

Reflections on an Idea: NCPH's First Decade

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Historians need to be conscious of the history of their own profession. In his 1987 chair's speech, Michael Scardaville eloquently set forth the development of the historical profession from the founding of the American Historical Association (AHA) in 1884 to the founding of groups like the National Council on Public History (NCPH) and the Society for History in the Federal Government.¹ After just a decade of NCPH history, is it too soon to celebrate? Do we have a history yet? I am reminded of the sign I saw in Fredericksburg, Virginia, in 1982 advertising "Gentleman Jim's, A Fine Tradition Since 1967." Four years later, on a return visit, it appeared that Gentleman Jim's had left its "traditional" location, if not gone out of business.

What makes setting down a narrative particularly important now is that the founding mothers and fathers of NCPH are still able to contribute to the story. But how does one write about a living institution? First, by acknowledging the cooperation of people who gave me their reminiscences for our archives.² These contributions make it extraordinarily clear that NCPH, like any institution, is only as strong as the people who are its members and officers. We still know who those individuals are and can acknowledge the hard work they put into organizing this group. Reminiscences enrich the official minutes, newsletters, and journals we have published over the years.³ The full and *complete* history of NCPH, though, awaits the person who writes the next version—perhaps including a statistical analysis of where all our "what do I do with a history career?" letters come from and an explanation of why I once received two or three letters from junior high school students in Kentucky, whose teacher told them to write to me for information about Native Americans in Kentucky for a social studies project.

The 1970s was the decade of the "job crisis." The National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History (NCC) was organized "to be concerned about promoting history generally," with a very strong emphasis on schools and teaching history. However, part of Arnita Jones' mandate as the first executive director was "to worry about careers for historians."⁴ To do this, she began building her own network of historians in the federal government and historical societies, people in what were then called "alternative careers." One of the people who responded to an NCC notice was Robert W. Pomeroy, III, who outlined for AHA Executive Director Mack Thompson the "value of historians' thought process in business." His diagram eventually became an NCC handout and an article in *The Public Historian*.⁵ Pomeroy thus became part of the network that would eventually produce the NCPH. Undoubtedly, many who became part of NCPH have a similar story to tell about how they joined the network, how they discovered or perhaps reaffirmed that they were, indeed, public historians.

At the same time, the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) was organizing its new public history program. G. Wesley Johnson remembers that "the 'public history movement' is a phrase that began to be used in 1977 and 1978."⁶ Robert Kelley ran the first year of the public history program at UCSB in 1976-77 while Johnson was on sabbatical at Arizona State University. Publicity for the program resulted in contacts with at least two individuals who would become important to NCPH: Arnita Jones and Suellen Hoy, then director of the Public Works Historical Society. And Santa Barbara began to establish itself as the western center of this bi-coastal movement. With help from a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), UCSB could "fly in literally dozens of historians to Santa Barbara over the next several years" to conduct seminars for students.⁷ Johnson's trips to Washington, D.C. to negotiate the grant were also important for NCPH, for there he met people like Arnita Jones at an NEH-sponsored conference on careers for people with humanities Ph.D.s. Jones remembers that Johnson, like Kelley, was "*wildly* enthusiastic" about public history.⁸ Thus began the links between the NCC and the public history movement, links that continued after Page Putnam Miller succeeded Jones at NCC.

By 1978, Johnson and Tom Fuller, his assistant, recognized that the papers being given by the visiting public historians deserved a broader and more permanent audience than a seminar setting. Johnson worked with Rockefeller Foundation staff member Lydia Bronte, who had helped provide some funding for the UCSB program. This resulted in the "Rockefeller Reports." Johnson and Fuller felt that something else was needed, their own publication, perhaps, but they could not interest the university or history department. A local printer extended credit, Bronte agreed that some of the Rockefeller funding could be used for one issue, and *The Public Historian* was born. Enough subscriptions came in to finance a second issue, and Rockefeller money was used for several more. "So," said Johnson, "*TPH* was started because we believed that we needed to get out the message and examples of public history that we were finding under the auspices of our public programs NEH grant."⁹

By 1978, Johnson had received a grant from the Arizona Humanities Council to put on a public history conference in Phoenix, perhaps the "first conference ever organized on public history anywhere." The attendees came from Santa Barbara, Arizona State University, and other places around the country.¹⁰ The meeting in Phoenix was useful, remembers Jones, "because it did allow two or three days for a number of us who had just begun to get acquainted by telephone and letter to really spend some time together, and that was very helpful." As a result of that successful conference, "the question came up: why not a national conference on public history?"¹¹

Before that could be organized, Johnson and Jones participated in a session on public history at the 1978 American Historical Association meeting. Johnson called "for public historians to come forward and be identified, and also argued that as a result of all the talks we had heard at Santa Barbara, and the conference in Phoenix, the possibility was emerging of looking at public history as a new field of history."¹² Jones, Johnson, and all the rest of us in "alternative careers" at the time were getting tired of the label.

Again with the help of funding from the Rockefeller Foundation and NEH, and the assistance of UCSB graduate students, UCSB was able to hold a national meeting in Santa Barbara in April 1979. Clearly, NCPH owes a big debt of gratitude to the granting agencies who supported these early public history endeavors and to Johnson and others at UCSB who were willing to apply for and administer these grants. The invitation list to the Montecito meeting "consisted, primarily, of practicing public historians from state agencies . . . or the wide variety of jobs that now do in fact characterize public history," as well as Bronte from the Rockefeller Foundation, and NEH officials. People were asked to attend "on the basis of their interest and visibility."¹³ About sixty-five people attended the conference, and, because of limited facilities at the retreat center, people had to be turned away.

Johnson described that first conference as "like an old-fashioned Christian 'witness' meeting where for several days people got up to tell why they were interested in public history, what they had done, how they thought we needed to stick together." Jones remembered "a lot of exchange of information and experience. Extending the network was important." The retreat center worked well because "there wasn't any place for anybody else to go. So we were stuck there, so to speak. And that was good." Pomeroy recalled that it was "an outstanding event—not so much the content of the presentations (all of us were at the 'show-and-tell' level), but in the energy, enthusiasm, and cordiality shown." By the time the conference ended on Sunday, people agreed to meet in Washington, D.C., on their own money, to continue the discussions of Montecito.¹⁴

From April to September, remembers Johnson, "letters, phone calls, and ideas swirled about. Somehow the idea surfaced during this period that we should organize ourselves into a 'council' to reflect the different constituencies . . . which were emerging. . . . Few people at this early juncture talked about a membership organization since it was not clear there would be enough potential members." To keep the idea alive, Johnson "had some 'gag' stationery printed up during the summer to use in writing some people to demonstrate the idea."¹⁵

The September meeting followed a meeting of federal historians planned by Ronald Spector and Jones as an "NCC operation" under the auspices of the AHA and the Organization of American Historians (OAH). It was at that meeting, while the future of NCC was in doubt, that Jack Holl "was absolutely determined that there was going to be an organization" of federal historians. While "this was a very radical idea," the Society for History in the Federal Government resulted. The time was right for public historians to organize.¹⁶

On September 14, about fifteen people gathered in the conference room of the National Archives to discuss how to proceed. Johnson chaired the meeting. David Trask moved to organize as a National Council on Public History. The group debated then, as it had in Montecito, over the use of public or applied history; Joel Tarr, who came late to the meeting, had been the "great proponent of 'applied,' but the vote had been taken, for 'public,' by the time he arrived," remembered Johnson. This was Philip Cantelon's first introduction to NCPH, but he and Pomeroy agreed to come up with ideas for organizing the council. Tarr, of Carnegie- Mellon

University, agreed that his university would sponsor a second conference in April in Pittsburgh.¹⁷

The Second National Conference on Public History was held in Pittsburgh on April 18-20, 1980. The theme was "History and Public Policy," and the conference was co-sponsored by the Program in Applied History and Social Science of Carnegie-Mellon University, the National Council on Public History, and the Rockefeller Foundation. That conference drew 160 representatives from around the U.S. Program chairs Joel Tarr and Peter Stearns, writing about the conference for the newsletter, noted that "the geographical, disciplinary, and occupational range of those who attended was truly remarkable." The Pittsburgh conference set a format that has continued, with sessions on "the relationship of public and applied history to the historical profession," public history curriculum, "contracting and compliance at the federal level, practitioners in government, and history in organizations such as unions, research institutes, corporations, and museum."¹⁸ The range of sessions has become even more diverse, particularly with the addition of media sessions, and, since 1986, workshops have become an important part of the conference program.

At that conference, the steering committee examined the organizational formats proposed by Robert Pomeroy and decided on a council instead of an ordinary membership organization. Jones, for one, wanted the organization to "be more of an organizational network and something more like the National Academy of Sciences or the National Academy of Public Administration, an organization which could provide expertise, which could do studies, which could issue reports . . . which could speak with some real prestige and expertise about ideas that were important to history and particularly the practice of history in the public sector or history as it is presented to publics." Admitting that "that was probably never a realistic notion," Jones felt that most of the people involved probably wanted a membership organization. Johnson felt that "a more popular and democratic organization would eventually be needed."¹⁹

But, how to get the organization started? The steering committee voted to transform itself into a larger acting board of directors by adding two new members chosen by each of the advisory committees that consisted of participants at the conference.²⁰ It is important to note that the group of thirty-two directors was the National Council on Public History. While Cantelon remembered that there were "a number of stories" about who first proposed that each board member pay \$100 to get the organization going, the minutes of the banquet on April 18, when NCPH "went public," note that he made the official motion to this effect.²¹ From then on, each board member or his or her institution paid \$100 for the privilege of being on the board.

From that board, an acting executive committee of Johnson, Jones, Trask, Larry Tise, and Darlene Roth was elected to organize the council. NCPH was incorporated in the District of Columbia on May 2, 1980. Johnson served as the group's acting chair and then served two terms as chair, from 1979 until 1983. From that first group of directors would come our first executive director, Phil Cantelon, and several future chairs: Larry Tise (1983-84), Jack Holl (1984-85), Arnita Jones (1987-88), and Ted Karamanski (1989-90).

The rest of us were, at first, just subscribers to *The Public Historian* and the newsletter for a total of \$15.00 per year or, for \$5.00, just to the newsletter, edited by Arnita Jones. The by-laws adopted in December 1980 made us associates of the National Council on Public History, and so we stayed until 1984. There would be no other members of the council other than the directors until that year, although I suspect most of us had no idea we were not members. The spring 1981 newsletter was the first to include what has become a familiar, and still confusing, form asking that patron, institutional sponsor, and individual sponsor checks be sent to 3914 Harrison St., N. W., Washington, D.C., our official address before we moved to West Virginia University in 1984. Those checks were to be made payable to NCPH. Associates were to send checks to the University of California Press in Berkeley. The press then, and now, maintains our membership list.

During that April 1980 meeting, the NCPH steering committee voted to designate *The Public Historian* as the major publication of NCPH, and it continues in that role today. Johnson served as the first editor of the journal before, during, and after serving as chair of NCPH. During the summer of 1980, Johnson approached Chancellor Robert Huttenback of UCSB for additional support for *TPH* and personally received a "half-time editorial assistant, funds for several graduate students, office space, computers, etc.," thereby making the journal a university project. Lindsey Reed replaced Tom Fuller as editorial assistant and has continued to work with the journal, now as associate editor, since that time. A new board of editors for the journal was appointed with terms to begin in the fall of 1980.²²

Two other NCPH programs were announced in that first newsletter. One was a nationwide network of public and applied history students to be coordinated by Gayle Olson, a graduate student in Public Historical Studies at Santa Barbara. This was felt to be necessary "because increasing numbers of public and applied history courses are being developed across the country, [and] public historians—academics, students and practitioners—are eager to identify students who are willing to contribute their concerns and ideas to this rapidly developing field."²³

The second network was to be a curriculum exchange "whereby curriculum from public and applied history programs across the nation [would] be gathered and eventually published."²⁴ Again, Olson was to coordinate this effort. The two networks were combined into the *Teaching Public History* newsletter, published with grant support and distributed free of charge while at UCSB, then moving to West Virginia University, where it was available for a \$5 subscription for four issues in 1983-85, and discontinued in 1985, when curriculum articles were moved into the regular newsletter. While perhaps not an intentional outgrowth, NCPH did establish a syllabus exchange in the spring of 1982 which has proven to be very popular for those developing public history courses.

Announcements in the newsletters are one indicator of the growth of the public history field. Space does not permit me to describe all such notices, but suffice it to say, as examples, that the fall 1980 issue announced a new program at George Washington University that would start in September 1981 and be headed by Anna K. Nelson. It also announced a new consulting firm by the name of History Associates, Inc. News of our members' contributions to the public history movement and

of the work of various organizations related to public history also fills the pages of our newsletters, providing a record of the issues of the day. Since NCPH has always been eager to see public history included on the agenda of other organizations, the early newsletters reported on public history sessions at conferences sponsored by the Public Works Historical Society in cooperation with the University of Missouri at Kansas City and the Missouri Committee for the Humanities, by the American Association for State and Local History, the Western History Association, the Oral History Association, and the Southern Historical Association.

But the organizational process was still not complete. The board met again at the American Historical Association in Washington, D.C. in December 1980. The by-laws adopted included a Council of Institutional Affiliates to consist of "organizations, corporations or other groups" who would pay an annual fee and be accepted by the Board of Directors. "Each organization shall have one delegate to the Council of Institutional Affiliates which meets at the time of the annual meeting. The responsibilities of the Council of Institutional Affiliates shall be decided by the Board of Directors."²⁵ I assume that this is what became our core of institutional sponsors who, before we became a membership organization, each cast one ballot toward choosing the board of directors, had voices on the nominating committee, and got a copy of the journal and newsletter. By 1982-83, this was no longer called the Council of Institutional Affiliates, although we still rely heavily on our institutional sponsors for generous financial contributions and reward them with copies of our publications and credit in our annual report. At this time, it was announced that the University of California Press would take over publication of the journal on January 1, 1981.

By the spring of 1981, NCPH realized it could no longer handle the responsibilities of a new group with a board of 32 scattered around the country. At its meeting on April 24, 1981, the board agreed to establish the office of executive director. Philip L. Cantelon was appointed interim executive director and, to date, is the only person who has held that title. While working for History Associates to get a paycheck and for NCPH for free, Cantelon was expected to "obtain funding for the activities of the National Council, to seek additional Sponsors, Patrons, and Associates of the National Council, to represent the National Council in other forums, and, with the Executive Committee, to coordinate public history projects and activities of the National Council." Cantelon announced that he wanted to "develop further the idea that history is more than an academic discipline, that it is also a profession, and that as a profession, it has intellectual, occupational, and ethical concerns that reach far beyond the concerns of the historian as teacher and the historian as researcher."²⁶ I trust that, as a council, we have not lost sight of his goals.

The third annual conference on public history was held at Raleigh, North Carolina, on April 23-25, 1981. There, we were hosted by the North Carolina Division of Archives and History. Larry Tise, in the summer 1980 newsletter, announced several new features: "workshops illustrating through specific public sector history projects the various potential applications or uses of history, conducted primarily by staff and associates of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History; (2) formal lectures on specific aspects of the philosophy and practice of

public and applied history by historians selected by the program committee; (3) sessions proposed by practicing historians or historians teaching facets of public and applied history." We were promised that "Tar Heel hospitality and a rich and challenging program should make the Third Annual Public History Conference the best yet."²⁷

What did NCPH do beside hold conferences? We tried, in those early days, to "conduct a survey of Washington-area businesses and their uses of historical skills and material . . . to elicit information about the maintenance of corporate records and archives," etc., but received very few responses.²⁸

"History and Its Publics" was the theme of our April 22-24, 1982 conference in Chicago. The Department of History of Loyola University of Chicago and the Public Works Historical Society joined us in sponsoring this conference. Co-chairs Ted Karamanski and Suellen Hoy announced that the main focus would be on the "relationship of history to business."²⁹ Three hundred participants attended that meeting, and we even managed to attract the attention of the *New York Times* on April 23, in an article that noted that "companies are finding that persons with graduate degrees in the humanities can be assets because of their perspective, their research training, and their knowledge." We also witnessed at that conference, by the way, a lesson that has haunted future conference planners ever since—historians descend on the food at a free reception like a plague of locusts.

NCPH activities took up just one column of space in the Fall 81/Winter 82 newsletter. A new brochure was announced, as was a special issue of *The Public Historian* edited by Pomeroy on business and history (vol. 3, no. 3). Subscribers also read about the NCPH's cooperation with UC Santa Barbara, the AHA, and California State University-Fullerton to publish a *Survey of the Historical Profession: Public Historians*. The survey returns of 2,347 public historians was turned into an on-line database at UC Santa Barbara. Larry de Graaf and Pomeroy played major roles in the production of this directory. A question remains: if 2,347 responded to that survey, why has NCPH failed to enroll them all as members of our group?

In the Spring 1982 newsletter, we announced our first media production: "History Goes Public." Darlene Roth coordinated the distribution of that project, which was produced with the cooperation of Glenda Riley at the University of Northern Iowa and Gerald Herman at Northeastern University. We hope, by 1990, to have a new and updated version of that production that will be available on videotape.

In that same newsletter, we announced the receipt of a grant from the Liberian Studies Institute in Philadelphia to "support the development of a course in History and Public Policy" to be given in the spring of 1982 at Rutgers University.³⁰ As far as I know, this was the first, and last, grant given to help a specific institution develop a public history program. The Spring 1982 newsletter also announced that *The Public Historian* was experiencing temporary circulation delays. That, in retrospect, was an ominous warning. Fortunately, in recent years, the journal has been appearing on schedule and complaints about not receiving the journal have almost disappeared.

The executive committee decided, on June 19, 1982, to hire Anna Nelson to serve as a part-time consultant from September to January. Her responsibility was to "undertake a search for financial support and develop long-range plans for the future of the National Council."³¹ The so-called Nelson Report began: "There are both too many and too few people in the leadership of the organization. . . . There is a perception abroad that the Council is a closed group unwilling to bring in new participants." I suspect this is something any new and relatively small organization has to deal with, and I'm not sure we have yet solved it, although, following Nelson's suggestion, we have set up a committee structure that includes both board and non-board members. Nelson suggested that the current system, using several people to do the chores on a daily basis, was too complicated and that we needed a staff person. We have that now in the person of Wayne Anderson, our first executive secretary to be hired specifically, although not full-time, to handle Council business. Nelson recommended that the council "should concentrate on projects which illustrate the value of history to as many groups as possible." This is a challenge we have not yet met. We have met her goal of sponsoring projects that appeal to specific parts of our constituency, the 1988 *Directory of Historical Consultants*, for example. Nelson recommended that we "think about projects which require cooperation with [other] groups in order to allay suspicions" but warned that "this won't be easy and indeed cooperation among historians of every variety may sound a little utopian!" Here, I think, we have made progress, as we have held joint meetings with the Organization of American Historians, the Society for History in the Federal Government, the Southwest Oral History Association, and Public Works Historical Society board of directors. We have also participated in sessions at the American Historical Association meetings and are jointly publishing the new "Careers for Students of History" with the AHA. We have not followed all of her suggested projects, but we have applied for funding from NEH for one that perhaps meets her idea of a "large-scale model project that would illustrate the value of history"—our proposed survey of corporate archives.³² The Nelson Report served as our guideline until our new long-range planning committee report was produced in 1985-86.

We moved our newsletter to Arizona State University in the winter of 1982. At that time, we welcomed Beth Luey and Noel Stowe as our new editors. We also got a new look and our current logo.

The fifth annual meeting of NCPH was held at Waterloo, Canada, May 5-7, 1983. We were hosted by the University of Waterloo and opened our conference with a memorable "Oktoberfest in May." Our first and, to date, only conference in Canada "marked the commencement of closer relations between the public history movements in Canada and the United States."³³ As far as I know, that was the first and only conference where we advertised that participants could save money by staying in the university dorms. Since then, although we often talk about trying to save money on accommodations, I think we've collectively decided we are getting too old to plod down the hall to common bathrooms.

The next winter, at the 1983 AHA meeting in San Francisco, we celebrated the appearance of our first major NCPH publication, *The Craft of Public History: An Annotated Bibliography*. Editors David Trask and Robert Pomeroy took on the herculean task of coordinating the publication of this "first book-length, comprehensive reference work for

the field."³⁴ This was truly a pioneering task, resulting in a bibliography that no one yet has wanted to try to update.

As I was finishing up preparations for the 1984 meeting, which I cochaired with John Porter Bloom and Lawrence de Graaf, I got a call from Deborah Gardner, asking if I would submit a proposal to house the soon-to-be established executive secretariat at WVU and, by the way, in this transition period, take on the duties of both executive secretary and secretary. The term executive director was not discussed in that spring 1984 conversation. Deborah was very persuasive, I was flattered to be asked, and the university was cooperative. We put together a proposal that was accepted by the board at its April 1984 meeting. That proposal set an important precedent in that our secretariat was with West Virginia University, not me as an individual. We felt then, and still do, that the institutional commitment is critical.

Our sixth annual meeting was held in Los Angeles on April 6-8, 1984. There, for the first time, we met in conjunction with the Organization of American Historians. That was not really a joint meeting, although we did "adopt" some sessions proposed to the OAH program committee and had them listed as joint NCPH-OAH sessions in addition to sponsoring our own sessions under the theme "The Diversity of Public History." Our success there led us to our first joint meeting in New York in 1986 and, from lessons learned there, to our 1989 meeting in St. Louis.

While we had talked about ethics in Waterloo, our Ethics Committee sponsored a session at the Los Angeles meeting that focused on NCPH's plans for ethical guidelines for historians. Those sessions, plus substantial additional discussion, would lead to our guidelines (adopted in April 1985), the special ethics issue of *The Public Historian* edited by Ted Karamanski for the Winter 1986 issue, and our forthcoming anthology on ethics for historians that will be published by the Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co. While some may say our code of ethics is too vague or not needed,³⁵ NCPH has been one of the lead organizations in discussing ethics for historians, and members' comments on the AHA'S proposed code of ethics were so critical that we were able to completely reverse the tone of that important document.

At that April 1984 board meeting, we took the critical step of revising the NCPH by-laws to turn the organization from a council to a full membership organization. Noel Stowe led the effort to make this change. While the change has generally worked well, it took a few years to make the transition. While we have a long way to go in reaching all our potential members, this move was a necessary step, as Stowe had recorded in the minutes of the December 1983 meeting that, originally, "NCPH was to manage a series of projects. Yet as a practical matter this did not happen. The model as such was unsuccessful in practice. No future exists as a coordinating agency."³⁶ During that restructuring, we continued to assess our officers for their \$100 annual dues, until gradually, beginning in 1987, as new board members came on, they were not asked to contribute. (The last such payment, I hope, was made by Paul Scheips in 1988, a payment which he then assigned to the organization's endowment fund.) Also at this time, we took away our officers' right to vote, with the rationale that they would no longer be considered members of the board. That has been changed again, and officers now vote.

April 1984 marked the appearance of the "Careers for Graduates in History" chart, published by the National Center for the Study of History with input from NCPH. By 1988, over 100,000 copies of this chart had been distributed. A box of these charts, supplied by Pomeroy to NCPH, was one of my most valuable "handouts" as executive secretary.

On June 1, 1984, we opened our first executive secretariat at West Virginia University. While Pomeroy and Cantelon had spent endless hours on NCPH correspondence and bookkeeping efforts and while Donna Munger had assisted Larry Tise during his term as chair, it became clear to the board that we needed to have everything centralized in one place so that we no longer had an official address in Washington, D.C., bank accounts in several states, a newsletter in Arizona, a chair that changed every year, and no one, except Munger, who could say that his or her official paid job description included being responsible for the council's business. I do know that I came back from a vacation in late May to find boxes full of NCPH's official records that had been shipped from Washington, D.C. to my office, and urgent phone messages wondering where the original copy of our contract with the University of California Press was. Confidently, I started rummaging through the boxes, sure it must be there somewhere and wondering why these people who were calling so frantically didn't know—surely they had been around these records longer than I had. That was a rapid introduction to something that would occupy the board's time and mine for the next five years—working out a long series of problems, crises, and challenges to get the journal, the editor, and our relationships with the University of California Press and UCSB on a firm and stable footing. Do we own *The Public Historian*? If we don't, who does? Who should be our editor? Should libraries be members or just subscribers? Should individuals be members or just subscribers? How should an editorial board work? Should we start a new journal? The minutes for these years are filled, literally, with pages of discussion on these topics, and each chair from Tise on has worked at addressing some part of the issue. We even promised out-going chair Jack Holl, at Tempe, a life-time subscription to *The Public Historian* if we found the original copy of the contract. (He's never collected!) Those stories in and of themselves could be an article, but they are the kind of thing that, while time-consuming and frustrating, are of very little interest to the general membership, which only wants what it has every right to expect—a quality journal published on time.

We received our first major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to sponsor an NEH summer institute from July 5 to August 3, 1984. The faculty for that institute were G. Wesley Johnson, Noel J. Stowe, Anna K. Nelson, Michael C. Scardaville, and Patricia Mooney Melvin. Meeting at Arizona State University, the "Tempe 30" consisted of college and university history faculty from around the country who wanted to learn to teach public history and develop materials they could use to introduce their students to the field. The three major areas of concentration were curriculum and course development, historians in the private sector, and cultural resources management. Those of us who flew out for cameo appearances heard stories about the "Tempe Death March," dorm food, and unrelenting heat. However, we also saw sessions discussing the institute and new programs at NCPH conferences and cultivated a new group of people who would become active participants in NCPH. Still, public historians have to be careful not

to advertise such programs as "thirty-day wonder credentialing program[s]."³⁷

Our 1985 annual meeting was held in Phoenix, Arizona, under the direction of Arnita Jones and Noel Stowe. Arizona State University hosted the meeting, and the Southwest Oral History Association and Coordinating Committee for History in Arizona met with us, as did the board of directors of the Public Works Historical Society. We, too, got to see "beautiful downtown Tempe," but we did it in cooler weather.

At that meeting, we accepted the report of our Long-Range Planning Committee, our second and, to date, only other formal attempt to assess our future. The committee's recommendations then included the following: comprehensive revision of by-laws, reconstitution as a true membership organization, elimination of special levies on the board and officers, reconstitution of the size of the board, redefinition of our objectives, election of board members by the membership, selection of the officers through an appropriate system, recommendation of standing committees—all have been accomplished. It was not deemed appropriate to rename the council, as the committee suggested might be considered. The committee also recommended that we sponsor training institutes for our members, which we have done through our workshops at conferences, and that we establish joint projects and activities with other historical organizations; we added our name to the University of Toledo's Mid-America Public History Conference in 1988 and have asked the Society for Industrial Archeology to lend its name to our planned cultural resources management institute this summer. (Other goals, asking us to reach out beyond the historical profession, have not been as well met to date.) A weekend brain-storming session for the executive committee in Washington, D.C. in October 1985 led to our current statement of purpose—"To promote the utility of history in society through professional practice"—and to our goals as set forth in our current brochure. One thing is certain, though, our committee structure exploded to fifteen in 1985-86—an all-time high, I think.³⁸

Our publications program began to grow in 1985-86, as Indiana University, Indianapolis helped us produce *Public History Education in America: A Guide*, the first comprehensive effort to address the question of who is teaching what in public history. We must now consider reprinting this guide, as we have just run out of copies. We reconstituted the editorial board for *The Public Historian* under the direction of David Kyvig; the group developed an editorial policy and, since April 1986, has been meeting regularly to discuss the work of the journal. We gave our first annual prize for the best article in *The Public Historian* to Thomas J. Schlereth; History Associates, Inc. funded that prize for us. Also that year, our newsletter took on a much different look as Todd Shallat at Boise State University became our new editor for the Spring 1986 issue. By the Summer 1986 issue, we had settled on the name *Public History News*, which we have continued to use.

Our 1986 conference was held in New York, the first time we tried a truly joint meeting with the OAH. Deborah Gardner and Daniel Walkowitz worked well with the OAH Program Committee to ensure that our sessions and tours were an integral part of the total program. That model has continued for the 1989 meeting. Both groups, however, learned a great deal about the financial mechanics of a joint meeting, and we have,

I trust, resolved all those for this meeting. Suffice it to say that joint meetings require something like a prenuptial agreement to be successful. This meeting also marked our first attempt to sponsor a formal pre-meeting workshop, a workshop that introduced the broad range of public history to about thirty historians. We were pleasantly surprised at the large crowd who came to hear Noel Stowe's address as chair. That meeting also inaugurated another NCPH "tradition—after sponsoring several expensive receptions at the AHA and OAH, we decided to do what other groups do—sponsor a luncheon where members can pay their own way.

By 1986-87, we were again expanding our publications program. Michael Wade coordinated our efforts to produce our "Guide to Continuing Education for Public Historians," which appeared in the summer of 1987. We also announced plans for our *Directory of Historical Consultants*, which has been a best-seller since it appeared in the fall of 1988. Anna Nelson and Constance Schultz deserve much credit for their work on this project.

The 1987 annual meeting was a joint meeting with the Society for History in the Federal Government. Janelle Warren-Findley and Patrick Harahan worked with Jamil Zainaldin of the Society to plan a meeting that took us all over the nation's capital during the Bicentennial of the Constitution. The pre-meeting workshop focused on history in the federal government. Clearly, the "tradition" of conference workshops was being established. It was at this meeting that we named our journal prize the G. Wesley Johnson Prize to honor the journal's first editor, who was stepping down from the position. Carroll Pursell would assume the editor's role with the Fall 1987 issue.

When our agreement with West Virginia University expired on May 31, 1987, it became time to look for a new home for the executive secretariat, especially since I was now vice-chair of the council and could not do both jobs. We agreed to establish the secretariat at Northeastern University, with Dr. R. Wayne Anderson as executive secretary. That official transfer took place November 1, 1987, as boxes and boxes of materials were shipped from Morgantown to our newly established archives at the University of Colorado, Boulder's Western Historical Collections and to Boston. With that move, we also moved the newsletter to Northeastern with Anderson as editor.

Again our publications program was growing. We worked with the Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co. to reprint the *Report of the Committee on the Records of Government* in 1987 and currently have two books under contract with them, *Ethics and the Historian*, edited by Karamanski, and *Corporate Archives and History: Making the Past Work*, edited by Jones and Cantelon. Both are now scheduled for publication in January 1990. Philip Scarpino agreed to chair a committee to work on a revised version of "History Goes Public." This will be available for preview in San Diego next spring. The AHA asked us to work with them in publishing a revised "Careers for Students of History" pamphlet. With help from NCPH reviewers, particularly board members, I was able to write that pamphlet during 1988, and it is now awaiting final editing and publication by AHA.

Our 1988 annual meeting was held in Denver March 3-6. The Society of American Archivists sponsored a workshop on the 3rd, and, that

evening, we had a memorable dinner at Bent's Old Fort Restaurant. We convened in the Brown Palace Hotel for our sessions, and, on Friday afternoon, boarded buses to see where historians really worked in the Denver area. Arnita Jones's address as chair focused on accreditation, providing stimulus for our current accreditation committee's efforts. Brit Storey was the overall coordinator for that meeting and earned a reputation as the most successful businessperson ever to chair a meeting for us.

During the past year, I, like my predecessors, have spent large amounts of time on issues related to our journal. We have, I hope, had some major successes that have built on the efforts of my predecessors. We have a new agreement with the University of California Press, effective January 1, 1989, and, effective July 1, 1989, we have a new editor—Dr. Otis Graham, who will be moving to UCSB to rejoin the faculty of the Department of History.

We are now meeting in St. Louis for our eleventh annual meeting. Katherine Corbett and Patricia Mooney Melvin chaired the local arrangements and program committees, respectively. Our workshop program has grown from one in our early years to five this year, and we now offer a wide range of tours and sessions.

Perhaps it is too soon to provide much analysis of the past ten years. Perhaps that awaits the historian who has not been as actively involved in the day-to-day activities as I have been, but I think some conclusions are possible that link the NCPH with the broad public history movement. Students need to know that public history exists, just as they ought to know that military history or the new social history exist. We have had some effect, working with the NCC, in areas related to the independence of the National Archives, funding for historic preservation and the Historic Publications and Records Commission, management policies for the National Park Service, and personnel policies for the federal government. Perhaps, like any small business, we should celebrate the fact that we still exist as an organization.

What are the problems and challenges for the future? If the job market for academic historians is opening again, will departments of history care about public history? How do we guarantee that the work public historians do reaches the highest level of scholarship and follows the highest standards of ethical behavior? Our annual reports and minutes document grants that did not get funded, committees that came and went without effect. Why did that happen?

Where to go in the future? In addition to addressing the above problems, my respondents set out an ambitious agenda to consider for the next ten years: enlarge our membership, continually cultivate new leaders for the organization, work more with state committees of the NCC, continue our workshops, generate more publicity for public history, enlarge our publishing program, keep public history programs in touch with each other, continue to promote public history in the profession, address the issues relevant to professional historians wherever they work, begin an accreditation program, initiate certification of public historians, get academic colleagues to place more value on public history work, develop a series of prizes that are well publicized, encourage the utility of history

in society, and rededicate ourselves to becoming a more service-oriented, truly professional organization.

The biggest challenge for NCPH today, as in 1979, is to learn how to mobilize the resources and talents of its members to do all the things everyone thinks it ought to do. We have no shortage of ideas, but now is the time again to acknowledge those who had perhaps the most important idea ten years ago-Why not a National Council on Public History?

Notes

1. Michael C. Scardaville, "Looking Backward Toward the Future: An Assessment of the Public History Movement," *The Public Historian* 9 (Fall 1987), 35-45.

2. I would especially like to acknowledge the contributions of Philip L. Cantelon; Suellen Hoy; Arnita A. Jones; G. Wesley Johnson; Patricia Mooney Melvin; Robert W. Pomeroy, III; Daniel J. Walkowitz; and James C. Williams. Interpretations of their comments are mine alone and do not reflect any official position of the National Council on Public History.

3. The official archives are now at the University of Colorado, Boulder, with the active files at the executive secretariat at Northeastern University. I did not have access to every piece of paper that NCPH has produced over the years as I wrote this paper.

4. Arnita A. Jones, taped reminiscences prepared for NCPH archives, January 3, 1989, tape in possession of NCPH. Hereafter referred to as Jones tape.

5. Robert W. Pomeroy, 111, National Council on Public History Questionnaire, January 10, 1989, NCPH files. Hereafter referred to as Pomeroy questionnaire. The term NCPH files is used to refer to materials that, as of spring 1989, were in the executive secretariat office at Northeastern University.

6. G. Wesley Johnson to Barbara Howe, March 23, 1989, response to questionnaire sent to all past chairs of NCPH, NCPH files. Hereafter referred to as Johnson letter.

7. Ibid.

8. Jones tape.

9. Johnson letter.

10. Ibid.

11. Jones tape, Johnson letter.

12. Johnson letter.

13. Ibid.

14. Johnson letter, Jones tape, Pomeroy questionnaire.

15. Johnson letter.

16. Jones tape.

17. Johnson letter; Philip L. Cantelon, taped reminiscences prepared for NCPH archives, February 4, 1989, tape in possession of NCPH. Hereafter referred to as Cantelon tape.

18. Peter N. Stearns and Joel A. Tarr, "Conference Report," *Newsletter of the National Council on Public History 1* (Summer 1980), 2-3.

19. Pomeroy questionnaire, Jones tape, and Johnson letter.

20. Minutes of Various Meetings of the Steering Committee for a National Council on Public History, at the Second Annual Conference on Public History, William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, April 18-20, 1980, Archive of the National Council on Public History, Western Historical Collections, University of Colorado, Boulder.

21. "Summary Proceedings of the Conference Banquet, 7 P.M., Friday, April 18," Archive of the NCPH. That first board of directors consisted of Robert Flanders, Corinne L. Gelb, Peter Harstad, Gerald Herman, Richard T. Hewlett, Jack M. Holl, Suellen M. Hoy, G. Wesley Johnson, Arnita Jones, Theodore J. Karamanski, Robert Kelley, Roy Lopata, Seymour Mandelbaum, Ernest R. May, Roberta Balstad Miller, Charles T. Morrissey, Gayle Olson, Robert W. Pomeroy, 111, James Reed, Darlene Roth, Melvin T. Smith, Joel A. Tarr, Larry E. Tise, David F. Trask, and Garrett Weaver. In fact, Tise claims to have been the one to suggest the \$100 contributions.

22. Johnson letter.

23. "Nationwide Network of Public and Applied History Students Announced," *Newsletter of the National Council on Public History 1* (Summer 1980), 3.

24. Ibid.

25. "Bylaws of the National Council on Public History," *Newsletter of the National Council on Public History 1* (Winter 1981), 3.

26. Minutes of Continuation of Annual Meeting of Board of Directors, April 24, 1981, Archive of the NCPH.

27. "Third Annual Conference on Public History," *Newsletter of the National Council on Public History 1* (Summer 1980), 4; and "National Council to Meet in Raleigh," *Newsletter of the National Council on Public History 1* (Winter 1981), 4.

28. Philip L. Cantelon, "Report of the Executive Director" in *1982-83 Annual Report of the National Council on Public History*, 2.

29. "History and its Publics-Theme of 1982 Public History Conference," *Newsletter of National Council on Public History 2* (Fall 1981/Winter 1982). 1.

30. "National Council Activities," *Newsletter of the National Council on Public History 2* (Spring 1982), 2.

31. "Consultant at Work for National Council," *Newsletter of the National Council on Public History 2-3* (Summer/Fall 1982), 2.

32. Anna K. Nelson, "Analysis of the Current Situation," Archive of the NCPH.

33. "Conference Participants Visit the Seagram Museum, Waterloo," *NCPH Newsletter 3-4* (Summer-Fall 1983), 8.

34. "The Craft of Public History: NCPH-Sponsored Bibliography," *NCPH Newsletter 3-4* (Summer-Fall 1983), 3.

35. James C. Williams is one member who feels that our code of ethics is not strong enough. See James C. Williams, Answers from a Charter NCPH Member, December 15, 1988, NCPH files. Hereafter referred to as Williams answers.

36. Minutes, Board Meeting, December 1983, NCPH files.

37. Quote on "thirty-day wonder" is from Williams answers.

38. Minutes of the Executive Meeting, October 4-6, 1985, NCPH files. Our committees were listed in "Annual Report, 1985-86, National Council on Public History," filed in *Public History News* 6 (Summer 1986). All material following in this paper is distilled from the annual reports published by NCPH and from the author's experiences as executive secretary, vice-chair, and then chair of NCPH. Annual reports are published in the summer issues of the newsletter.

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