

At the Heart of the Community

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What is the future of the historic house museum? Providing Americans with intimate glimpses into the past, historic house museums comprise the largest yet most vulnerable sector of the museum field. In light of shifting economic challenges, demographics, and understandings of public value, house museums have been forced to rethink their cultural, interpretive and financial frameworks in recent years.



College students explore the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum. Photo by Lauren Meranda, 2010.

Those historic house practitioners leading the field recognize that in order to progress, we must shed old assumptions about how historic homes should look and what functions they should perform. Historic house museums must open conversations with community stakeholders about issues that matter today. They must tell stories that are inclusive and that illuminate contemporary life. They must move beyond the velvet rope to provide hands-on experiences to visitors. This will no doubt make some historians uncomfortable because some prevailing practices will be lost. But the National Trust for Historic Preservation has embraced the evolution within its own historic homes by proclaiming: “The period of significance for these sites is now—not 50 or 150 years ago.” So then, what is the future of the historic house museum? It is to be at the heart of today’s communities.

You can download the *Forum* issue by visiting <http://blog.preservationleadershipforum.org/ncph-summer-2014-download/>. The password is *historicsites*. Look for the *TPH* issue in February 2015.

Lisa Junkin Lopez is Interim Director of the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is the guest editor for the February 2015 issue of *The Public Historian* about historic house museums.

The Public Historian and the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s *Forum* journal have teamed up to investigate historic house museums and locate strategies of survival and success. Each is devoting a special issue to the topic. What has emerged is the beginning of a revival in domestic form. While some sites have been forced to shut their doors, others have successfully innovated upon the house museum model, experimenting with 21st-century public history practices and creating more nimble and dynamic sites. Throughout the United States and beyond, house museums are beginning to use novel storytelling techniques that draw in new audiences. Contemporary artists are using old homes as sites of experimentation and creativity. Preservation efforts are finding companionship with placemaking campaigns. And new sites are emerging that interpret the recent past.

President’s Comments

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This last June, stemming from my 83-year old father’s declining health, my wife, Tina, and I accompanied my parents on their bucket-list trip to Australia and New Zealand. While we referred to ourselves as “Trans-Pacific Sherpas” the adventure was spectacular in every way. Beyond my dutiful-son and prerequisite tourist duties, one of things I looked forward to most (aside from the food, obviously) was observing the way the Aussies and Kiwis engage in historic interpretation. Like wherever I travel, I ponder not simply the narrative, but the entire design and structure of everything from traffic flow to audience engagement. (I am sure the process of peering behind panels and inspecting fixtures, lighting, and display techniques resonates with many of you out there. As a former graduate student recently told me “Thanks for ruining museums for me.”)

As this was my first time venturing to the place where pretty much anything that moves, blinks, or sways in the wind can and will kill you, studying how the locals went about presenting their own diverse and remarkably complex cultures was fascinating. Ranging from interpreted Aboriginal and Maori villages

to Captain Cook’s explorations, Chinese immigration, New Zealand’s maritime history, and the natural wonders that comprised Peter Jackson’s Middle Earth, each location engaged with their audiences in distinctive and compelling ways. (Yes, I was giddy as a lovesick schoolgirl wandering around the completely fictional and fabricated—but no less culturally significant—Hobbiton. A former NCPH president behaved similarly while visiting “Downton Abbey,” so I stand by my nerdiness.) Although I could ramble on about my discoveries, the deeper reflections of my travels underscored how public historians across the globe share in common professional activities but often approach their craft in myriad ways.



Postcard, c.1908. Cultural Collections, University of Newcastle Library.



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NCPH inspires public engagement with the past and serves the needs of practitioners in putting history to work in the world by building community among historians, expanding professional skills and tools, fostering critical reflection on historical practice, and publicly advocating for history and historians. *Public History News* is published in March, June, September, and December. NCPH reserves the right to reject material that is not consistent with the goals and purposes of the organization. Individual membership orders, changes of address, and business and editorial correspondence should be addressed to NCPH, 127 Cavanaugh Hall – IUPUI, 425 University Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46202-5140. E-mail: ncpH@iupui.edu. Tel: 317-274-2716. Join online or renew at www.ncpH.org. Headquartered on the campus of Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, NCPH is grateful for the generous support of the IU School of Liberal Arts and the Department of History.

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IFPH's inaugural annual conference will be in Amsterdam, October 23-25, 2014. Photo by Serge Noiret.

After joining the NCPH Board in 2006 as Secretary-Treasurer, at some point during many of our semiannual meetings the topic of internationalism would emerge. These typically revolved around the context of selecting Canadian conference sites, encouraging international diversity in meeting attendance, or addressing international editions of *The Public Historian*. There was often the hint of professional preeminence about these discussions. Not that the NCPH needed to spread the word to the great-unwashed historical masses, but that our foreign counterparts could clearly use our guidance in achieving their potential.

Certainly, there are instances where the United States has demonstrated leadership. While not the first legislation, either in the U.S. or abroad, the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act helped establish robust standards for preservation law. Since then, historians, archaeologists, and preservation entities have been navigating the nuances of these standards and establishing protocols that others could emulate. Underscoring this, an archaeologist colleague of mine, who recently returned from a preservation venture to Australia, explained how the routine compliance and mitigation practices we follow here in North America continue to evolve Down Under. While the central preservation arguments between continents may be similar, the cultural, economic, and political complexities of reaching an accord on specific outcomes can be very different.

The same year I joined the NCPH Board, I presented at a conference at Humboldt University in Berlin about my Knowledge Elicitation (KE) and Concept Mapping projects at Guantanamo Bay and Kennedy Space Center. What struck me from that meeting was not only how intrigued my European counterparts were in my various KE approaches, but also how compellingly distinctive I found their work. We were using similar tools, but the processes and outcomes were often markedly unique.

Those insights had an immediate and profound influence on enhancing my range of public history activities.

While face-to-face interactions between international counterparts are certainly preferable, the pace of technology has afforded public historians across the globe the ability to communicate instantaneously and share their collective work. Within our own organization, the forward-looking Public History Commons has created an active interface where public historians anywhere can impart insights and explore developments in the field. Growing out of an NCPH initiative but taking on an identity all its own, the International Federation for Public History (IFPH) will provide further opportunities for intercontinental exchange with its inaugural annual conference in Amsterdam this October, followed by its meeting in Jinan, China next August. Even Facebook and Twitter enable us to witness, often on a day-by-day basis, how fellow practitioners on the other side of the globe employ intriguing methodologies within their craft.

Although there are many in our ranks that have actively pursued international connections and projects, since its inception, the NCPH has largely operated within a North American framework that was confined by oceans, accepted pedagogical traditions, and political policies. Over the last several years, however, those barriers have deteriorated. As the opportunities for open dialog and instant communication continue to expand, public historians around the world can benefit from working together and learning from each other. Within this new global arena, practitioners everywhere can draw upon what is distinctively unique and valuable from their foreign colleagues and, together, can change our mutual discipline in ways that we have yet to imagine.

Patrick Moore is the Director of the Public History Program at the University of West Florida and is a Senior Historian at Historical Research Associates, Inc.

Welcome New Members!

Nancy Adgent Sleepy Hollow, NY	Meredith Clark-Wiltz Franklin, IN	Patricia Glowinski New York, NY	Thomas Littlewood Frederickton, NB Canada	David Myers Nashville, TN	Michelle Shukis Colchester, CT	Mary Williford Greensboro, NC	NCPH would like to extend a special thanks to our new Partner members:
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Semi-Annual Report

Cool weather all summer in central Indiana made it feel like fall was already here. We only hit above the low 80s a few times. Temperatures are supposed to rise from June through August, and associational membership levels tend to drop. But for NCPH that hasn't been happening either. This is good news. Our membership now stands at 1,275, or about 9% more than any previous July-August figure.

Participation in the conference has been growing as well. Session proposals increased 40% for the 2014 Monterey conference over any previous NCPH meeting, and submissions for 2015 Nashville were up 25% beyond that high water mark. Also this spring, Stephanie Rowe and the Program Committee inaugurated an Early Topic Proposal deadline which generated many helpful comments for shaping final proposals, and which seemed to attract new people to NCPH. It was one of a few experiments over the past seven years to extend the annual conference beyond the limits of four days in spring. We continue to broaden conversations that lead into the conference and extend discussions at the conference into the weeks and months that follow.

There are other changes afoot for the 2015 Nashville conference. THATCamp 2015 will be more of a "boot camp" for digital history skills. And there will be an especially rich offering of workshops, including an AASLH project management workshop, which that organization has perfected in many locations around the country. The awards event will be restructured to attract, hopefully, a majority of conference attendees. It will be a low-priced, Saturday breakfast event, sans Business Meeting (which will be headed to a stand-alone spot elsewhere during the conference), with time for mingling and more of a focus on the award recipients and the keynote address. We are excited to have MacArthur Foundation Fellow and 2011 NCPH Book Award Winner Tiya Miles as our speaker. Program co-chair Modupe Labode is working on a Civil Rights theme for the Public Plenary on Friday.

Planning the annual NCPH meeting definitely is a year-round activity. In fact, this summer we've been working on the next five conferences. The joint 2016 meeting in Baltimore with the Society for History in the Federal Government will be only the second time we've met with that group, yet both are public history organizations that emerged simultaneously in the late 1970s and with overlapping memberships. In 2017, NCPH will meet in Indianapolis. And for either 2018 or 2019, we have been working with the OAH on selecting a city for a joint meeting.

Another group with which NCPH has been working closely of late is the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). Our

Nashville meeting will be in their home city, and our 2014 fall Board of Directors Meeting will take place at the AASLH's annual meeting, which will be in St. Paul, Minnesota, this month. For the second year in a row, we have placed the NCPH Poster Session at the AASLH conference. We're also providing a session, "The Who, What, and How of Tapping into New Scholarship for Your Site or Exhibit," on Friday afternoon. NCPH Digital Media Editor Cathy Stanton, *TPH* Co-editor Mary Rizzo, and Cassie Ward, Director of Public Programs at Long Branch Plantation are the panelists.

At its meeting in St. Paul, the NCPH board will be reviewing a new draft agreement with the University of California Press and UC Santa Barbara for publishing the journal. Completed and signed this summer were agreements with UC Santa Barbara for joint ownership and editing of the journal, and with UC Santa Barbara and Rutgers University-Camden for providing the journal's co-editor. UC Press has informed NCPH that next summer, all of its journal content, including *TPH*, will move to the HighWire Open Platform from Stanford's University's HighWire Press, and be taken out of JSTOR's Current Scholarship Program—though *TPH* will remain part of the JSTOR journal Archives.

Things slowed down for some of the committees this summer, though the New Professional and Graduate Student Committee was hard at work finishing up its initial draft of a consumer's guide to public history programs. "The Public History Navigator: How to Choose and Thrive in a Public History Program" in current form is about twenty pages and will be finished this fall. Meanwhile, the Membership Committee is developing a resume review service and piloting it for annual meeting attendees in Nashville. The committee also reviewed the new membership brochure and the guidelines for establishing an NCPH mini-con, which appear in this newsletter.

A significant amount of my time as NCPH executive director has been spent this year in serving as president of the National Coalition for History, the Washington, DC-based advocacy and educational nonprofit. (See page 6.) More than fifty entities belong to the coalition, from NCPH to the American Historical Association, and from the History Channel to the Society of American Archivists. Besides fighting on several fronts to protect open access to and funding for history, NCH's executive director, Lee White, has worked with members of the House of Representatives to launch a bipartisan House History Caucus and has welcomed a national group of genealogists into the coalition. While staying on top of advocacy crises, the coalition is broadening its base and strengthening its reach on Capitol Hill.

In a similar way, NCPH has been involved with another wide-ranging advocacy effort, the History Relevance Campaign (HRC). NCPH has benefitted from sessions in Monterey and Ottawa by HRC and continues to work closely with the group. As one of HRC founders, John Durel, puts it, "HRC is a group of people posing questions about what makes history relevant today, and how we can change the public's perception—and policymakers' perception—that history is nice to have, but not really essential." That goal resonates with all that NCPH stands for, and all that we have been doing so far in 2014.

For 35 years NCPH has been the place where public historians share ideas and advance the profession.

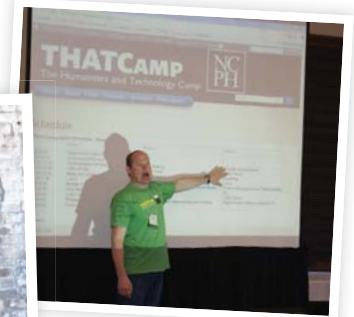
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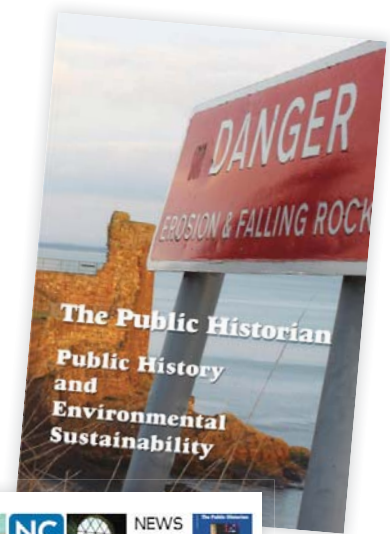
NEW ENERGY



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CRITICAL REFLECTION



EXPERIENCED MENTORS



FRIENDS, OLD AND NEW

Advocacy Roundup

New to the Coalition: NCH has added a major new constituency. The Records Preservation and Access Committee (RPAC) is made up of the National Genealogical Society (NGS), the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS), and the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS). FGS represents the members of hundreds of genealogical societies and NGS and IAJGS represent 9,000 genealogists.

Federal Funding: There are a few bright spots in the FY '15 budget. For many years, the History Coalition has successfully led the fight to prevent elimination of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and to ensure that it receives adequate funding to meet its mission. This year, however, both the Financial Services and General Government (FS&GG) Appropriations bill passed by the House and the one considered by the FS&GG appropriations subcommittee in the Senate include a modest \$500,000 increase for the NHPRC up to a level of \$5 million. If ultimately included in the FY '15 Continuing Resolution, this would represent the first increase in the NHPRC's budget in six fiscal years. On July 15, the House Appropriations Committee adopted the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies FY '15 funding bill and included \$146 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The Committee added \$8 million in funding for the NEH, up from the \$138 million level recommended by the Interior appropriations subcommittee. NCH and our colleagues at the National Humanities Alliance issued an advocacy alert urging support of increased funding for the NEH.

Restoration of Funding for History, Civics, and Social Studies: On July 18, the NCH submitted a letter to the U.S. Department of Education requesting that history and civic education be included as priorities in determining where to focus Federal financial assistance through the agency's discretionary grant programs. In addition, numerous NCH member organizations submitted comments in support of history and civics funding. As of the July 24 comment deadline the Department had received over 1,400 comments on its proposal, the vast majority from history and civics organizations and activists. The department is now proposing to repeal its 2010 priorities and definitions for awarding discretionary (competitive) grants, and to replace them with

new priorities. History and civic education haven't been in the government's priorities for some time. In fiscal year 2002, Congress authorized nearly \$1 billion for the "Teaching American History" (TAH) grants program, but Congress terminated funding for TAH in fiscal year 2012. At the same time, appropriations earmarked for civics education were defunded. National History Day, authorized under the History and Civics Act of 2004, received an appropriation of \$500,000 in 2010 and 2011, but Congress terminated funding in 2012. As a result, since FY '11 there has been no federal funding provided for K-12 history or civics education.

National Women's History Museum

Commission: On May 16, the National Coalition for History (NCH) sent a letter to Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) concerning a bill (S. 398) she introduced to establish a commission to study the creation of a National Women's History Museum. NCH strongly supports forming the commission, as well as the ultimate goal of building the museum. Nevertheless, NCH expressed concerns that the legislation in its current form leaves out expert historians and the public from the deliberations of the commission and endorses a problematic fundraising plan. NCH sent a similar letter to the cosponsors of S. 398. Legislation to study the concept of building the museum has been stalled in Congress for nearly a decade and there have been questions about the nonprofit group formed in 1996 to promote the project, the National Women's History Museum, Inc. (NWHM). The legislation calls for the commission to consider the role the NWHM should have in raising funds for the construction of the museum. Yet, since its formation, the NWHM has raised only \$14 million. The museum itself is estimated to cost at least \$400 million. In 2011, the NWHM created a Scholarly Advisory Council made up of experts in women's history, museum professionals, and others to review the museum's exhibits and programs. But just before the women's history museum commission bill was considered by the House, NWHM's president and CEO dissolved the council, which caused an uproar in the historical community. In May, a companion bill (H.R. 863) passed the House by a vote of 383-33. S. 398 has not yet been scheduled for markup or consideration in the Senate.

NCH is a Washington, DC-based nonprofit educational organization providing leadership in history-related advocacy.

~~Ten~~ Eleven Things You Can Do to Support NCPH

1. Share NCPH videos. Thanks to our partners at UTEP, we have four online videos that help convey what NCPH is up to. <http://bit.ly/NCPHvideo>

2. Spread the word. You can help your professional association grow further by nudging colleagues and others to join. We'll happily send you a supply of the new membership brochure. Here's an online flyer <http://bit.ly/NCPHmbr-form>

3. Support NCPH when shopping online. Amazon Smile will donate .5% of your Amazon.com purchase to NCPH. [Search for "National Council on Public History" using the "Pick your own charitable organization" box.] <http://smile.amazon.com/>

4. Send word of job openings to NCPH. Our Jobs page, the most heavily visited part of the NCPH website, is free to employers and job seekers. <http://bit.ly/NCPHjobs>

5. Consider giving a membership as a gift. A thank you, a goodbye, or an introduction to the field for someone you know in the Student, New Professional, and Individual membership categories. <http://bit.ly/GiftMbr>

6. Check the Guide. Is the public history program that you love (i.e., run, teach at, are enrolled at, are an alumnus of) listed in the NCPH Guide with a full and up-to-date entry? <http://bit.ly/NCPH-Guide>

7. Ask your library to subscribe to *The Public Historian*. Public and university libraries with journal subscriptions have the potential to reach thousands of new readers. Help broaden the audience of the best journal in the field. <http://bit.ly/TPH-press>

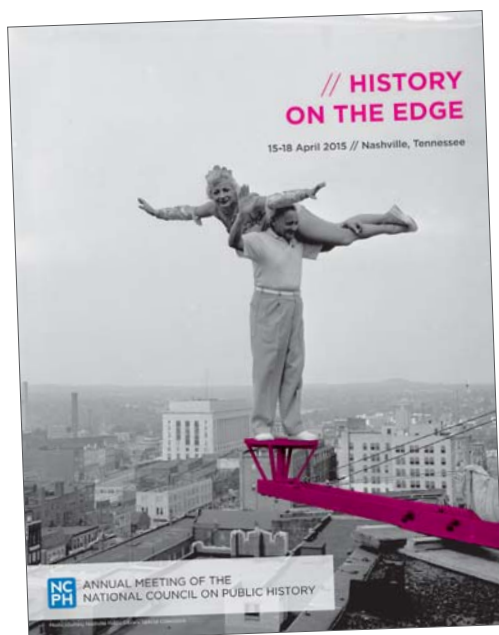
8. Volunteer to help with Speed Networking. If you have a few years of experience and would be willing to talk to folks thinking about career choices, please consider helping with Speed Networking. Volunteer at ncph@iupui.edu.

9. Organize a Mini-Con event. The NCPH Membership Committee inaugurated the "mini-conference" last spring in Chicago. Three more are planned, and we now have guidelines [see page 7] for how you can create a similar event. Let us know you're interested at ncph@iupui.edu.

10. Make a Donation. NCPH has an Annual Fund to help offset the general operating budget, an Endowment Fund for long-term financial needs, and a Digital Integration Fund for advancing digital projects and services. Any amount helps! <http://bit.ly/NCPH-give>
Dial up your support to eleven....

11. Seriously, Consider NCPH in Your Will. The Legacy Circle invites donors who will pledge significant in-hand or deferred donations to ensure NCPH can continue to serve public historians for decades to come. <http://ncph.org/cms/giving/>

Be Seen in Nashville



More than six hundred public historians are expected to attend the 2015 NCPH Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. NCPH invites you to raise your institution's profile by reserving exhibit space, advertising in the Conference Program, or sponsoring an event. Reach potential customers, partners, or students; promote the latest scholarship, forthcoming titles, and journals from your press; and celebrate the accomplishments of your organization.

For more information, visit the 2015 Conference page on the NCPH website: <http://bit.ly/NCPH2015>



There's Still Room for You on the Program

Now that the Program Committee has worked through the session, workshop, and working group proposals for the 2015 NCPH Annual Meeting in Nashville, we have opened the call for Poster Sessions and will open the call for Working Group discussants this month.

Call for Working Group Discussants

Each Working Group has facilitators who have already proposed the topic. They will be looking for 8-12 individuals to join them in pre-conference online discussion, to exchange brief case statements, and to meet in session during the conference. Look for the call in late September; it closes **October 15**.

Information about NCPH Working Groups can be found at <http://bit.ly/NCPH-WorkingGroups>

Call for Posters

The Poster Session is a format for presenters eager to share their work through one-on-one discussion. It can be especially useful for work-in-progress, and may be particularly appropriate where visual or material evidence represents a central component of the project. The Call for Posters is available now at <http://bit.ly/NCPH2015>. Proposals are due **October 1**.

Guidelines for Organizing an NCPH Mini-Con

An NCPH Mini-conference is an event that members plan locally, in collaboration with the NCPH (Executive Office, Membership Committee, or other representative of the organization), that builds a sense of community among NCPH members and does any of the following:

- connects NCPH members to local or state networks, organizations, and institutions of history practitioners and their allies
- helps to strengthen the sense of community among local public history organizations, institutions, and practitioners
- provides public history programming and/or professional development, such as a lecture, discussion, presentation, or workshop

- makes the field/profession of public history and the NCPH more visible
- helps to link the NCPH as an organization to local or state networks, organizations, and institutions of history practitioners and their allies

Local organizers should:

- provide the idea for the event
- make arrangements with speakers, workshop leaders, or panelists
- seek institutional and in-kind support (e.g., meeting space, A/V and computer equipment) and sponsorships
- if appropriate, set a registration fee, in consultation with the NCPH office
- promote the mini-con locally
- provide NCPH with a report and images of the event for promotional purposes afterward
- collect contact information for NCPH, including email addresses of all participants (via registration process before or sign-up sheet at event)

NCPH can:

- offer organizational, logistical, and programming advice
- help local organizers find speakers/presenters
- provide mailing lists of NCPH members and other contacts in the local area
- set up a simple online registration form, if participants will be required to register
- design promotional flyers and other marketing assistance
- promote the mini-con nationally/internationally
- provide NCPH membership materials for distribution at the mini-con



One of the upcoming Mini-Cons will be a Careers in History Symposium like this one that NCPH helped organize in 2010.

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Help Recognize Those Making a Difference in Our Field

NCPH awards mark excellence in the diverse ways public historians apply their skills to the world around us. We invite you to nominate a colleague or submit your own work and join us at the 2015 award breakfast in Nashville during the annual meeting.

Excellence in Consulting Award—Up to two \$500 awards recognize outstanding work and contributions by consultants or contractors.

NCPH Book Award—A \$1,000 award for the best book about or “growing out of” public history published within the previous two calendar years (2013 and 2014).

Graduate Student Travel Award—Five travel grants of up to \$300 each for graduate students presenting (session, poster session, or working group) at the 2015 Annual Meeting.

Outstanding Public History Project Award—\$1,000 recognizing a project that contributes to a broader public reflection and appreciation of the past or that serves as a model of professional public history practice.

Student Project Award—A \$500 travel grant to attend the 2015 Annual Meeting recognizes the contributions of student work to the field of public history.

New Professional Award—Two \$500 travel grants to encourage new professionals, practicing public history for no more than three years, to attend the 2015 Annual Meeting.

Robert Kelley Memorial Award—This \$500 award honors distinguished achievements by individuals, institutions, or nonprofit or corporate entities for making history relevant to individual lives of ordinary people outside of academia.

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

Book and Robert Kelley award nominations must be received by November 1, 2014. All other nominations must be received by December 1, 2014. Submission guidelines are available at www.ncph.org/cms/awards

Questions? (317) 274-2716; ncph@iupui.edu

