

THE NEW FEDERALISM; OR, HOW PUBLIC HISTORICAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS MAY SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN THE NEW ERA

by *Larry E. Tise*

All of us face choices about how we can best survive in what appears to be an extended period of either level or reduced support from appropriated funds. Although there is from time to time discussion about the eradication of non-essential programs—and we often wonder which politician will be the first to designate history programming as non-essential—it does not appear that any public history program has been eliminated to date on either the federal or the state level merely on the grounds of fiscal priorities. Those which have been abolished on the state level have been apparently as the result of a continuing pattern of government reorganization. Although most public history programs have been reduced in some manner, and some drastically, at this point, most seem to be surviving.

Mere survival, however, is not enough for any public history agency or program. As in other fields of public or private endeavor, historians are committed to protect and preserve the materials of history, to conduct research and interpret those materials, and to make them available to the public as fully and as accurately as possible. To do less is a denial of our professional interests and of our callings in life. In short, we are prone to search out some manner whereby our programs may

not only survive but also thrive in every era.

We have for some time been developing the necessary mechanisms. Smart history administrators, whatever their precise program responsibilities, have for years developed into an art the use of volunteer labor in the form of docents, hostesses, interns, and associates. They have also made use of non-profit membership organizations to supplement both the program's income and to expand the list of volunteers who might be called into service. They have developed gift shops, sales programs, special promotions, tours, and any other method whereby some supplemental funds might be brought into the overall program budget. Finally, they have attempted to generate charitable donations from private foundations and corporations. While many of these activities were once the bread and butter of all private non-profit history organizations, few public history programs are today without one or more of these "fund-raising" activities. Whereas ten years ago public history programs were funded almost entirely from appropriated funds on the federal level and in most states where such programs were an agency of state government, today it is remarkable that—as I recently learned in an evaluation of the operations of three of Pennsylvania's prime stateowned historic sites and museums—as much as thirty percent of their support derives from non-appropriated funds generated by the history programs themselves.

What the proliferation of non-bureaucratic and non-governmental fund-raising techniques means is that public history institutions have sometimes consciously,



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but frequently unconsciously, begun changing their nature from strictly governmental entities to quasi-governmental entities. They are taking on in some cases characteristics of the non-profit corporation and in others those of the for-profit corporation. For example, a couple of years ago in North Carolina as a result of the rapid increase in letters of a genealogical nature received at the State Archives from outside the state, we made a decision to charge a fee for answering the inquiry, the fee rate set at a level that would enable the program to pay its own way. In another case, we decided to sell "core" microfilm of county records to school and public libraries at slightly greater than the cost of both the film and the production costs. The enterprise ended up deriving profits that could be invested in other programs.

In Pennsylvania this past year we made a decision to spend for the printing of our historical publications only that amount of money derived from the sale of such publications and to expend on our magazine only that amount of money derived in

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subscription fees. More recently, in a test case at three historic sites and museums located in one county we decided to calculate our costs for providing visitor services and to set our already existing admission fee at a level that would pay the costs of providing such services. At the same time, we decided to begin leasing some of our unused or underutilized buildings to derive sufficient lease income to pay the costs of maintenance and repairs and to lease lands that were once groundskeeping chores for agricultural purposes. In another area of our program we set aside an amount of money as challenge grants for our historic site and museum administrators. They may make use of the money to carry out projects at their properties if they will but raise one half of the cost of the project from non-state sources. In another effort to encourage efficiency and productivity we reallocated funds from admission fees that once went into a special state-level discretionary fund back to the historic sites and museums from which they derived as an incentive and as an inducement to produce greater revenues resulting in ever larger operating budgets.

What has occurred in the state history programs in North Carolina and Pennsylvania is characteristic of what is happening and what must happen in all public history programs. While I am not suggesting that we give up on the pursuit of a just and proper allocation of appropriated funds from Congress and legislatures, I am suggesting that there is much we can do to raise additional funds. While some may fear that in pursuing such a course public history programs subject themselves to reduced appropriations, I have not found that such is the case. Such a course expands the network of people and interests involved in the public history program and also provides a strong argument for legislators that the program is doing much to aid itself. It overcomes the spectre of the lazy bureaucrat spending the public's money, if it is

available, and doing nothing if public funds are cut.

Some of the principles to be followed to move beyond mere survival are these:

(1) Identify those portions of the public history program which can be put on a self-paying basis and establish them with income-expenditure cost centers monitored by the personnel whose work depends upon a sufficiently high level of income.

(2) Make use of non-profit and for-profit corporations to sponsor and carry out projects for the public history program on a profitable basis wherever possible. Most frequently such corporations are able to accomplish the same amount of work for as little as half the cost of government. Wherever possible, channel charitable donations through such corporations and have such corporations hold funds for the use of the public history program.

(3) Every public history program should establish programs to make formal and increasing use of intelligent volunteer labor. Increasing portions of the program's work can be accomplished with carefully recruited, trained, and supervised volunteers. Such a program should be operated in the same manner and with the same care as normal employee work.

(4) Make use of every opportunity to place program facets which may currently make use of operating budget funds in a special fund category. Facilities should be made available to non-governmental groups in such a manner as to cover costs and derive a margin of profit to maintain and repair the facility. Conferences, seminars, and training programs should be operated in a manner to cover their costs and perhaps on occasion to make a profit.

(5) Develop special purpose corporations to carry out portions of the program more economically and attractively than can be accomplished by the public history agency. For example, a historic preservation revolving fund or a publications revolving fund can be operated more efficiently and can attract charitable gifts more effectively if handled by a corporation than by a government agency.

* * *

While I would not suggest that public history institutions will be able to cover all the costs of their operations through such mechanisms as I have been suggesting, it is clear that they can reach a stage in which they fend for themselves. One of the prime advantages of such an approach is that by operating large portions of its program on a paying basis the public history institution can come very close to making itself less subject to inflationary factors. Costs can be controlled because income is geared to the cost of providing service. Indeed, the non-governmental activities of the public history institution may be viewed as its margin of profit, its protection against those forces that ravage so many institutions in a time of

contracting economy. By following such a course, it is my firm belief that public history institutions can not only survive in the near future, but they can also thrive while other programs may be reduced and eliminated.

Larry E. Tise is Executive Director, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

• The National Council on Public History recently received a grant from the Liberian Studies Institute in Philadelphia to support the development of a course in History and Public Policy, being given in the Spring of 1982 at Rutgers University.

The Liberian Studies Institute sponsors research, publication, and scholarly activity in a variety of policy areas and is particularly interested in questions of archival organization, establishment and utilization of research facilities, and the preservation of both documentary and oral historical sources.

The grant provides for teaching release time for Professor Rodney Carlisle to develop the new course, as well as to work on the planning of a new program, the Master of Arts in Public History, anticipated to begin in 1983-1984.

• The Education and Training Committee of the National Council on Public History is interested in developing a syllabi exchange for historians teaching public history courses or for those interested in developing these courses. Committee members hope to have this available for those attending the Fifth Annual Conference on Public History in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada in May 1983, but they would also like to be able to help those who need assistance before that time. If you have copies of syllabi, assignments, class outlines or reading lists for any public history classes, or if you would like to receive copies of syllabi, please contact Dr. Barbara J. Howe, Department of History, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506. The committee is particularly interested in material for introductory courses, and it would be helpful if anyone sending material could note which assignments or classes were particularly successful. If you wish, names will be deleted before the material is sent out. The new chairperson of the Education and Training Committee is Dr. Patricia Mooney Melvin, Department of History, Stabler Hall 604D, University of Arkansas, Little Rock, Little Rock, Arkansas 72701.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Weible, Robert, Oliver Ford, and Paul Marion, editors, *Essays from the Lowell Conference on Industrial History, 1980 and 1981*

The *Newsletter of the National Council on Public History* is published quarterly. Copy for inclusion in the *Newsletter* should be sent to the *Newsletter* Editor, National Council on Public History, 3914 Harrison Street, NW, Washington, DC 20015, by January 15, May 15, August 15, or November 15.

Advertisements are welcome and will be charged at the following rates:

Job Ad—\$10.00 per run.

Business/Professional Ad—\$12.50 per column inch.

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(Lowell, MA: Lowell Conference on Industrial History, 1981).

A collection of essays first presented at two conferences on industrial history held in Lowell, Massachusetts. The first concerned "The Social Impacts of Industrialization" (1980) and the second, "The Relationship of Government and Industry in the United States" (1981). Of particular interest to public historians are essays by Harry N. Scheiber, "Government and the American Economy: Three Stages of Historical Change, 1790-1941" and "The Managerial State: Government and Business Since 1940" by Gerald D. Nash.

Hechler, Ken, *The Endless Space Frontier: A History of the House Committee on Science and Astronautics, 1959-1978* (San Diego, CA: American Astronautical Society Publication, 1982).

An abridgement of the author's mammoth *Toward the Endless Frontier*. This volume, published by the American Astronautical Society, is the history of House of Representatives' treatment of the U.S. space program under the House Committee on Science and Astronautics, later named the Committee on Science and Technology.

Presenting the Past: History and the Public, a special issue of *Radical History Review* (New York: MARHO: The Radical Historians' Organization, 1981).

Essays on the "people's history" movement. With some exceptions, most notably an essay by Howard Green entitled "A Critique of the Professional Public History Movement," these essays tend to confuse public history with people's or populist history and with the history of the hitherto inarticulate classes.

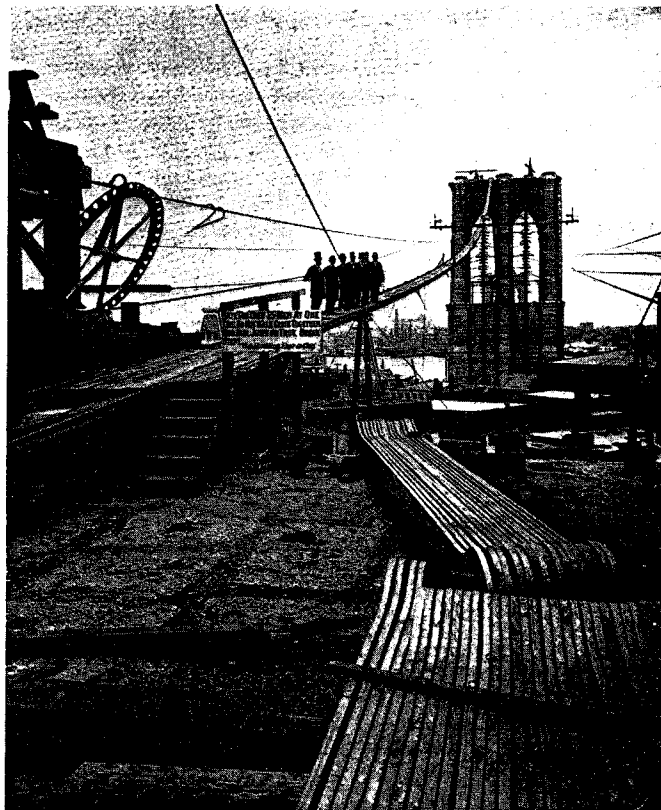
National Competition Policy: Historians' Perspectives on Antitrust and Government-Business Relationships in the United States (Office of Special Projects—Bureau of Competition, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, D.C., 1981).

Transcript of a seminar series conducted by historians for the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in 1979. The topics discussed were all concerned with historical aspects of antitrust policy. Participants included FTC attorneys, economists, and the following historians: Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., Robert D. Cuff, Louis Galambos, Ellis W. Hawley, and Thomas K. McCraw.

Please send books or articles to be included in "Recent Publications" to Roberta Miller, Council of Social Science Associations, 1200 17th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

1983 CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN CANADA

The National Council on Public History is pleased to announce the exciting arrangements being made for its fifth annual



Citibank/Citicorp, Courtesy of The New York Historical Society, New York City

A screening of the film Brooklyn Bridge at the National Council's annual meeting in Chicago was made possible by a grant from Citicorp (USA), Inc.

conference on public history, to be held Thursday through Saturday, May 5-7, 1983, in suburban Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Host for the conference will be the University of Waterloo, where the first public history training program in Canada has been established. Under the general title "Public History in Action: An International Perspective," the conference will offer a unique opportunity for history professionals in the U.S. and Canada to explore shared interests and problems.

The program will include films, lectures, panel discussions, presentations, and dialogues, following four general topics: 1) Imaging the Past (in media, exhibitions, public fairs, and advertising); 2) Conserving the Past (in museums and archives, historical societies, agencies and trusts; in cultural-environmental conservation, especially comparatively in the U.S. and Canada; local history within international perspectives); 3) Using the Past in the Public Sector (applying history to official domestic and foreign policy, Indian affairs, energy resources, and arms limitation; history in international communications organizations); and 4) Using the Past in the Private Sector (journalism; applying history to management and labor policies, experiences, and disputes; historical consulting; corporate history in international corporations).

The program committee includes Beth Ansley of Georgia Power Company, Robert Flanders of Southeast Missouri State Uni-

versity, Darlene Roth of The History Group Inc., and James Walker, John English and Ken McLaughlin of the University of Waterloo. The committee especially encourages participants to offer suggestions, papers, and whole sessions in the areas here specified, but serious consideration will be given all offerors. Send proposals and requests for information to James Walker, History Department, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1. Telephone 519-885-1211, X2771.

1982 PUBLIC HISTORY CONFERENCE ATTRACTS 300 PARTICIPANTS

by Suellen Hoy

The Fourth Annual Conference on Public History was held in Chicago from April 22 to April 24. It was sponsored by Loyola University of Chicago and the Public Works Historical Society in association with the National Council on Public History. Theodore J. Karamanski of Loyola University and Suellen M. Hoy, formerly executive secretary of the Public Works Historical Society and now assistant director of the Division of Archives and History, served as conference co-chairs.

The relationship between business and history was the emphasis of the 1982 program. Friday's sessions on business archives and information management, training programs, corporate histories,

forecasting, policymaking, and marketing addressed the theme "Corporate Planning: The Future as History." Reporting on these sessions on April 23, the *New York Times* pointed out that although only a few dozen companies have full-time historians "companies are finding that persons with graduate degrees in the humanities can be assets because of their perspective, their research training, and their knowledge." The 1982 public history conference brought many businessmen and historians together for the first time and gave them a forum for a meaningful exchange.

The highlight of the conference was David McCullough's banquet presentation on "History, Hubris, and the Professor's Pickled Fish." Author of *Mornings on Horseback* (recipient of the 1982 American Book Award), *The Path Between the Seas*, *The Great Bridge*, and *The Johnstown Flood*, McCullough offered insightful and illustrative suggestions not only on how to read and write history but also on how to present it to an educated public eager to understand its past. McCullough's presentation was complemented by Ken Burns' documentary film (1982 academy award nominee) on "Brooklyn Bridge," which was shown to conference participants on Thursday evening. McCullough as well as Lewis Mumford, Arthur Miller, and Paul Goldberger, architectural critic for the *New York Times*, appeared on the screen to reflect on the historical, aesthetic, political, and emotional impact of the bridge which will be a hundred years old next year. The film incorporates old prints, architectural drawings, newspaper stories, clips from old Hollywood movies, and some new footage. Burns introduced the film and responded to a lengthy series of questions on its production.

MEETING AND PROGRAM PLANNING FOR 1982-1983*

July 25-30, 1982: The U.S. Commission on Military History will hold a conference on the soldier-statesmen of the age of the

Enlightenment at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. For further information, contact Charles von Luttichau, U.S. Commission on Military History, c/o U.S. Army Center of Military History, 20 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20314.

August 1-4, 1982: The United States Army War College, the United States Army Center of Military History, and the United States Army Military History Institute will sponsor an international symposium on the subject of "The Impact of Unsuccessful Military Campaigns on Military Institutions, 1860-1960," to be held at the United States Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. This symposium immediately follows the colloquium of the International Commission on Military History in Washington, D.C. Transportation will be provided between Washington and Carlisle Barracks. Requests for registration materials and other communications regarding the symposium should be sent to Lieutenant Colonel Charles R. Shrader, 1982 Symposium Coordinator, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013.

August 18-21, 1982: The Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association will meet at Mills College, Oakland, California. For information, contact Joseph E. Illick, Department of History, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco, California 94132.

Fall: Call for papers. During the academic year 1982-83 the Institute for Massachusetts Studies will sponsor a series of three symposia on "Massachusetts during the Gilded Age," which will be held at various sites in the state. Each symposium will consist of two sessions of a total of four papers, on the political, social, cultural, economic, and other aspects of Massachusetts history during the time period under study. Persons wishing their papers to be considered should send the completed papers to Institute for Massachusetts Studies, History Department, Westfield State College, Westfield, Massachusetts

THE PUBLIC HISTORIAN EXPERIENCES TEMPORARY CIRCULATION DELAYS

Because the University of California Press is in the process of installing a new computerized mailing system, a few subscribers have experienced delays receiving their copies of *The Public Historian*. The Press apologizes for these delays, and informs those concerned that the new system will be in place by summer of 1982, at which time circulation problems should be resolved. Meanwhile, subscribers experiencing delays should notify Cynthia Deno, The University of California Press, 2223 Fulton Street, Berkeley, California 94720.

10186. All papers from the symposia will be published. Deadline for submissions is August 15, 1982.

September 21-24, 1982: The American Association for State and Local History will hold its annual meeting in Hartford, Connecticut. For information, write AASLH, 708 Berry Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37204.

October 8-10, 1982: The Oral History Association will meet in San Antonio, Texas. The Program Committee invites proposals for papers, sessions, and media presentations. Send an abstract and brief vita to John J. Fox, History Department, Salem State College, Salem, Massachusetts 01970.

October 13-16, 1982: The American Society for Ethnohistory will hold its annual meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. Submit ideas for symposia and special sessions by August 16 to Ross Hassig, Program Chair, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37235.

*Please send notices regarding your organization's programs to Suellen M. Hoy, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 109 E. Jones St., Raleigh, North Carolina 27611.

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