

A REPORT FROM THE RADIO PRESERVATION TASK FORCE, NATIONAL RECORDING PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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Thank you to those who participated in November's Radio Preservation Task Force (RPTF) conference (RPTF2). Thank you to NCPH for becoming an affiliate of the RPTF and for the November conference. Many events held in conjunction with the conference were collaborative "firsts," reflecting a happy culmination of several years of planning and partnership-building. We will continue with this momentum going forward by expanding our multi-sector coalition.

At the moment I'm writing, the RPTF now features faculty from over 200 universities, 33 directors and chairs, 50 archivists, representatives from over 20 radio stations, over 20 collectors, 750 archival affiliates, and over 40 federal, national conference, and public sector partnerships. A civic project like the RPTF survives on the research and service time of our associates. As a federal task force, participation with the project provides strong reporting for one's vita while addressing the very real stakes of preserving a decaying infrastructure of US cultural memory. We ask you to join us for the next round of planning,

which will include continued detective work locating broadcasts in archives, grantwriting, curricular, and metadata development.

THE PROBLEM: DISAPPEARING SOUNDS OF POLITICAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY

The work ahead is both urgent and exciting. Many at-risk materials demand immediate action, and there are other collections still waiting to be discovered, preserved, and studied. Much of the organizational work conducted by the RPTF over 2017 involved building a sustainable coalition to synthesize expertise into a decentralized infrastructure. The conference was organized to consolidate this infrastructure and increase collaboration between experts across sectors.

As everyone participating with the RPTF understands, news, community organizing, performance broadcasts, and everything in between provide new primary sources for research, especially in underrepresented areas with fewer paper trails. We've organized the project to reflect what I'd characterize as a decentralized clearinghouse to improve communication, provide connected resources, and accelerate digital preservation of recordings.

Two core expediencies are clear. First, there is a need to make extant recordings locatable



and searchable. Second, we have to brainstorm solutions to protect endangered collections.

DISCUSSING THE PROBLEM: THE CONFERENCE RPTF2 – From Archive to Classroom

Our second conference at the Library of Congress was organized as a three-day brainstorming event. It featured representatives from over 200 institutions, reflecting a buy-in from many of the country's influential stakeholders. Panel themes covered two areas: 1) RPTF's logistical divisions, and 2) content-based Caucus meetings. It was, by design, a very unusual conference, in that no presenter was allowed to discuss past research. Participants were asked to envision future steps for how we might better work together, calling upon their established expertise. We were honored to partner with three local institutions for the event.

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THE PUBLIC HISTORY OF LABOR MINI-CON

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On October 21st, 2017 the North American Labor History Conference (NALHC) hosted *The*

Public History of Labor, an NCPH branded mini-conference at Wayne State University's Walter P. Reuther Library in Detroit, Michigan. Rachel Donaldson, assistant professor of history at the College of Charleston, and Richard Anderson, a doctoral candidate in history at Princeton University and NCPH Advocacy Committee member, organized the mini-con with logistical support from NALHC coordinator Tracy Neumann (coordinator for Wayne State

University's MA program in Public History) and NCPH, which promoted the event and received proposal submissions.

The organizers sought to use the *Public History of Labor* mini-con to kick-start a long-term discussion among practitioners about how to incorporate labor history more fully into public-facing interpretive and educational programming at a time when the nature of work is changing rapidly and labor unions are under sustained political assault. The partnership between NCPH and NALHC, which support vibrant networks of public historians and labor historians, respectively, seemed like a natural fit for this important project. Several key questions guided the mini-con: how can labor history and cultural heritage support or enhance

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ▶

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

ALEXANDRA LORD / LORDA@SI.EDU



We look forward to welcoming you to NCPH's 40th annual conference next month. Las Vegas' motto may be, "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas," but historians

know that its past has never been so confined. While many people may see Las Vegas as the ultimate destination of the here and now, the city and its surrounding area have an extraordinary history. Home to diverse cultures spanning almost 10,000 years, the area reflects the full extent of human civilization—with sites ranging from ancient petroglyphs to historic neon signs.

This year's theme, "Power Lines," is especially reflective of this city's history—not simply

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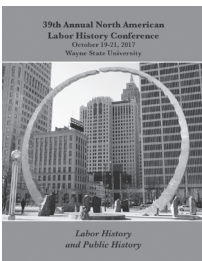
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THE PUBLIC HISTORY OF LABOR MINI-CON // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1



contemporary political and workplace struggles among organized and unorganized workers? How can public history create a broader, more socially and culturally inclusive understanding of what labor history is and who is a worker?

What places can be considered historical sites of labor, even if they haven't been identified as such? How can historic sites, museums, archives, and other repositories of labor history help to challenge historical myths, reshape popular conceptualizations of this past, and communicate to labor audiences that our institutions belong to them as well?

In Detroit, an audience of more than twenty joined the participants for a robust examination

of these questions. Mayela Caro (University of California, Riverside), Rosemary Feurer (Northern Illinois University), Kerry Taylor (The Citadel), and Leah Worthington (Addlestone Library, College of Charleston) made short presentations about their own work at the intersection of labor history and public history. An extended conversation with the audience followed. The group wrestled with issues like how best to collaborate with precarious workers on the front lines of political conflict, how to share authority with activists, and how to interpret the labor history of communities that do not define themselves first and foremost as "workers." The highlight of the event came when members of UAW Local 685 (Kokomo, Indiana) in attendance shared their experiences of drawing on labor history during present-day organizing campaigns. Their testimony illustrated the vital need for a more thorough intertwining of labor history and public history.

In a sign of the richness of the exchanges, the mini-con left participants with more questions than answers. Fortunately, the conversation will continue in April at the NCPH Annual Meeting in Las Vegas when the original panelists will be joined by an expanded lineup of practitioners for a working group session devoted to the Public History of Labor. Look for us on Saturday, April 21 at the conference to join the conversation in person or contact Rachel Donaldson (donaldsonrc@cofc.edu) or Richard Anderson (raatwo@princeton.edu).

Richard Anderson is a doctoral student in 20th century American history at Princeton University and co-facilitator of the NCPH 2018 working group "The Public History of Labor."

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: A YEAR OF PARTNERSHIPS



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As you read in Long Range Planning Committee Chair Jean-Pierre Morin's report in the last issue of *Public History News*, NCPH's board and staff are enthusiastic about setting to work on the key priorities of the 2017-2022 Long Range Plan. Included in these priorities are "addressing the academic/non-academic divide" and "creating a more diverse public history community." To those ends, we've begun the new year with a number of exciting partnerships.

NCPH just signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Organization of American Historians (OAH) to participate as a partner in their Mellon Foundation-funded OAH Amplified Initiative. The project seeks to amplify the OAH Annual Meeting to reach the public, teachers, students, and scholars

interested in American history and to build community and share ideas between OAH members and those studying, teaching, and interpreting US history. As a project partner, NCPH will receive funds to work with key IUPUI public history faculty and MA students to create modules for exploration via case studies that investigate the state of public history at the OAH meeting and within academic history in this particular moment. This project allows us to build connections between academic and non-academic practitioners and faculty, and to strengthen our partnerships with IUPUI (our host institution) and the Organization of American Historians.

We have embarked on another new collaboration with the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) and an editorial team of public history leaders. Together, we are helping to develop and promote the *Inclusive Historian's Handbook* which you can read about in more detail on page six. The *Handbook's* co-editors are current NCPH Board Member, Diversity & Inclusion

Task Force Member, and *History@Work* Copyeditor Modupe Labode; *History@Work* Lead Editor Will Walker; and former NCPH President Bob Weible.

In another exciting partnership with IUPUI, NCPH is supporting a track in the university's new American Studies PhD Program. This track, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Public History and Higher Education" will begin in fall 2018. It includes an assistantship with the IUPUI Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the potential for summer work in the NCPH office. NCPH is excited to connect with campus inclusion work, and to help further research in these fields as they relate to public history. Applications for the track were due March 1.

As I write this, we're just one month into 2018 and our work plan for the year is already full of exciting new opportunities and partnerships. This is a testament to the creative and nurturing network of public historians in our membership who are generous with their time and talents and a relevant Long Range Plan to help guide us. Here's to an exciting year ahead!

A REPORT FROM THE RADIO PRESERVATION TASK FORCE, NATIONAL RECORDING PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

First, the University of Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities held an event with Wikipedia, the Media History Digital Library, American Archive of Public Broadcasting, and Smithsonian Institution Archives regarding digital crowdsourcing strategies for radio accessibility. Second, the eminent Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars held a special session on Cold War Communication in conjunction with the Library of Congress, National Archives, Hoover Library and Archives, and Voice of America. The session was a huge hit, well over capacity, with an audience spilling into the hallway. It was a great honor to participate with events connected to the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Public Broadcasting Act. National Public Radio (NPR) held a special Plenary at Studio One with founder Bill Siemering and Podcast Director Neal Carruth. Perhaps the highlight of the whole conference was American Archives of Public Broadcasting's notable and worthy celebration of Public Media History.

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM: A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RADIO PRESERVATION

RPTF Divisions and Caucuses

As our archivists and collectors know, radio

preservation turns out to be a lot more complicated than the (not-so-simple!) act of digital preservation of obsolete media. It's a multi-stage process that involves different sectors working together, in coordination, for the common goals of preservation and access.

The process works something like this:

- 1) Broadcasts have to be identified.
- 2) Broadcasts have to be "processed," creating basic-level metadata describing what's on the recording.
- 3) The recordings themselves have to be assessed for frailty or mold, to be deemed ready to be preserved.
- 4) Metadata has to be collected into one place so that we can determine if a broadcast has already been preserved by another site.
- 5) Incentive must be created so that radio preservation is deemed worthy of funds. We believe that incentive will come through collaborations that envision educational goals as part of the preservation process.
- 6) Grants have to be written with incentive in tow, so that we might locate funds to preserve recordings, either in-house at universities, radio stations, or libraries, or through an appropriate vendor.
- 7) We have to begin to discuss the best course of action for how recordings might be made available to students and the public.

- 8) Curriculum must be developed so that newly discovered archival materials fit into the structure of existing classroom education. One compelling end result of this project is that we'll diversify the range of historical media, in the process diversifying media history curriculum while increasing access and exposure.

This process as stated doesn't even take into account endangered recordings, which require a separate procedure of: 1) identifying shelf space at archives for deposit or donation; 2) locating funds for moving recordings to archival spaces; and 3) evaluating what might be on those recordings so that we can 4) organize for the steps stated above.

RPTF2 was designed to feature representatives from every step in this process, often on the same panel. The talent and the will are there, and we are set to address the problem of decaying recordings.

Josh Shepperd is a director of the Radio Preservation Task Force, a Sound History Fellow at the Library of Congress NRPB, and Assistant Professor of Media Studies at Catholic University.

THE INCLUSIVE HISTORIAN'S HANDBOOK PROJECT

MODUPE LABODE, WILL WALKER, AND BOB WEIBLE /
WILLIAM.WALKER@ONEONTA.EDU

We are excited to announce that NCPH is partnering with the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) to develop a new digital resource called *The Inclusive Historian's Handbook*. This dynamic reference source will open the practice of history for diverse communities of practitioners and directly support inclusive and equity-focused historical work in public settings. The *Handbook* seeks to broaden the scope of public history by:

- Sharing a knowledge base that invites more people to engage in history projects.
- Centering equity, inclusivity, diversity, and public service.
- Providing concrete examples of how to make history work more relevant.
- Offering accessible windows into the ways public historians work.

The Inclusive Historian's Handbook aligns with AASLH's and NCPH's goals of building diversity and inclusion across the historical community. Many individual public historians and history organizations state publicly their desire to be more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and service-oriented; in practice, however,

we have largely failed to change our practices in ways that would fundamentally open up the field. In many cases, well-intentioned professionals and amateurs do not have the tools or knowledge to bring new practitioners and audiences into their institutions. The *Handbook* will provide easily accessible information for historians working in multiple contexts. Authored by a range of experienced professionals, the *Handbook's* entries will combine practical advice with critical reflections and telling examples.

The *Handbook* will be an ideal reference source for individuals and groups engaged in historical work in a variety of settings. It will provide community groups, museum professionals, educators, students, scholars, activists, preservationists, archivists, and others with easy-to-find information that is directly applicable to inclusive history practice. *The Inclusive Historian's Handbook* will be a vital resource for all professional public historians; at the same time, it will be relevant and accessible for community groups and amateur historians. The overarching goal—of opening up historical practice to the widest possible audience—makes the *Handbook* an essential text for empowering historians and non-historians alike to make history as well as study it.

The Inclusive Historian's Handbook will be a digital resource that is free and open to all on the internet. This approach ensures the widest possible reach and the greatest impact on the profession as well as broader public audiences. To facilitate easy browsing, the main body of the *Handbook* will consist of an alphabetical list of entries written by multiple authors. Examples of entries include: "Accessibility," "Activism," "Civic Engagement," "Collaborative Practice," "Heritage Tourism," "Intersectionality," "Leadership," "Memorials and Monuments," and "Racism and Anti-Racism." Each entry will be a single-authored essay of approximately 2,000 words, and the volume will contain around 150 entries in total. The first group of entries will be posted in early 2019. If you are interested in getting involved with the project, or have suggestions for topics that should be included, please email Will Walker (william.walker@oneonta.edu).

Modupe Labode (IUPUI), Will Walker (Cooperstown Graduate Program, SUNY Oneonta), and Bob Weible (retired New York State Historian) are co-editors of *The Inclusive Historian's Handbook*.

WANT TO HOST THE NCPH ANNUAL MEETING IN YOUR CITY?



Woman creating map of United States, Aug. 12, 1922. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-nppc-23258.

2022: American Midwest and Canada

NCPH is accepting proposals from Midwestern and Canadian cities for our 2022 Annual Meeting. Proposals to host are submitted by NCPH members interested in serving as the chair of our Local Arrangements Committee and on the Program Committee.

Proposals should include the following: a statement describing why the city is a great fit for a public history conference; information about local hotels and enlisting the support of local officials, institutions, and agencies who will work together to plan a successful conference; and an outline of potential arrangements for offsite events and possible tours/field trips. Proposals are due by October 1, 2018. Please visit <http://ncph.org/future-meetings/> for more information.

2023 and Beyond: American Northeast and American South

We are currently accepting initial expressions of interest from the Northeast and South for our 2023 and 2024 Annual Meetings. If you're an NCPH member with a strong local public history community who would like to see NCPH come to your city, please reach out to us by July 1, 2018 to express your interest in hosting so we can talk about the next steps! Emails can be sent to ncph@iupui.edu.



Hands at work at the Colt's Patent Firearms Mfg. Company, Hartford, CT, July 1942. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-DIG-isa-8b07472.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

"Repair Work"

Hartford, Connecticut,
March 27-30, 2019
Connecticut Convention Center

Public historians have long been engaged in acts of repair. We restore and preserve old objects and buildings. We reconstruct fragmentary evidence about the past and reconsider the stories it has been used to tell, including stories about past histories and commemorations themselves. We

contribute to economic and civic revitalization efforts. Increasingly, we also align our work with social and environmental projects of reparation, putting ourselves in service of overcoming or resisting the effects of past damage, injustice, and exclusion.

NCPH invites proposals for its 2019 conference in Hartford, Connecticut that explore how public history intersects—sometimes purposefully, sometimes with unintended consequences—with the ongoing task of making and remaking places, communities, and politics.

The online proposal system opens in April; proposals are due by July 15, 2018.

NCPH AWARD WINNERS FOR 2018



Please join us in congratulating the recipients of this year's awards for outstanding achievement in a variety of public history formats. Full details about the award winners' projects will be released in conjunction with the NCPH Annual Meeting in Las Vegas next month. We hope you will celebrate with us at the Awards Breakfast on Saturday, April 21, at the Renaissance Las Vegas, 8:00 am – 10:00 am.

NCPH FOUNDERS AWARD

The NCPH Council of Past Presidents developed the Founders Award to recognize those individuals who were present at the creation of NCPH and who played critical roles in the organization's success.

Suellen M. Hoy

Joel A. Tarr, Carnegie Mellon University

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AWARD FOR EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE

Awarded for the first time this year, the Board Award is given when the Board of Directors seeks to recognize publicly an individual who has, through long-term and substantive effort, made transformational contributions to the work of the NCPH.

Cathy Stanton, Tufts University

OUTSTANDING PUBLIC HISTORY PROJECT AWARD

NCPH acknowledges the generous support of Stevie and Ted Wolf that makes this award possible.

The Mere Distinction of Colour, **Christian J. Cotz** and **Elizabeth Chew**, James Madison's Montpelier;

Chris Danemayer, Proun Design LLC; and **Molly O'Brien**, Northern Light Productions

HONORABLE MENTION

Confinement in the Land of Enchantment: Japanese Americans in New Mexico during World War II, **Sarah R. Payne**, Colorado State University Public Lands History Center; **Andrew Russell**, Central New Mexico Community College; and **Victor Yamada**, New Mexico Japanese American Citizens League

NCPH BOOK AWARD



Andrew G. Kirk, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, *Doom Towns: The People and Landscapes of Atomic Testing, A Graphic History* (Oxford University Press, 2017)

HONORABLE MENTION

Ronald Rudin, Concordia University, *Kouchibouguac: Removal, Resistance, and Remembrance at a Canadian National Park* (University of Toronto Press, 2016)

G. WESLEY JOHNSON AWARD

For the best article in *The Public Historian*.

Natasha Erlank, University of Johannesburg, for "From Main Reef to Albertina Sisulu Road: The Signposted Heroine and the Politics of Memory," *The Public Historian* Vol 39, No 2

HONORABLE MENTION

Gregory Rosenthal, Roanoke College, for "Make Roanoke Queer Again: Community History and Urban Change in a Southern City," *The Public Historian* Vol 39, No 1

EXCELLENCE IN CONSULTING AWARD

INDIVIDUAL AWARD

Delia Hagen, Hagen Historical Consulting, *African-American Heritage Resources in Helena, Montana*

HONORABLE MENTION

Ryan Shackleton, Know History, *Métis Nation of Ontario*

STUDENT PROJECT AWARD

Making History: Kansas City and the Rise of Gay Rights, **Taylor C. Bye**, **Kathryn B. Carpenter**, **Samantha Hollingsworth**, **Leah Palmer**, **Kevin Ploth**, and **Jennifer Tufts**, University of Missouri-Kansas City

NEW PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL AWARDS

HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC. NEW PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL AWARD

Kimber J. Heinz, Bull City 150, Duke University

NCPH NEW PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL AWARD

Shakti Castro, BOOM!Health

GRADUATE STUDENT TRAVEL AWARDS

Melissa Barthelemy, University of California, Santa Barbara

Aaron Hollis, West Virginia University

Nora Kassner, University of California, Santa Barbara

Hope Shannon, Loyola University Chicago

GVGK Tang, Temple University

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

because its hustle, bustle, and famously neon skyline rely on the power infrastructure fueled by the nearby Hoover Dam but because Las Vegas has a complicated history shaped by power. It is the site of countless struggles between disparate groups seeking to control their own destiny.

Two questions are at the heart of this year's conference: Can public history help us envision a civic whole? What is public history's role in helping to build a community? These questions have great and pressing relevance for Americans, who are engaged in a very public discussion about the role of history in shaping our understanding of who we are. But these questions are at the heart of debates raging in other countries as well. Knowing who we were shapes who we are (and want to become) as a nation—and this is true whether we live in the United States or Spain; South Africa or Ukraine; Venezuela or South Korea.

Thinking about the complexity and ubiquity of these questions is crucial if we are to promote the best public history work. Not only can we

at NCPH set a model for how Americans and others think about history; so, too, can we benefit from considering how others think about and approach these issues, whether we are talking about the city down the road or a nation on the other side of the world.

To help you explore these questions, we hope you will take advantage of the unique opportunity this conference always provides to explore public history on the ground in the conference city. This year's Local Arrangements Committee has assembled an impressive collection of tours and field sessions, all of which enable you to see how museums, heritage organizations, and preservation projects are reshaping and challenging views of how history plays a role in developing a community.

If you have a chance while at the conference, please thank both the incredible Program Committee, which did an amazing job of sorting through and selecting proposals during an exceptionally competitive year; and the Local

Arrangements Committee, which has ensured that you get a chance to explore and truly come to know Las Vegas as the locals do. This year's program has been lovingly built to help you delve into some of the best public history work being done today—in a city whose history, and excellent public history work, often goes unjustly overlooked.

Please also take the time to introduce yourself to your fellow conference attendees. NCPH conferences have always had the reputation of being extraordinarily friendly. As our attendance grows, we want to encourage lively discussions both in and outside of our formal sessions. It's these conversations that enrich our professional lives and enable us to do the best public history work possible.

So enjoy the conference and the conversation and I look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas!



PUBLIC HISTORY NEWS

National Council on Public History

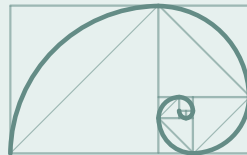
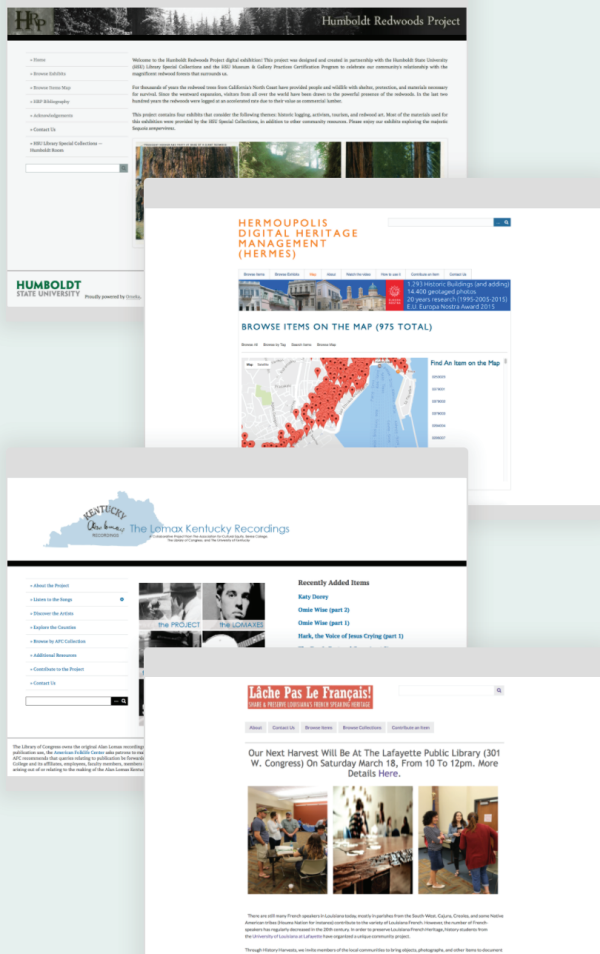
127 Cavanaugh Hall-IUPUI
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ISSN 08912610

Editor: Stephanie Rowe

Editorial Assistance: Christine Crosby,
Meghan Hillman, Stasia Tanzer, and Dan Will

Design: Brooke Hamilton
openbookstudio.com



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