration is open from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Wednesday, March 16 (and 7:30-5 every day through Saturday the 19th) in the Ballroom foyer, on the 5th floor of the conference hotel, the Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel. Give yourself enough time on your first day to register and pick up your conference program and badge. Be prepared for a line at registration, especially if you plan to arrive on Wednesday or Thursday. Registration hours and workshop/session start times can be found on pages 23-40 of the conference *Program*.

Check meeting times closely. The final conference *Program* you'll receive after check-in lists times and locations for all conference events. Times and locations occasionally shift after the *Program* is printed, so make sure to check your Errata sheet for updates.

Tip: You can use the Schedule-at-a-Glance on pages 2-3 of the *Program* to help choose which sessions and events you would like to attend. Keep an eye out for our mobile app!

What should I bring? We recommend bringing business cards and résumés for networking. If you plan to use electronics during the day, remember to bring chargers with you. NCPH encourages the use of electronic devices throughout the conference. Some attendees also bring water and snacks with them to stay fresh during the day.

Tip: 123Print and VistaPrint are two quick, easy, and affordable options for business cards.

Q: What types of activities are available?

A: 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 check your *Program*.

- **Sessions** feature 3-6 speakers and generally have room for 50 seated attendees. Attending sessions is included with your conference registration. 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. Everyone is welcome to ask questions! If a speaker is an expert in a subject related to your field of study or research, consider taking the opportunity to meet them and establish a formal connection after the session.

- **Working groups** are designed to facilitate extended conversations on a particular topic. They feature a group of approximately 10-15 discussants, selected in October, who come together to explore and address potential problems and/or solutions to a specific issue. Each participant prepares a case statement to share with the working group. These case statements are circulated and discussed among participants prior to the group's meeting at the conference and everyone is prepared to participate actively in the discussion. Working groups are open to other conference-goers (unless otherwise noted), but we ask that they respect the co-chair's need to potentially limit audience participation.

- **Workshops** feature outside presenters giving a "how-to" talk on a specific topic. Note that these sessions usually require additional fees. Workshops are generally longer than a typical conference session, but they may vary in length with some sessions often lasting 3 hours or more. Please see pages 20-21 of the conference *Program* for workshop details.

- **Field trips and tours** are organized by the Local Arrangements Committee to take participants to points of interest in Baltimore. Field trips are typically between 90 minutes and 3 hours in length. Field trips require advance registration and additional fees. Spaces can fill up quickly, so consider this when registering. The list of field trips and tours is on pages 14-15 of the conference *Program*.

Q: Do I have to attend each session?

A: No, you do not need to attend each session. There are sessions occurring concurrently in

every timeslot, so you couldn't attend each session even if you wanted to. You should consult your *Program* ahead of time to schedule the sessions that are most appealing to you. The temptation to pack your schedule to get the most out of the conference is very real, but you may get just as much benefit from taking a break to interact and network with other public historians as you would from packing your schedule with sessions.

Q: Do I have to pay for each session?

A: Normal sessions, such as panels and working groups, are included with your conference registration. Other events may require an extra fee. These include field trips, workshops, and meal events. Some free events, including Speed Networking, require you to sign up in advance of the conference.

Q: Are there any events tailored to first-time attendees or graduate students?

A: NCPH offers several special events designed to help novice conference attendees network with professionals and graduate students in the field. For more information on these events, see pages 16-18 of the *Program*.

On Wednesday, March 16, consider participating in:

- The **First Time Attendee and Mentor/Mentee Pre-reception** is included with the $7 fee to attend the Opening Reception later that evening and is a great way to get oriented and find a few new faces to meet before the big reception.

- The **Resume Building Workshop** affords the opportunity for attendees to have their resumes reviewed by a working professional in the field. Sign up when you register becausethis session is arranged in advance of the conference

- Meet and mingle at a local restaurant with fellow attendees at the **New Professional and Graduate Student Social**. Tickets cost $5 and go fast, so sign-up early!

On Thursday, March 17, consider:

- **NCPH's New Member Welcome** provides an opportunity to meet new and experienced members of the organization and learn more about NCPH, the conference, and the field of public history.

- **Speed Networking** provides graduate students with a relaxed opportunity to connect with public history professionals and to learn about the variety of careers available to public historians. Sign up in advance via the conference registration form. Check out our video for more information.

- A new opportunity, **Out to Lunch**, is designed to help public history professionals meet colleagues in an informal setting. Prior to the event, attendees will be placed in groups of 4-5, which will then meet for lunch at a restaurant of their choosing. For more information, visit the conference homepage.

- At The **Poster Session** attendees, many of them graduate students present their work more informally. The deadline to submit a poster for 2016 has passed, but this is a great opportunity to see what your peers are working on and get ideas for involvement in future conferences!

And on Friday, March 18:

- **Out to Lunch – *Grad Student Edition*** offers a great, informal opportunity for students to mingle and connect with future colleagues from other programs while getting a taste of Baltimore. Graduate students will be placed in groups of 4-5 from different schools, which will then meet for lunch at a restaurant of their choosing.

Q. How should/Can I network while at the conference?

A: 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.

The conference is an opportunity to network for potential interviews in the future, not a job interview. 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 may contact them a few days later.

Q: How should I spend my evenings?

A: Most days, sessions and workshops end between 5:00 and 6:00 PM; evening events last until about 7:00 PM. Our "Dine Arounds," which stretch later into the evening on Thursday, March 17, facilitate small group discussions on pre-determined topics over dinner at local restaurants. You can sign up for a Dine Around at the registration desk on the first day of the conference.

You will have free time in the evenings, and we recommend that you take advantage of this time to explore Baltimore and get to know fellow attendees. Baltimore is known for its great neighborhoods and great food. NCPH's Local Arrangements Committee has put together a list of recommended restaurants and things to do on pages 8-11 of the conference *Program*.

Tweet to #NCPH2016! 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 real-time conference discussions online. Twitter is also a great way to find fellow attendees who share your interests.

After the Conference

Follow up with your new contacts. Send an email to those you've networked with. Follow them on Twitter and connect with them on LinkedIn.

Complete the post-conference survey. NCPH emails a post-conference survey to all registrants. This survey is important because it helps us improve future conferences. Please take a few minutes to share your experiences.

Q: How can I present next year?

A: The deadline for submitting a proposal for the 2017 annual conference in Indianapolis is July 15, 2016. You can find session participants through networking or by submitting an early topic proposal by June 1. 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 page 12 of your *Program* for more information on the NCPH 2017 Annual Meeting.

Presenting a poster at the Poster Session is a great way for new professionals to present research or projects at NCPH. The deadline for submitting a poster session proposal for Indianapolis is October 1, 2016.

Q: Where can I learn more about attending conferences?

A: There are many links that provide additional information on attending conferences. Here are a few worth investigating:

- 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"
- Megan MacKenzie, "Survival Guide for Grad Students: The Essential Clothing, Food, Shelter, and Networking Dos and Don'ts"
- 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"
- NCPH Public History Navigator
- Elizabeth Covart, "Reflections on the 2015 NCPH Conference"
- Tamar Cachet, "My Experience Attending the NCPH Annual Meeting 2015"