

## Trekking about Providence

The 2009 NCPH Local Arrangements Committee

Providence has a long history, exciting politics, extraordinary museums and thriving cultural institutions. There's much for the public historian to learn from—and much to enjoy. *The New York Times* wrote, a few years back: "Providence, R.I., the much-promoted 'renaissance city,' has become a tourist Mecca with its rejuvenated downtown, trendy

The city's renaissance builds on its history, making Providence an ideal place for this meeting. Providence has put its past to good use in recent years, pioneering techniques of historic preservation and cultural and civic tourism that are models for other cities. Come and see how museums, preserved landscapes, and historic mills, office buildings, houses, and harbors have become key elements in a city's revival. Come see public history in action!

Providence is a walking city, and from our Downcity hotel you can walk to theaters (The Providence Black Repertory Company and Trinity Repertory Company are just blocks from the hotel), shops (including the requisite downtown mall), historic sites (including the Providence Athenaeum, founded in 1753, the First Baptist

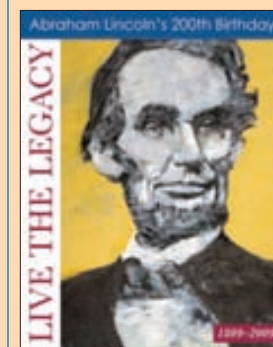
The areas around Providence have also found ways to use their history to appeal to residents and tourists. Join us for tours east to Newport (colonial architecture, grand mansions), New Bedford (whaling history, architecture), and Little Compton (wine, and agricultural tourism); south to Mystic Seaport (the largest maritime museum in the US) and the Mashantucket Pequot Museum (a grand museum, and fascinating archaeological sites); and north to the Blackstone Valley and Worcester (mill villages, and a model National Heritage Corridor). All of these tours will include behind-the-scenes explorations of museums and archaeological sites, as well as the opportunity to see the beautiful New England countryside and preserved historic cities and towns.

We promise you a lot to see, and a lot to do. Looking forward to seeing you in Providence!



restaurants and vibrant cultural scene." Come to the NCPH meeting both for the serious work of public history and to enjoy a city that cares about history, art, and culture.

Church in America meeting house, built in 1774, the Rhode Island Historical Society's John Brown House Museum, 1788, and newly reinterpreted), and exhibitions at Brown University's List Gallery, John Carter Brown Library, John Hay Library, John Nicholas Brown Center Carriage House Gallery, and Haffenreffer Museum, and at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art and its other exhibition galleries. We'll have tours around Providence, and events at the Johnson and Wales Culinary Museum (exhibits from kitchen sinks to diners, as well as spectacular food on display), and at the Children's Museum, where we will be treated to public history historical pageant (even public historians can play!).



Celebrate the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth in February 2009 with the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission's

(ALBC) free poster. The front side, suitable for display, is a portrait of Lincoln, while the reverse contains resources for educators, offering suggestions for incorporating Lincoln's legacy into learning activities. To request this poster, please call the ALBC offices at (202) 707-6998. Visit our website at [www.abrahamlincoln200.org](http://www.abrahamlincoln200.org) to view numerous resources, find event ideas, and much more. Join us in celebrating our greatest American president and help our students honor Lincoln's legacy of freedom, democracy, and equality of opportunity!



### Best in Public History

Nominate yourself or colleagues for an NCPH Award. Book submissions due December 1, 2008; all other award submissions due January 8, 2009.

# Remember 1980?

NCPH will be turning 30 in 2010, and we need your help to build a photo archive of the organization's early years. Do you have snapshots from NCPH conferences or other events in the 1980s or 1990s? How about photographs of early NCPHers at a public history event organized by your company, university, office, institution, or agency? We also are interested in images that help illustrate the growth of the public history field in general. Please check [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org) today for instructions on uploading and tagging your NCPH and related public history photos. Or simply email your photos or contact us at [NCPH@iupui.edu](mailto:NCPH@iupui.edu) to discuss how we might scan your paper/print photographs.



Photo courtesy of Mike McMinis.



## Coming Soon! NCPH Membership Directories—Online and Connected

This month NCPH launches an online membership directory and an NCPH "group" on LinkedIn. Both will be benefits of membership, open only to current individual members of the organization. The directory provides basic contact information about other members. The LinkedIn group is a way to connect to NCPH members who have chosen to use this networking site. Joining the group also adds a defining characteristic to an existing LinkedIn profile. With more than 30 million users, LinkedIn is a fast-growing social networking site being used by professionals for career and social purposes. See [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org) for details about these new member services.



## Patrons & Sponsors

We are especially grateful for the support of the following institutions.

### Patrons

The History Channel  
American Association for State and Local History  
California State University Fullerton, Center for Oral and Public History  
California State University, San Bernardino, Department of History  
Carnegie-Mellon University, Department of History  
Chicago History Museum  
Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Department of History  
Historical Research Associates, Inc.  
John Nicholas Brown Center, Brown University  
Middle Tennessee State University, Department of History  
New York University, Department of History  
University of South Carolina, Department of History  
The University of West Florida Public History Program and West Florida Historic Preservation, Inc.  
University of West Georgia, Department of History



### Sponsors

University at Albany, State University of New York, Department of History  
American University, Department of History  
Arizona State University, Department of History  
Baylor University, Department of History  
California State University Chico, Department of History  
University of California Riverside, Department of History  
California State University Sacramento, Department of History  
University of California Santa Barbara, Department of History  
Central Connecticut State University  
Cornell University, Department of Science & Technology Studies  
Eastern Illinois University, Department of History  
Florida State University, Department of History  
History Link  
University of Houston, Center for Public History  
JRP Historical Consulting  
LifeStory Productions, Inc.  
Loyola University of Chicago, Department of History  
University of Massachusetts, Department of History  
Missouri Historical Society  
University of Nevada Las Vegas, Department of History  
North Carolina State University, Department of History  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Department of History  
University of Northern Iowa, Department of History  
Oklahoma State University, Department of History  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission  
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee  
Washington State University, Department of History  
Truman Presidential Library  
Wells Fargo  
Western Michigan University, Department of History

# Inside This Issue

A Quarterly Publication of the  
National Council on Public History

4  
2009 Annual Meeting

7  
President's Comments

8  
Treasurer's Report

9  
Board of Directors Meeting

12  
Intersections

14  
"Anniversary Fever" and  
Historical Reenactments

Sunrise images on front and back cover are  
courtesy of Flickr.com user Clairity and Indy  
Kethdy. See [http://creativecommons.org/licenses/  
by-sa/3.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/) for license terms of this work.



Printed on 50% recycled paper  
(25% post-consumer waste)

**Marianne Babal**  
President

**Martin Blatt**  
Vice President

**Bill Bryans**  
Past President

**Patrick Moore**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**John Dichtl**  
Executive Director

## Do You Twitter?

### Announcing the NCPH Digital Media Group

Digital media and public history seem made for each other in many ways. Both are oriented toward the collective creation and sharing of knowledge, with all the questions and challenges that those processes inevitably raise. So it's no surprise that many publicly-inclined historians were among the "early adopters" of electronic communications technologies. H-Public, the NCPH-sponsored listserv, was among the earliest of the now more than 180 online discussion groups at H-Net, while pioneers like Roy Rosenzweig, founder of the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, led the way in showing what a digitally-oriented humanities practice might look like.

With the advent of "Web 2.0" technologies, the potential for this kind of communication has increased exponentially, and the NCPH board recently convened a new ad hoc committee to help the organization think more broadly about how we can expand, enliven, and coordinate our online presence. The committee will consider projects such as the NCPH conference blog, initiated in 2008 and soon to be expanded for the 2009 conference in Providence, along with ways to link existing web efforts like H-Public and the NCPH website with newer "social networking" sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

Members of the new ad hoc committee bring an exciting range of experience and new ideas to our conversations about public history in the digital realm. They are:

- Maren Bzdek, program manager and research associate, Center for Public History and Archaeology, Colorado State University
- Tony Cherian, PhD candidate in public history, University of Texas at Austin
- John Dichtl (ex officio), executive director, NCPH

- Suzanne Fischer, curator of technology, The Henry Ford, author of "Public Historian" blog
- Kate Freedman, graduate student in digital public history, University of Massachusetts at Amherst
- Stephen Gapps, independent scholar and living historian, Historica, Sydney, Australia
- Patrick Moore, public history program director, University of West Florida
- Jon Olsen, professor of digital public history, University of Massachusetts at Amherst
- Tom Scheinfeldt, managing director, Center for History and New Media, George Mason University
- Cathy Stanton (chair), H-Public editor, Union Institute & University
- Bill Turkel, professor of history, University of Western Ontario, author of "Digital History Hacks" blog



Courtesy of B. Bowen Carr

NCPH members with ideas for the new committee are welcome to email Cathy Stanton, the chair, at [cstanton@tiac.net](mailto:cstanton@tiac.net). And coming soon, we hope there will be lots of new ways to encounter NCPH and other public historians in the rapidly-expanding cyber-universe!



## THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PUBLIC HISTORY

Given the essential value of historical understanding, the National Council on Public History promotes professionalism among history practitioners and their engagement with the public.

*Public History News* is published in March, June, September, and December. Individual membership orders, changes of address, and business and editorial correspondence should be addressed to National Council on Public History, 327 Cavanaugh Hall – IUPUI, 425 University Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46202-5140. E-mail: [ncph@iupui.edu](mailto:ncph@iupui.edu). Tel: 317-274-2716. New members are welcome. Join online or renew at [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org).

Institutional subscription orders, changes of address, and business correspondence should be addressed to Journals and Digital Publishing Division, University of California Press, 2000 Center St., Ste. 303, Berkeley, CA 94704-1223. Or visit [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu).

We welcome submissions to *Public History News* sent to John Dichtl, Editor, at the above address. Articles are 400-800 words in length; announcements and bulletin items are up to 75 words. NCPH reserves the right to reject material that is not consistent with the goals and purposes of the organization.

Headquartered on the campus of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, NCPH benefits greatly from the generous support of the IU School of Liberal Arts.

# 2009 NCPH Annual Meeting



## Registration Opens December 2008

Your conference registration fee covers admission to all sessions, coffee breaks, the exhibit room, the public plenary, the poster session and reception, the Digital Projects Showcase, and the Mentoring Network, and includes a conference

packet and badge. All conference attendees, including presenters and other participants, are expected to register for the annual meeting.

Preregistration before March 20 is available at [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org) or by completing the form at the back of the *Program* (out in January). And don't forget to make your reservation at the Providence Biltmore hotel soon!



Providence Board of Trade, 1912.

There's still time to sponsor an event, secure advertising space, or reserve an exhibit booth at the 2009 Annual Meeting. Promote your program, press, company, institution, or office. Win friends. Influence people. [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org)

Make Your Mark in Providence

## Recollecting Street Life, Stoop Culture

Anne M. Valk | [Anne\\_Valk@brown.edu](mailto:Anne_Valk@brown.edu)

For the past year, Brown University students have been working on a public history project to document the history of Fox Point, a neighborhood located on Providence's east side. Bordered on three sides by water and, on the fourth, by Brown University, Fox Point once



Manuel Pedroso in front of Friends Market. Pedroso has owned and operated the store on Brook Street in Fox Point since the late 1940s. Image courtesy of Lou Costa.

was a major seaport that attracted immigrants, primarily from Ireland, Portugal, and Cape Verde, to work as longshoremen and stevedores in the waterfront industries and nearby jewelry manufactories. Up through the 1950s, working-class families lived in close proximity and sustained vibrant churches, corner stores and small shops, ethnically segregated bars, voluntary associations, and social welfare organizations. A lively street life and stoop culture helped unite this ethnically diverse community, although

differences of language and culture prevailed. In the decades following World War II, the expansion of the university, the closing of the seaports, the historic preservation movement, and the building of freeways transformed the area socially and physically. Today Fox Point's immigrant population is small, the waterfront now boasts parklands, and upscale shops and restaurants serve students and staff from nearby Brown and Rhode Island School of Design.

The Fox Point of old looms large in the community's memory, however. In order to capture these memories and understanding the significance of this multilayered community, public humanities students have been collecting oral history interviews and images of historic Fox Point, working under the direction of Anne Valk, Associate Director for Programs at the John Nicholas Brown Center, and with the guidance of local historian Lou Costa, who lived in Fox Point from the 1930s-1950s.

To increase access to these materials, the students have made a very large collection of photos available on Flickr, a website that allows users to post and share photographs for free. Collected by Mr. Costa over the past decade, these photographs are now enhanced by information recalled during recent gatherings of Fox Pointers. The images vividly document neighborhood life throughout the twentieth century, featuring families, schools, churches, businesses, sports

teams, and social organizations. Thanks to Flickr's social networking capabilities, viewers, too, can share their recollections and add information to the online collection.



John and Ernie Costa on Brook Street, Fox Point, circa 1942. Image courtesy of Lou Costa.

NCPH members are encouraged to visit the Flickr site <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/foxpoint>>, enjoying a preview of Providence and sampling an ongoing public history project.

Anne M. Valk is Associate Director for Programs at the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage at Brown University.



Members of the Traverse and Lima families gathered on Easter Sunday, 1947, on John Street in Fox Point. Image courtesy of Lou Costa.

## Some Highlights of the Upcoming Conference

### Public Plenary

Jill Lepore, the David Woods Kemper '41 Professor of American History at Harvard University and a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, will present, "Telling Stories about Why History Matters."

*Sometimes history can read like a comic book: action, adventure, larger-than-life heroes, shocking tragedies. The past, like the present, is full of heroes, and villains, too. Unfortunately, a cartoon only gets you so far: it's colorful, but there's no denying it's flat. What happens when we try to make history rounder?*

### Working Groups

Involving up to twelve participants, these seminar-like conversations allow conferees to explore a subject of shared concern. Discussants submitted brief applications in October and will be reviewing each other's case statements and a common set of readings in the months before they gather in Providence. For most working groups, general conference attendees may observe the discussion. Working group topics include:

- The Public Value of History
- Where is the History in Historic Districts?
- Public History as Work
- How Do We Get There? Racial and Ethnic Diversity within the Public History Profession
- Bearing the Standard: Public Historians Role in the Commemorations of the Sesquicentennial of the American the Civil War
- Historical Truths and Reconciliation: Interpreting Indigenous and Other Difficult Histories
- So You're Teaching in a Public History Program
- Digital Experiments, Collaboration, and Interactivity (follow-up from the Digital Projects Showcase)

### Digital Projects Showcase

This new format showcases ten digital projects that consider issues of preservation of community and memory, collaboration, historical interpretation, and accessibility. Projects include the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank in New Orleans, the Massachusetts Memory Road Show, PhilaPlace, Maine Memory Network, Beyond Steel, and Historic Annapolis GIS. Each project explores the use of several new media tools including GIS, Web 2.0, blogs, and podcasts.

### Mentoring Network

Sponsored by the Curriculum & Training Committee and Graduate Student Committee, NCPH's mentoring network pairs students, new professionals, and new conference attendees with experienced public historians. Make sure to indicate your interest on the annual meeting registration form.

### Graduate Student Reception

The second annual graduate student reception is sponsored by the John Nicholas Brown Center at Brown University on Thursday, April 2. Following the public plenary featuring Harvard historian Jill Lepore, graduate students can head up the university "hill" to enjoy hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and camaraderie. Free, but a ticket is required.

### Speed Networking

Bring your questions and resumes as NCPH puts a professional twist on the popular 'speed dating' craze. Following a session on social networking, graduate students, recent graduates, and new professionals will get the chance to meet briefly with well-established public history practitioners to discuss the field, career opportunities, and any other questions you may have. Advance registration is required.



## Call for Poster Sessions

You are invited to submit a proposal for the Poster Session, Friday, April 3, at the 2009 NCPH Annual Meeting. The Poster Session is an informal format for public history presentations on research and projects that use visual evidence. It offers an alternative for presenters eager to share their work through one-on-one discussion, can be useful for work-in-progress, and may be a particularly appropriate format for presentations where visual or material evidence represents a central component of the project. Presenters may demonstrate and discuss websites or other computer applications for public history projects; mount table-sized exhibits of research or interpretation; or share images, audiovisual materials, and handouts from successful public programs.

Proposals must be postmarked or received electronically by January 8, 2009. Graduate students whose work is accepted are eligible to apply for a \$300 Graduate Student Travel Award. Visit [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org) for submission details.

# Ten Things NCPH Is Doing for You

Your continued membership is important to us. With your support NCPH is able to offer better services, resources, and opportunities for public historians at all stages of a career.

1. Look for the new “best practices” guidelines for public history programs at the graduate and undergraduate level, specifically covering internships, the M.A. program, the undergraduate program, and graduate certificates related to public history.

2. Seven awards either were created or the prize amount increased starting in 2008. These awards cover a wide range of public history practice, from consultant research, to books, exhibits, and student projects.

3. We are shifting to a Web 2.0 approach, which included a transformed NCPH website in 2007, a vibrant annual meeting blog introduced in 2008, and movement into multiple social networking arenas in 2009.

4. Taking seriously the value of graduate student participation in the conference, NCPH has expanded the conference poster session to allow more participation, added an annual Graduate Student Reception, dedicated funds for five graduate student travel grants each year, and created a Graduate Student Committee to ensure student needs are being met.

5. This month we will be launching an online, members-only Membership Directory to promote professional networking and facilitate collaboration and conversation.

6. Yes, we are about to revive the long-lost *Guide to Public History Programs* in a new, online directory form that will include all graduate and undergraduate programs in the field.

7. NCPH brings you up-to-date job listings, internships, and conferences on the organization’s website and through H-Public.

8. An NCPH joint task force with the American Historical Association (AHA) and the Organization of American Historians (OAH) is drafting recommendations for college and university chairs, presidents, and others who evaluate public history work for promotion and tenure decisions.

9. We continually try to improve the annual conference with stimulating content, more exhibitors and more connections to the local community, and new formats, such as a digital projects showcase, working groups, and innovative offsite events.

10. We are leading the international Survey of Public History Professionals project, with the AHA and eight other associations, to better understand the demographics, training, employment conditions, and expectations of public historians.

# Candidates for 2009 NCPH Election



## Secretary-Treasurer (one position)

Bruce Craig, University of Prince Edward Island  
Patrick Moore, University of West Florida

## Board of Directors (three positions)

Anna Adamek, Canadian House of Commons  
Jason Gart, History Associates Incorporated  
Ray Geselbracht, Harry S. Truman Library & Museum  
Peter Liebhold, National Museum of American History  
Estevan Rael-Gálvez, New Mexico Office of the State Historian  
John Sprinkle, Federal Preservation Institute

## Nominating Committee (two positions)

Rose Díaz, Origins and Legacies Historical Services  
Ann Honious, National Park Service  
Harry Klinkhamer, Forest Preserve District of Will County  
Donna Neary, Kentucky Historical Society

Ballots and candidate biographical information was distributed to all members beginning in November. Your vote counts!

## Welcome New Members!

Elizabeth Almlie Columbia, SC	Valerie Cunningham Portsmouth, NH	Daniel Greene Chicago, IL	Derrick Little Littlestown, PA	Robert Reeder Kettering, OH	Jean Svadlenak Kansas City, MO
Laura Arata Pullman, WA	Nicholas DeCicco Amsterdam, NY	Kristen Gunn Pensacola, FL	Rebecca Mackey Tillson, NY	Amanda Roddy Columbia, SC	Scott Timm Miami Beach, FL
Kathleen Barker Cambridge, MA	Ted Delaney Lynchburg, VA	Kim Harrison Orem, UT	Blythe Marshall Pensacola, FL	Polly Root Bourbonnais, IL	Courtney Tollison Greeneville, SC
Laurie Baty Washington, DC	Brian Dempsey Nashville, TN	Mercedes Harrold Gulf Breeze, FL	Laura Marshallsay Baltimore, MD	Julia Rose Port Allen, LA	Courtney Townsend Morgantown, WV
Elizabeth Becker Indianapolis, IN	Keara Duggan Brooklyn, NY	Abby Hathaway Saint Louis, MO	Julia Maserjian Bethlehem, PA	Constance Sachs Knoxville, TN	Andrew Urban Syracuse, NY
Brian Bergheger Elmhurst, IL	Darlene Ellinger Propf Baltimore, MD	Elizabeth Heath Mesa, AZ	Nicole Moore Charlotte, NC	Lauren Safranek Columbia, SC	Shirley Wajda Vienna, OH
Amanda Bowman Columbia, SC	James, Finelli Schenectady, NY	Margaret Huettl Waterford, WI	Kendra Mulleins Rice, VA	Adrienne Sams Pensacola, FL	Amy Waldrep Nolan Columbia, SC
Amy Bracewell Custer, SD	Gayle Fischer Salem, MA	Devin Hunter Chicago, IL	Victoria Myers Houston, TX	William Sanderlin Murfreesboro, TN	Valerie Wersé Hartford, CT
Megan Brett Montpelier Station, VA	Lindsay Flanagan Silver Spring, MD	Isabelle Huppé Montréal, QC	Phillip Neale Raleigh, NC	Teresa Sherwood Laramie, WY	Ashley Whitehead Morgantown, WV
Nathan Brown Las Cruces, NM	Melissa Ford Lake Orion, MI	Christine Jamet Wilmington, NC	Jon Berndt Olsen Amherst, MA	Christine Shook San Juan Capistrano, CA	Kelly Wilson Mount Pleasant, MI
Ruth Bryan Flint, MI	Matthew Foss Eau Claire, WI	Jessica Jensen Orangevale, CA	Mary Osborne Indianapolis, IN	Jo-el Smith Wilmington, NC	Jacquelyn Wilson Pensacola, FL
Angie Caldera El Paso, TX	Irina Franklin Pensacola, FL	Katie Kelly Milton, FL	Monica Penick Austin, TX	Erica Smith Pensacola, FL	Bob Zeller Southampton, NY
Ruth Chan Columbia, SC	Erin Gobel Greenwood, IN	Lee Kluck Eau Claire, WI	Jessica Pitcher Lafayette, LA	Marvin Steinback Presidio, TX	S. Paul Zielinski Pensacola, FL
Mason Christensen University Park, PA	Jessica Godfrey Belt, MT	Lila Knight Kyle, TX	Tony Platt Berkeley, CA	Diana Stepanek St. Cloud, MN	
Barrett Codieck Eugene, OR	Tiffany Goldhamer Pensacola, FL	Mitchell Koffman Tempe, AZ	Chad Proudfoot Morgantown, WV	Julia Stetler North Las Vegas, NV	
Erica Cottam Tempe, AZ	Art Gomez Santa Fe, NM	John Kovach Brownsboro, AL	Heather Putt Ravenna, OH	William Stoutamire Tempe, AZ	
Jonathan Creel Milton, FL	Bethany Gray Dublin, OH	David Lemon Sacramento, CA	Derrick Ranostaj Fairlawn, OH	Kaytlin Sumner Loretto, PA	

# President's Comments



**Marianne Babal**  
babalm@wellsfargo.com

It has been an interesting couple of months. The election is over, regime change is at hand. The Dow dives, and global financial systems implode. Regarding the economy, we have heard a lot of talk about uncharted territory, unprecedented events, recession, and even depression. We historians, however, in a more considered view, perceive very little in the world that is unprecedented. Economic cycles have occurred throughout our history, crises and challenges have risen before. Boom times come, and bust inevitably follows.

As individuals, we have seen the effects of economic meltdown reflected in our pocketbooks and investment portfolios. The economic downturn has taken a toll on NCPH's finances as well. Elsewhere in this issue of *Public History News* NCPH Secretary/Treasurer Patrick Moore gives a financial report for our latest fiscal year. Not surprisingly, our Endowment Fund has fallen significantly in value, mirroring market performance. Our bottom line shows a deficit of several thousand dollars. This is due to the fact that our board elected to fund several obligations from operating funds rather than dip further into the Endowment, absent quarterly earnings on our investments. While it may be

tempting to preserve capital by stashing cash under the proverbial mattress, conventional wisdom recommends maintaining our position in a diversified investment portfolio.

At the end of September, I had the rather surreal experience of speaking at an event in Indianapolis in tandem with a bank investment advisor the day the nation's largest thrift was seized by regulators. My presentation on historical economic perspective was still good to go; he on the other hand was rewriting furiously on the plane down from Chicago. The word

Members of our Board of Directors this year have stepped up to the challenge...

"unprecedented" was uttered that evening, and yes, even "mattress." But another bit of advice stuck with me. For investors tempted to pull out of the current market, statistics

from the S&P 500 Index from 1989-2007 show a total annualized return of 11.62% for those who remain fully invested, but fall to under 9% for investors who miss the 10 best up days in market performance, and under 5% for those who sit out the market's 30 best days. While past performance is no guarantee of future results, we as individuals and NCPH as an institution will likely be better off remaining in the game than watching with trepidation from the sidelines.

Even in these unsettled times, it is imperative for NCPH that we continue to build our Endowment Fund to position ourselves in future years to fund the work our Endowment is intended to support. Endowment revenue makes

possible many things: travel grants for students to attend and participate in our conference, awards for consultants, new professionals, and student projects, and the NCPH Book Award. It enables us to bring international public historians and noted plenary speakers to our conferences, and delivers a small part of the public history experience to our host community in a public plenary. All of this is important if NCPH is going to move forward with big ideas and even bigger accomplishments.

It is going to be challenging to meet our funding goals in the anticipated lean times ahead. Sponsored awards greatly help stretch our Endowment dollars. A generous donation from Stevie and Ted Wolf enabled us to give our first Outstanding Public History Project Award in 2008, and will allow us to continue to bestow this award in recognition of notable projects in public history. Members of our Board of Directors this year have stepped up to the challenge, committing to underwriting several of our awards through increased individual donations, with one board member issuing a challenge to match other board members' contributions toward our student travel grants. If you would like your Endowment donation this year channeled into our awards program or even an individual award, please designate your contribution as such. But please, make your contribution to our Endowment Fund this year more than ever to help NCPH remain a champion for public history and public historians everywhere.



## National Council on Public History Endowment Campaign

**Yes, I would like to help build the NCPH Endowment. Please count my contribution of**

\_\_\_ \$50      \_\_\_ \$75      \_\_\_ \$100      \$ \_\_\_ Other

\_\_\_ Check enclosed made payable to NCPH.

\_\_\_ Please bill my credit card for \$ \_\_\_      VISA \_\_\_      MasterCard \_\_\_      American Express \_\_\_

Account # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
(Required for credit card donations)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to the NCPH Executive Office, 327 Cavanaugh Hall-IUPUI, 425 University Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46202.  
Contributions to the NCPH Endowment Fund are put to work immediately building new programs for public historians.  
NCPH is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation, and contributions to the endowment fund are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Contribute online at  
[www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org)

# From the Executive Director



**John Dichtl**  
jdichtl@iupui.edu

publics together into a collaborative sphere.

Public history includes a growing range of practitioners in forms or places of employment, and in academic training. The past two winners of the NCPH Book Award, for example, were a professor of English/American Studies and an anthropologist who studies public history. The theme for our 2009 Annual Meeting, "Toward Broader Horizons," cast a wide net across the historical profession and far beyond. The program committee considered proposals from people with advanced degrees in

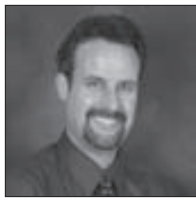
American Studies, Folklore, Education, Governmental Affairs, Landscape Studies, Political Science, Museum Studies, Sociology, Cultural Resource Management, Public Administration, and more, in addition to public history and traditional history. How these varied approaches contribute to our practice and scholarship will be an important conversation for NCPH members who turn out in Providence next April.

Looking ahead to 2009, NCPH is both strengthening its public history core and exploring the borders where it meets other disciplines

and approaches to the study of the past. NCPH, for example, now offers guidelines, or "best practices," for public history education. Early in 2009 NCPH will start gathering profiles of public history programs for a new, online *Guide*, which will offer a systematic picture of graduate and undergraduate training. And the Survey of Public History Professionals has netted thousands of questionnaires yielding information about a remarkably multifarious lot.

We are certain to become even more diverse as others are attracted to this growing community of interest.

## → Fall 2008 NCPH Treasurer's Report



**Patrick Moore**  
pmoore@uwf.edu

Let's get the bad news out of the way up front. Like the rest of the nation, the last few months have proven challenging for the NCPH endowment. Since the start of the calendar year, our overall portfolio has dropped from \$426,147 to \$307,286. Sadly, not even history can shield us from the ravages of economic reality.

With that said, we have had several successes from the financial side.

In 2007 the board voted to shift our fiscal year to match the calendar year. Since we receive the majority of our operating funds from the annual meeting and expenses and revenue for meeting take several months to settle, budget planning under the old July to June fiscal year proved exceedingly difficult. A partial year budget covering July through December was successfully implemented this year, and we will begin a new fiscal year on January 1.

Now that the dust from our Louisville conference has indeed settled, we are pleased to report that the final gross income was \$72,575. As we anticipated only \$57,775, this certainly exceeded our expectations. Much of this clearly stemmed from a

remarkable program. Kudos to everyone involved with making this economically-essential event another outstanding success.

Further demonstrating the success of our fully-transparent approach to budgeting, the external biannual audit came back this fall with stellar marks. (Actually, the audit indicated there were "no findings," but in auditor-ese, we will take that as an acclamation of excellent bookkeeping!)

Finally, although our investments took a major hit, our conservative approach to spending endowment earnings enables us to meet our obligations to fund new awards designed to recognize outstanding contributions to the discipline. While we may need to tighten our organizational belt in the coming year should conditions further decline, at this point, the NCPH is on a sound financial footing and will continue to meet the needs of our membership.

The Finance Committee, the board, and the executive staff will continue to remain reflective in our investing strategy and responsive to changing market conditions. We do, however, need the membership's continued support for the future of the organization. Even though times are tight, please plan to attend the meeting in Providence and make your reservations to stay in the conference hotels as soon as available.

See you all in April.

### NCPH 2007-2008 Financial Statement

July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008

	2007-08 Budget	2007-08 Actual
<b>Income</b>		
Memberships, Subscriptions & Sponsors/Patrons	\$101,150	\$88,949
Annual Meeting	\$57,775	\$74,360
Interest (non-Endowment)	\$3,450	\$1,070
IUPUI O'Brien Lecture Series	\$6,000	\$5,625
Interfund Transfer from Endowment Earnings*	\$18,600	\$0
Miscellaneous	\$1,100	\$831
<b>Total Operating Budget Income</b>	<b>\$188,075</b>	<b>\$170,835</b>
Development Contributions	\$4,212	
Endowment Earnings	\$25,163	
Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Endowment	[\$46,242]	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$153,968</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>		
Memberships, Subscriptions & Sponsors/Patrons	\$13,300	\$15,110
Annual Meeting	\$49,835	\$58,167
Public History News	\$15,375	\$17,284
Other Publications	\$6,000	\$3,865
Awards	\$7,850	\$8,801
Administration	\$84,437	\$71,543
Board Meetings	\$5,300	\$2,642
Committees	\$2,500	\$2,618
Dues to Other Organizations	\$6,315	\$6,330
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$190,912</b>	<b>\$186,360</b>
<b>NET OPERATING BUDGET LOSS</b>	<b>\$2,837</b>	<b>\$15,525*</b>
(Total Operating Budget Income minus Expenses)		

\* We are showing a net operating loss of \$15,525. Rather than using endowment funds to fund new projects and awards, as authorized by the board up to \$18,600, we opted to cover the projects and awards using budgeted operations funds, resulting in the deficit. Obviously, if the money had been moved out of the endowment, we would have ended the year with a slight surplus.



# Personal Historians, Helping to Tell Your Story

Steve Christopherson | [stmchris@iupui.edu](mailto:stmchris@iupui.edu)

On Saturday, October 18, 2008, the NCPH Board of Directors convened during the 2008 Annual Meeting of the Oral History Association in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and took the following actions:

- Voted to approve the Minutes of the Spring 2008 Board Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky.
- Voted to approve the proposed budget for Fiscal 2009 with a modest increase for committee expenditures.
- Given the current condition of the market, discussed ways to modify the amount of the earnings from the NCPH Endowment that will be spent on new programs in 2009.
- Discussed progress on the project to launch an NCPH “Online Guide to Public History Programs” this winter. Program directors at colleges and universities will be asked to provide basic information in a standardized format that offers comparative information both for other public history faculty and for prospective students.
- Heard the report of the editor of H-Public, the organization’s H-Net listserv, which currently includes 1,506 subscribers.
- Agreed to not consider outsourcing the journal typesetting process overseas.
- Heard the report of the editor and editorial board of *The Public Historian*.
- Considered a general investment policy proposed by the Finance Committee and agreed to discuss it in detail at the board meeting next spring with members of the committee.
- Reviewed the reports of the Membership, Consultants, and ad hoc 30th Anniversary committees.
- Decided to call a meeting with the Development Committee at the annual conference next spring in Providence to discuss NCPH’s fundraising plans during its 30th Anniversary.
- Voted to adopt two sets of “Best Practices in Public History” guidelines created by the Curriculum and Training Committee: “The M.A. Program in Public History” and “Public History Internships.” (These are now available on the NCPH web site.)
- Heard a status report from the joint NCPH, AHA, and OAH Working Group on Evaluating Public History Scholarship, which plans in early 2009 to present its recommended guidelines for rewarding public history work in promotion and tenure situations.
- Voted to create an *ad hoc* advisory committee to explore Facebook, LinkedIn, and other digital media outlets and social networking tools and to help coordinate NCPH’s overall web presence.
- Voted to create an *Ad Hoc* Graduate Student Committee to work with the Program Committee and Curriculum and Training Committee, and to offer advice about making the annual conference and other aspects of NCPH more beneficial to students.
- Voted to approve a dues increase in 2009 of \$5 for each membership category. The student and new professional rates were last changed in 2002 and the regular membership rate in 2006.
- Voted to recognize the efforts of the executive office in, and directed it to continue, implementing where possible measures to lessen the environmental impact of the annual conference.

Founded by journalist Kitty Axelson-Berry in 1995, the Association of Personal Historians (APH) is a nonprofit organization whose purpose “is to advance the profession of helping individuals by providing educational, training, and networking opportunities to help professional personal historians.” Personal historians may come from backgrounds perhaps more varied than public historians. The APH website emphasizes the fields of journalism, education, broadcasting, video, film, psychology, law, social work, gerontology, therapy, hospice, and medicine. One third of APH members claim to have professional backgrounds in history and three quarters in writing or interviewing.

But what does the title, “personal historian,” mean? The APH website describes its members as professionals who preserve “a person’s life story, memoirs, or life values in printed form or on audiotape, videotape, CD or DVD.” Evoking nostalgia, APH asserts “your story can provide a link with the past for future generations—a priceless gift for loved ones that will be treasured beyond material goods.” Not wanting to be confused with genealogists, the APH acknowledges that “interest in genealogy has escalated over the past decade, but genealogists soon realize that what is missing from the data they collect are the stories that put flesh on the bones of their ancestors. And two things keep them from preserving what stories they can—lack of time, and lack of skill.” Personal historians aim to get the stories before those capable of telling them have passed away.

How does personal history differ from oral history? The latter, according to the Oral History Association, is “a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events.” Oral historians lay claim to a scholarly tradition, dating from the 1940s, and as a field promote and develop rigorous standards, methods, and new technologies. While the APH website addresses differences between personal history and genealogy, it does not attempt to distinguish its members from oral historians. Some APH members do refer to themselves as oral historians who have received oral history training.

Claiming 600 members worldwide, APH strives to provide its members with “a stronger public presence as a Personal Historian, a dynamic and informative Web site, support via an interactive online Forum and Listserv, regular newsletters, active media outreach and marketing expertise, a resource-filled annual conference, and the opportunity to network in regional and committee activities.” The active nature of these regional groups and meetings appears to be one of the major benefits of membership, since local members find a variety of ways to help each other. Members and nonmembers have access to a membership directory listing services, and individual members’ websites. APH promotes a code of ethics, which states that personal historian should conduct business fairly, provide transparency in qualifications and affiliation, render quality services, respect individuals and what makes them unique, and act in the best interest of the client, narrator, and profession. More than 300 people attended APH’s recent 14th annual conference Salt Lake City. Each day’s program echoed the main theme, “Crossroads”: Thursday—“Business and Products Crossroads”; Friday—“Historical Crossroads”; Saturday—“Crossroads at the Heart of the Story”; and, Sunday—“Personal Crossroads.” Workshops in Salt Lake included Digital Audio Basics, Personal History as Business, Become the Community Expert, and Put Life into Writing Workshops. Next year’s meeting, in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, October 21-25, will deal with Revolutionary Perspectives.

Still curious about personal history? Scheduled for the 2009 NCPH Annual Meeting in Providence there is a session entitled, “All in the Family? Genealogy and Public History.” Panelists, including APH’s founder, Axelson-Berry, will explore what public historians, genealogists, and personal historians might learn from each other.

*Steve Christopherson is the NCPH Graduate Intern and is in the Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis Public History Program.*

For weekly updated information on jobs, fellowships, internships, awards, conferences, and calls, please visit [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org).

## AWARDS, GRANTS & INTERNSHIPS

Information about **NCPH** awards for public history projects, consultants, students, and more is available at [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org). Submissions are due January 8, 2009.

**American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) of the National Park Service** invites applications for \$5,000 to \$80,000 grants for projects leading directly to identification, preservation and interpretation of battlefield land and/or historic sites associated with battlefields. Please contact ABPP Grants Manager, [kristen\\_mcmasters@nps.gov](mailto:kristen_mcmasters@nps.gov) or at (202) 354-2037, to discuss proposal before preparing an application. Deadline is January 2, 2009. <<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp/grants/battlefieldgrants/2009grants.htm>>



**Massachusetts Historical Society** will award at least two long-term MHS-NEH fellowships for the academic year 2009-10. The stipend, governed by an NEH formula, will be no more than \$40,000 for a term of 6-12 months or \$20,000 for a term of 4-5 months, plus a housing allowance of up to \$500 per month. Deadline is January 15, 2009. <<http://www.masshist.org/fellowships/>>

**Vernacular Architecture Forum (VAF)** seeks nominations for the Paul E. Buchanan Award for 2009, which recognizes significant contributions to the study and preservation of vernacular architecture and landscape studies not taking the form of books or published work. Projects completed in 2007 and 2008 are eligible. Deadline is January 15, 2009. <<http://www.vafweb.org/awards/buchanan.html>>

**AASLH** offers the Alderson Internship Grant Program opportunity (up to \$3,000) to one of its members to hire a summer intern. The host institution must provide information on what they expect their intern to do and match funds at a 1:3 level. Application deadline is 5 p.m. on December 15, 2009. <<http://aaslh.org/alderson.htm>>

**Society of Architectural Historians (SAH)** and the **National Park Service's Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)** announces the Sally Kress Tompkins Fellowship for 2009. This fellowship and \$10,000 stipend permits an architectural historian to work on a 12-week HABS

project during the summer of 2009. Deadline is February 1, 2009. <<http://www.nps.gov/history/hdp/jobs/tompkins.htm>>

The **Presbyterian Historical Society** invites applications for its \$2,500 research and travel fellowships, a program designed to encourage faculty, students, and

independent researchers to use and publish from the society's rich holdings. Applications due February 6, 2009. <<http://www.history.pcusa.org/research/fellow.html>>

The **National Council for Preservation Education** has posted internship offerings, for September 2008-May 2009, for the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior. A new notice will be posted in January 2009 for the summer 2009 positions. Internships are located in Washington D.C. and last for ten weeks, at forty hours per week. <<http://www.preservenet.cornell.edu/employ/ncpe.html>> Apply to Michael Tomlan of Cornell University at [mat4@cornell.edu](mailto:mat4@cornell.edu).

## WORKSHOPS

**AASLH** is hosting three workshops: 1) "The Basics of Archives," a 5-lesson (15-20 hour) online workshop, January 5-February 6, 2009. Registration opened November 1, 2008. Cost is \$85 for members, \$150 for nonmembers. <<http://www.aaslh.org/basicsofarchives.htm>> 2) "Going Green," a webinar of three 75-minute sessions, January 8, 15, and 22, 2009. Registration opened November 15, 2008. Cost is \$145 for members, \$210 for nonmembers. A 10% discount is available for groups of 5-14 and a 15% discount for groups of 15 or more. <<http://www.aaslh.org/GoingGreen.htm>> 3) "Historic House Museum Issues & Operations," in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is February 19-20, 2009. Hosted by the Texas Historical Commission in Austin, Texas. Cost is \$250 for members, \$315 for nonmembers; \$20 discount if fee is received by January 19. <<http://www.aaslh.org/hhissues.htm>>

## CALLS FOR PAPERS, ARTICLES, PROPOSALS, & PRESENTATIONS

"**The Regeneration of Image in Old Industrial Regions**," February 15-17, 2009, Monchengladbach, Germany. To submit an abstract, contact Paul Benneworth of Newcastle University at [paul.benneworth@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:paul.benneworth@ncl.ac.uk). Deadline is December 31, 2008. <<http://www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk/>>

"**Rendezvous 2009, A Northwest History & Heritage Extravaganza**," Pacific Northwest History Conference, April 15-18, 2009, Portland, Oregon. Submit proposals to Katrine Barber of Portland State University at [barberk@pdx.edu](mailto:barberk@pdx.edu). Deadline is December 31, 2008. <<http://www.ncph.org/Portals/13/Conferences/Pacific%20NW%20Conference%20April%202009.pdf>>

"**Museums and Biographies**," Museums and Galleries History Group and the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies at Newcastle University, September 10-12, 2009, London, United Kingdom. Deadline is January 31, 2009. <<http://www.mghg.org/>>

**Fifth Annual Loyola University Chicago Graduate Student Conference**, April 24-25, 2009, Chicago, Illinois. Email proposals as attachment to HGSA Vice President Lisa Davis at [lucsymposium@gmail.com](mailto:lucsymposium@gmail.com) or mail to the History Graduate Student Association at Loyola University Chicago. Deadline is February 2, 2009. <<http://www.ncph.org/Portals/13/Conferences/Fifth%20Annual%20Loyola%20Chicago%20Conference.pdf>>

**American Culture, American Democracy: 103rd Meeting of the OAH**, April 7-10, 2010. The Organization of American Historians is accepting proposals for presentations and panels for a wide-ranging program in Washington, DC, highlighting the culture and cultures of the United States and how those have shaped the practice of American democracy. <<http://www.oah.org/meetings/2010/>> Deadline is February 15, 2009.

## CONFERENCES & LECTURE SERIES

**123rd Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association**, "Globalizing Historiography," January 2-5, 2009, New York, NY. <<http://www.historians.org/annual/2009/index.cfm>>

**Society for Historical Archaeology Conference**, "Places of Meaning, Meaning in Place: Tangibility, Controversy, and Conscience at Historic Sites," January 6-11, 2009, Toronto, Canada. <<http://www.sha.org/>>

**International Conference on Heritage in Asia**, "Converging Forces and Conflicting Values," January 8-10, 2009, Singapore. <<http://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=163068>>



**UCLA Center for the Study of Women Graduate Student Research Conference.** "Thinking Gender," February 6, 2009, Los Angeles, CA. <<http://www.csw.ucla.edu/thinkinggender.html>>

**Sixth Savannah Symposium: "World Heritage and National Registers in Perspective,"** February 19-21, 2009, Savannah, GA. <<http://www.scad.edu/events/calendar/index.cfm?startdate=20090201&enddate=20090301&category=>>

**Small Museum Association 25th Annual Conference,** February 22-24, 2009, Ocean City, MD. <<http://www.smallmuseum.org/>>

**"Museums Advocacy Day,"** February 23-24, 2009, Washington, DC <<http://www.speakupformuseums.org/>>

**California Association of Museums 2009 Annual Conference.** "Building Bridges: Collaboration / Innovation / Risk," February 25-27, 2009, San Francisco, CA. <[http://www.calmuseums.org/conferences\\_and\\_workshops/2009overview.html](http://www.calmuseums.org/conferences_and_workshops/2009overview.html)>

**College Art Association Conference,** February 25-28, 2009, Los Angeles, CA. <<http://www.collegeart.org/pdf/CallforParticipation2009.pdf>>

**Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums.** "Building Museums Symposium," February 26-28, 2009, Washington, DC. <<http://www.midatlanticmuseums.org/buildingmuseums.html>>

**Northeast Modern Language Association Conference,** February 26-March 1, 2009, Boston, MA. <<http://www.nemla.org/>>

## JOBS & POSITIONS AVAILABLE

**The Healdsburg Museum** seeks an Executive Director to be responsible for fulfilling the mission of the Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society through operational management, financial monitoring, planning, museum representation, and more. A bachelor's degree is required as well as business experience, excellent communication skills, computer skills, and experience in non-profit management. Mail resume by December 15, 2008, to Search Committee, Healdsburg Museum, PO Box 952, Healdsburg CA 95448. <<http://www.healdsburgmuseum.org/>>

**The United States Air Force** is seeking multiple historians to work at a variety of locations throughout the U.S. and the world. Assignments may include heritage pamphlets, oral histories, articles for internal and/or external audiences, and/or critical analysis of large, complex projects characterized by the need for substantial problem analysis. A degree in history is required and experience is important. Apply online at <http://www.usajobs.gov/> by December 29, 2008.

**ICF International** is seeking an historian for an on-call position in their Portland, OR office, to perform historical research in Washington and Oregon to produce public documents, oral history, and academic literature, and to collaborate with other related professionals such as archaeologists. MA in history or relevant area, and 5+ years experience is required. Visit <<https://jobs.icfi.com/viewjob.html?erjob=24603&optlink-view=view-24603&eresc=Indeed&eresc=Indeed>> to apply [job ID # 49891008014].

**University of Connecticut** is hiring a Director for the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center to participate in a range of duties, including fundraising, strategic planning, budgeting, staff oversight, public

programming, collection development, and research assistance. Must demonstrate strong commitment to field of human rights. Desired qualifications include degrees from two or more disciplines and/or a PhD in relevant subject area. Submit a letter of interest, resume and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of three references electronically to [margotlansing@comcast.net](mailto:margotlansing@comcast.net) or hard copy to Lansing & Associates, 11 Martin Road, Wellesley, MA 02481. <<http://www.lib.uconn.edu/about/recruitment>> [Search #2009034].



### Joint Conference "Currents of Change"

American Society for Environmental History  
National Council on Public History

### 2010 Annual Meetings

Portland, Oregon, March 10-14, 2010

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

In 2010 the American Society for Environmental History and the National Council on Public History will meet together at the Hilton Hotel in Portland, Oregon. While many conference events will be shared, the two organizations will offer separate but coordinated programs. Both organizations invite panel, roundtable, workshop, working group, paper, and poster proposals for the conference.

Located at the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette rivers and in the center of the dynamic Pacific Northwest, Portland is an ideal place to consider issues and ideas structured around the theme "Currents of Change." These could include the relationship of human settlement to environmental transformation, the impact of power/energy development on ecological systems, the adaptive re-use/recycling of older and historic buildings and the notion of sustainable development, the rethinking of authenticity as a historic value, and interdisciplinary and culturally pluralistic approaches to historical issues. Proposals may address any area of environmental and public history, but we especially welcome submissions which illustrate or explicate the theme "Currents of Change."

We also encourage proposals that help commemorate the 30th anniversary of NCPH, which we will be celebrating at the 2010 conference.

Proposals are due by **June 30, 2009**. For details visit [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org).

“Intersections” offers brief, reflective pieces illuminating how public historians interact with each other, with the public, or with other professionals. Please contact us at [ncph@iupui.edu](mailto:ncph@iupui.edu) if you have ideas for future articles.

## Marketing Public Historians for Future Success

Alex Bethke | [abethke03@gmail.com](mailto:abethke03@gmail.com)

When I graduated from Arizona State University’s Public History Program in 2007, I arrived in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, as a Preservation Planner expecting to lend my expertise to the Planning Department and local historical institutions. Even as I encountered cultural resource professionals, historical society leaders, and other members of the community, I realized they had no idea what “public history” is or how it might relate to their life and work. In fact, they tended to view me as a “buff” rather than a trained professional. The problem, ironically, stemmed from our field’s inability to market itself to the public. While public historians have focused on validating their existence to colleagues in academia, they have neglected the public, who remains unaware that we exist.

The issue is not one of interest, but association, for public historians have not distanced themselves enough from the practices of academic history. To the public, a truly professional Historian

acts in a strictly professorial role and has no interest interacting with the general public. The opposite is considered to be a mere *history buff*. This is the very sentiment that public historians sought to dispel with the founding of public history in the late 1970s. Moreover, communities have worked to document their own past by designating their own local historians to fill this professional gap. Because the field has not successfully dispelled these unfounded associations with academia, public historians are forced to compete with embellished notions of what historians do, as well as with highly esteemed, but untrained, community historians in order to gain the respect of local citizens. Without marketing the tangible expertise of public historians, the public will continue to discount our profession as unprofessional and unnecessary.

Coming out of graduate school, I was particularly surprised that nonprofit cultural institutions were unaware of the applied historian’s

existence, expertise, and accessibility. Once appraised, however, of the opportunities that public history can afford their institutions and constituents, cultural organizations, civic leaders, and employers can become very attracted to our profession.

Unfortunately, few people I met at the local level view the historian’s skills as anything more than writing narrative and memorizing dates. In Delaware County, I witnessed the distressing struggle that most of the local historical organizations endure to acquire funds and membership. To make matters worse, Delaware County contains no fewer than eighty historical sites, societies, museums, and commissions, all competing for precious resources. Having studied the principles of successful historical administration at ASU, I understood the problems these organizations faced and sought a solution to right the ship. Yet I knew my knowledge as a planner, outsider, and “historical buff” would not be sought.

With the support of my coworkers, I began a campaign for the Planning Department to undertake a County-wide Public History Feasibility Study and Master Plan. The purpose of this endeavor was to remedy issues of finite resources and uncoordinated efforts with a centralized nonprofit organization that would coordinate the interpretation, preservation, and presentation of history as an educational tool. By no means was I the first to identify such concerns, but others were unable to frame the problems in an entrepreneurial and comprehensive manner. While organizations realized these obstacles, they were at a loss for viable solutions that public history ultimately provided.

In another instance, a coworker and I were tasked with composing the historic preservation chapter of a township comprehensive plan. Knowing that the community saw preservation for its association with property restrictions, we immediately began an effort to educate decision-makers, repeatedly illustrating the com-

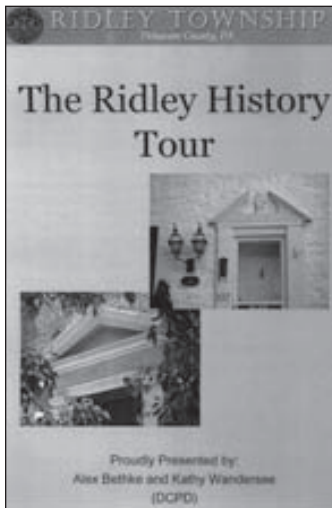


Public historians in their natural habitat, out and about in the local community exploring the Vulture Mine ruins in Wickenburg, AZ. From left, Lindsey Vogel, Ian Johnson, Jodey Elsner, and Alex Bethke. Image courtesy of author.



The Morton House is the pride of the Norwood Historical Society. The c.1750 house is one of many house museums in Delaware County, PA, that compete for finite resources and struggle to operate efficiently. Image courtesy of author.

munity's rich heritage through makeshift but effective tours, slide shows, and exhibits. By channeling our discussions away from the land rights issue and towards community investment, we used public history concepts to create a more educationally-based and public-friendly approach for preservation. Our persistent prodding also resulted in the eventual incorporation of public history as the major thesis within the plan. In this case, preservation became the essential ingredient of a product that would present historic resources through interpretation, exhibits, and other interactive means, all in the name of benefiting education, the economy, and quality of life. Amazingly, civic leaders became excited by the possibilities that public history and historic preservation could offer.



The cover of a thirty-page booklet the Planning Department provided to certain Township officials as we embarked on a general tour of the community's best historical resources. This was our first step introducing historic preservation in a more education-friendly manner. Image courtesy of author.

New professionals should also be excited by the field's progress with potential employers. While larger institutions specifically seek public historians for their versatility, even small employers like Delaware County are increasingly intrigued by the field. When we have the opportunity to explain how public history's diversity in training and application can uniquely benefit an organization, administrators are able to comprehend its value and react positively. Of course an individual interview enables us to sell the profession in ways that are impossible on a public level. In my interview for Delaware County, for example, I was asked questions related to defining public history, specifics of the ASU program, and how public history relates to historic preservation.

Despite such reasons for optimism, public historians may continue to be undervalued and frustrated by supervisors who are unaware of their full potential. A colleague of mine who works for an archaeological CRM firm is stifled by the company's perception that her use is limited to composing narrative. Without a clear knowledge of what public historians bring to the table, our training can unknowingly be marginalized.

A public historian's job inherently involves marketing history to a mass audience, but in our marketing expertise, we have forgotten to promote our own profession. The field has been too slow in emerging at the local level, where its audience resides. For future growth, it is imperative that we strive to distinguish the public historian's unique abilities.

*Alex Bethke is a historian and cultural resource manager for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command in San Diego, CA. Before joining the federal government, he interned and contracted for the City of Phoenix Historic Preservation Office and worked as a Preservation Planner for the Delaware County Planning Department.*



## Mark Your Calendar!

2009 Annual Meeting in Providence, RI, April 2-5. Registration opens December 1 at [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org).

# “Anniversary Fever” and Historical Reenactments

Stephen Gapps | [stephen.gapps@optusnet.com.au](mailto:stephen.gapps@optusnet.com.au)

Anniversary moments generate a sort of “gold fever” for history. Impending jubilees, centenaries, sesquicentenaries, and bicentenaries make history organizations and local committees clear the decks and scurry for funding. Often, in the frenzy of the anniversary moment, the shape and form of commemoration is not always well thought through. This is particularly so when the commemoration involves a military conflict that attracts the words “sacrifice” and “nation.”

In Australia, the 1988 bi-centenary of the arrival of the First Fleet of British settlers generated an extraordinary amount of popular history in the form of television, monuments, museums, and historical reenactments. The bicentenary left a valuable legacy of new and improved museums and archives and a broadened interest in Australian social history. Yet it was also the most publicly contested commemorative event in the country’s past.



Members of the Australian Great War Association at the Australian War Memorial, 2007. Image courtesy of author.

Australia is set for another round of anniversary moments that would appear to be very popular and supported by all sides of politics. From 2014-2018 we will commemorate four years worth of First World War battles that have, particularly in the last ten years or so, become quite sacred. The highlight will undoubtedly be the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign in 2015. At Gallipoli in the Dardanelles, the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed with other Commonwealth forces in a disastrous attempt to invade Turkey. Relatively unknown outside Australia, New Zealand, and Turkey, the campaign has come to represent a so-called Australian character—the “ANZAC spirit.”

The ANZACs are unarguably the most sacred of Australian secular histories. Considered by some to have been heroic in their fight against impossible odds, they are much like the “Lost Cause” memory of the southern states in the American Civil War. As heroes, in an inverse ratio to their growing distance in the past, they have received increased popular attention, as well as government funding for various monuments, museums, and re-burials.



Australian sniper, Gallipoli, 1915. Wikimedia Commons, image courtesy of the Australian War Memorial Collection, H10324.

ANZAC day, the annual national holiday anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli, has been commemorated with an increasing passion over the last twenty years or so, when the “last of the ANZACs” became imminent. From the 1920s to the 1970s, the commemorative element of ANZAC Day waxed and waned in popular interest. Nowadays, quasi-religious “dawn services” and congratulatory motorcades of returned soldiers attract much broader audiences. Thousands of young Australians backpacking in Europe head for the commemoration and party at ANZAC Cove in Turkey. Many others walk for three weeks on historical treks across rugged mountain ranges in New Guinea, “re-tracing” the Second World War battle of the Kokoda Trail. The once thinning ranks of ANZAC day marches are now, sometimes in the chagrin of veterans, becoming filled out again by soldiers’ descendants, with their grandparent’s medals pinned to their chests.

What interests me in particular here is that, with what appears to be an increasing desire for a physical (and hence emotional) connection with military history, exactly what role might the most visceral of all popular histories—historical reenactments—take in the impending commemorations? An interesting comparison for Australia’s military anniversaries is that it was during the centennial years of 1961-65 when American Civil War reenactment really began in the United States. Although there were many other contributing factors, such as how 1960s North Americans were beginning to focus on their personal narratives in national histories, the centennial years generated the phenomena of Civil War reenactment that has grown to see possibly 20,000 reenactors turning out for the impending 150th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg in 2013.

Like Americans and the Civil War before the early 1960s, Australians do not really reenact the First World War. There is a limited form of reenactment that has had to negotiate strong public and official sentiment about issues of dress-ups versus respect for war heroes. There have only ever been small contingents of sanctioned ceremonial “performers” at commemorative events in the past. Reenactors refuse to consider these so-called “farbs”, uninterested in authenticity, as true reenactors. In fact, reenactors in Australia have historically been more attuned to the military histories of Europe and the United States.

One of the important factors in American Civil War reenactments and their increasing power to claim commemorative status rather than masculine hobby, has been their re-staging on “actual sites.” This is a major difficulty for Australians who have fought most of their wars overseas. The only one that was a “home game” lasted around a hundred years and, as a war with our Indigenous population, is quite “unreenactable.”



Grand Army of the Republic reunion, 1914. Image courtesy of Library of Congress, LC-DIG-npcc-19953.



Australian Great War Association reenactor Shannon Brown with a "living history" display at the Australian War Memorial, 2007. Image courtesy of author.

Yet the issue of foreign soil has not stopped a proposal to re-create the beaches of Gallipoli on the coastline of Victoria in southern Australia (although this was quickly howled down by the Returned Soldiers League, among others). As the impending anniversaries draw near and anniversary fever strikes, I await with some trepidation what else might be proposed.

Over the next few years, questions of what shape and form commemorations should take will become increasingly important. As Gallipoli has attained its sacred status, the sanctity of commemoration may not have room for re-enactments. Indeed the small group of reenactors already performing First World War reenactment in this country have specifically stated that they "do not *do* battle reenactments" as this would not honour those who fought and died.



Gettysburg, Currier and Ives. Wikimedia Commons, image courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-2088.

However as Australians substituted their mourning and loss of thousands of young men who were buried overseas with statues of ANZACs in every town across the nation, so may they now turn to more visceral forms of remembrance and begin to accept dressing up as a valid form of respectful commemoration.

Perhaps then, another significant question for Australian anniversaries of the First World War will arise. This question also initially plagued early American Civil War reenactment in the United States—who will play the enemy? In the U.S., the reenactment of 1861-65 battles was largely generated by people sympathetic to the South. It was a common problem that early reenactments often had ten times the amount of southern to northern reenactors and that southerners would refuse to play as the North.

In Australia, we now have a significant Turkish population. For authentic and conceivable reenactments to occur, there must be an enemy. Who will play the Turks? As Heather Goodall suggested in a previous H-Public discussion, how the current Turkish-Australian communities see ANZAC memorialization in Australia, and how the depiction of "the enemy" is addressed in reenactment of the Gallipoli events by people in Australia or New Zealand, is an important question with which public historians should engage.

Cathy Stanton noted in the same discussion that commemorations can always veer in unexpected directions. Indeed the scope for performative histories in the impending war anniversaries may well be one of a solemn presence (of reenactors) rather than mock battles. One thing that reenactors have become very good at over the last 30 years or so is "living history" displays—well researched and

crafted educational interpretations of "daily life" from the past. An interesting recent solution to some of the problems inherent to reenactments was conducted for the 200th anniversary of the so-called Rum Rebellion in Sydney. A sort of *tableaux vivant* of reenactors, formed up as a live version of an historical painting, rather than a full-scale performance, created an interesting focal point to other more contextualised elements of the commemoration.



Members of the Australian Great War Association set up a "living history" display at the Australian War Memorial, 2007. Image courtesy of author.

Perhaps these sorts of "reenactments" are where official commemorations might allocate some of the inevitable rounds of funding that will occur in the lead up to 2015. So too, as the United States gears up for the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, thinking about interesting ways of employing the armies of Civil War reenactors will be important and may avoid some of the pitfalls in creating history out of the commemoration of religious icons.

*Stephen Gapps is a Sydney based Public Historian whose PhD thesis was a cultural history of historical reenactments in Australia, Europe and the United States. Stephen has published on various aspects of the practices of reenactment and is a reenactor in his spare time. He has participated in the battles of Waterloo, Hastings, and Gettysburg.*



## 2009 AWARDS: Now Accepting Nominations

The NCPH call for award submissions is open until January 8, 2009. Nominate a colleague or submit your own work and join us in Providence, RI, for the awards presentation! Visit [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org) for more information.

**Outstanding Public History Project Award** – A \$1,000 prize for work that contributes to broader public appreciation of the past or that serves as a model of professional public history practice.

**Excellence in Consulting Award** – These \$300 awards recognize outstanding work and contributions by consultants and contractors.

**G. Wesley Johnson Award** – A \$750 award for the best article in *The Public Historian* in calendar year 2008.

**Michael C. Robinson Prize for Historical Analysis** – A \$500 award for a historical study that contributes directly to the formation of public policy.

**New Professional Awards** – Two \$500 travel grants to encourage new professionals to attend the 2009 Annual Meeting.

**Student Project Award** – For coursework implemented and recognized beyond the classroom, this \$500 travel grant helps support the student author(s) attendance at the 2009 Annual Meeting.

**Graduate Student Travel Award** – Five matching travel grants of up to \$300 each for graduate students whose work is accepted for inclusion in the program of the 2009 Annual Meeting.

## Public History News

### National Council on Public History

327 Cavanaugh Hall-IUPUI  
425 University Blvd.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-5148

ISSN 08912610

Editor: John Dichtl

Assistant Editor: Sarah Koeppel

Editorial Assistant: Steve Christopherson