



“Challenging the Exclusive Past”

CALL FOR PAPERS – 2016 Annual Meeting
**National Council on Public History and Society for
History in the Federal Government**
Baltimore, Maryland, March 16-19, 2016



Formal preservation and interpretation of the past began as a movement to celebrate great men and elite spaces. Slowly, and with difficulty, this is becoming a more democratic and inclusive effort. We believe that public historians have an important role to play in the ongoing work to expand national, state, local, and global narratives. What are the most effective and engaging means for expanding interpretive practices and professional spaces in order to promote full inclusion of previously marginalized peoples and places? To what extent have new, more democratic and engaged public history practices changed museum collections and exhibits, preservation practice, law, and public commemoration? And what happens when formerly disenfranchised publics assert their right to tell their own histories? These questions get at the very meanings of public history and citizenship. As 2016 will mark the centennial of the National Park Service and fifty years of the National Historic Preservation Act, in Baltimore we invite public historians to explore the promise, the successes, and the challenges of developing a more inclusive public history landscape in the twenty-first century.



Questions to consider:

- How are successful collaborations between public historians and under-represented communities built?
- How do new practices including digital history open up narratives and collaborations for public historians that challenge the exclusive past?
- How do government historians and agencies work with communities, such as Indigenous nations, that share traumatic histories with the government?
- How do historians establish the trust necessary to work with and within communities of which they are not members? Conversely, how do historians who are community “insiders” experience and navigate the issue of trust?
- How do we reach public historians practicing outside of established institutions and build a more diverse guild?
- To what extent have government historians influenced public policy makers? And should they?
- What are the risks of using traditional great men and great event narratives when highlighting the

histories of under-represented groups? Do we ignore or obscure important counter narratives when we follow this course?

- What role can historic preservation play in revitalizing communities?
- How can public historians contribute to the preservation of previously marginalized places?
- How and should activism and public history meet? Can such intersections lead to more inclusive histories?
- How do public historians weave together local, national, and global narratives to create meaningful histories for all communities?

The NCPH urges participants to dispense with the reading of papers, and encourages a wide variety of forms of conversation and session format options. Please avoid panels of talking heads and overreliance on PowerPoint presentations. Sessions should not simply be a “show and tell” but should demonstrate advice and methodology, and include exchanges between presenters and audience beyond a ten-minute Q&A at the end. Session format options (90 minutes) can include, but are not limited to:

- **Experiential:** Participants simulate, role-play, or play games to convey key principles and learning objectives.
- **PechaKucha:** Facilitators quickly move the session through a variety of short tips/images/ideas designed to leave participants with inspiration and ideas. Typically, a PechaKucha is a multiple-presenter activity where each presenter shows 20 slides in 20-second increments. Allow time for debriefing.
- **Point/Counterpoint:** A moderated discussion that offers opposing points of view in a debate format.
- **Roundtable:** Presentations in roundtables are typically limited to 30 minutes of presentation, followed by 60 minutes of discussion and feedback. Roundtable presenters should bring targeted questions to pose to others at the table in order to learn from and with those attending. Roundtables are an ideal format for networking and in-depth discussion on a particular topic.
- **Structured Conversation:** Sparked by a shared interest or need, these facilitated participant-driven discussions are designed to encourage audience dialogue. Start with a provocative or problem statement and see where the conversation goes.
- **Traditional:** Three-person, chair, and commentator panels.

Other non-session format options can include:

- **Working Groups (2 hours):** Involving facilitators and up to twelve discussants, working groups allow conferees to explore in depth a subject of shared concern before and during the annual meeting. In these seminar-like conversations, participants have a chance to discuss questions raised by specific programs, problems, or initiatives in their own public history practice with peers grappling with similar issues. Working groups articulate a purpose they are working toward, a problem they are actively trying to solve, and aim to create an end product(s), such as a report, article, website, or exhibition. Proposals should include only facilitators. An open call for discussants will be issued fall 2015. More information about working groups can be found at <http://bit.ly/1Hmyu49>
- **Workshops (half-or full-day):** Workshops provide hands-on and participatory experiences that impart

practical information or skills, and typically require participants to pay a fee.



While individuals are not prohibited from presenting in consecutive years at the meeting, session proposals that include new voices will receive preference. Additionally, participants may be members of only one session, but may also be discussants in Working Groups or introduce sessions.

See the NCPH website at www.ncph.org for details about submitting your proposal and be sure to peruse past NCPH and SHFG programs for ideas about new session/event formats.

How to submit your proposal:

Optional Early Topic Proposal deadline: This is for people who are interested in presenting on a certain topic, but are looking for ideas to more fully develop their proposal or are looking for collaborators/co-panelists. Fill out the topic-only proposal form online by **June 1, 2015**. Topics received by that date will be distributed to NCPH and SHFG members via email, and posted to the Public History Commons for feedback and offers of collaboration. Respondents will contact the original submitter directly with their ideas or offers, and the submitter may choose to select additional participants, refine the proposal, and complete a full proposal form online by the July deadline.

Final Proposal Deadline: Submit your fully formed session, working group, individual paper, or workshop proposal online by **July 15, 2015**.