



Call for Working Group Discussants
2016 NCPH Annual Meeting
Baltimore, Maryland
March 16-19, 2016

Working groups, involving facilitators and up to twelve discussants, allow conferees to explore in depth a subject of shared concern before and during the Annual Meeting. In these seminar-like conversations, participants have a chance to discuss questions raised by specific programs, problems, or initiatives in their own public history practice with peers grappling with similar issues. Working groups articulate a purpose they are working toward or a problem they are actively trying to solve and aim to create an end product(s), such as a report, article, website, or exhibition. For 2016, eight working groups are assembling:

1. Making Public History Accessible: Exploring Best Practices for Disability Access **CLOSED**
2. Museums and Public Discourse: Past, Present, & Emerging Futures **CLOSED**
3. Building Capacity to Challenge the Exclusive Past **CLOSED**
4. Interpreting the History of Race Riots and Racialized Mass Violence in the Context of "Black Lives Matter" **CLOSED**
5. Standing Up for History in the War on the Humanities **CLOSED**
6. Campus History as Public History **CLOSED**
7. Public History and the Potential of Sports History Museums **CLOSED**
8. Contemporary Collecting to Correct the Exclusive Past **OPEN THROUGH 10/26**

To join a working group, please submit a one-paragraph email message describing the issues you wish to raise with your peers, together with a one-page resume, c.v., or biographical statement by ~~October 15~~ **October 26**. We welcome submissions from individuals across a range of professions and career stages. Please see the specific working group descriptions below. Individuals who are selected will be listed as working group discussants in the conference *Program* and will participate in the working group session at the annual meeting.

This winter the group facilitators will ask participants to contribute a case statement of no more than 500-1,000 words for discussion. The case statement will describe a participant's particular experience, define the issues it raises, and suggests strategies and/or goals for resolution. Case statements will be circulated among participants by email and posted in the *History@Work* blog on the Public History Commons, or in PDF format on the NCPH website. Discussants are expected to read and comment briefly by email on one another's case statements well before the conference date. Some working groups may also have additional shared background reading materials identified by their facilitators.

To apply, please send your paragraph and one-page resume/c.v./biographical statement by ~~October 15~~ October 26 to ncph@iupui.edu with the specific working group title in the subject line of your email. (You may apply to participate in a working group whether or not you have submitted another presentation or session proposal. You may apply for only one working group.) All presenters, attendees, and other participants are expected to register for the Annual Meeting. More information about working groups is available at <http://ncph.org/cms/conferences/working-groups/>.

8. Contemporary Collecting to Correct the Exclusive Past

Facilitators: Joe Tropea, Maryland Historical Society
Michael Stone, University of Maryland Baltimore County

In the midst of uprisings responding to economic inequality, systemic racism, and police violence, what are the roles of public historians and archivists? Public history professionals and institutions occupy a space on the front lines of events that have recognizable historical significance. They also understand all too well—based on the gaps in their own material culture and archival collections—how the absence of evidence can erase voices and hide experiences that do not fit the dominant narrative. Rather than face a future in which historians must scour archives for traces of subaltern narratives, public historians have taken it upon themselves to preserve the voices of contemporary protest before they can be silenced. This project is challenging and imperfect. Public historians can encounter ethical and practical dilemmas that are hard to overcome, with little guidance through the moral terrain.

In particular, this working group is interested in the following questions:

- When is it ethical to begin collecting and interpreting sources and stories?
- What is the project's responsibility to the causes of participants?
- What are the best practice guidelines for collecting materials relating to minors?
- Is it important to know who is served by the project before it begins?
- What does it look like to share authority in a project so embroiled in the passions and politics of the moment?
- Are all voices considered equal?
- How are contributed items preserved digitally?
- How do we ensure the project is sustainable?

This working group will begin to answer these questions surrounding the ethics and best practices of collecting contemporary history and histories of violence. We seek partners from projects that have begun collecting stories, photographs, and other primary sources while events are ongoing or shortly after they have passed. We will share our struggles, concerns, and successes in this largely uncharted territory, and we will produce a document to help guide our colleagues and peers in similar efforts.