Indianapolis is ready to welcome NCPH attendees next month, and we can’t wait to show you around our hometown! Festivities will kick off on Wednesday, April 19 with an opening reception hosted and sponsored by the Indiana Historical Society (IHS), located just a few minutes’ walk from the conference hotel, The Westin Indianapolis. Beginning at 5:15 pm, IHS will host a live performance of an original historical play developed by Conner Prairie Interactive History Park in collaboration with Asante Children’s Theatre. “The Rhodes Family Incident,” written by Crystal V. Rhodes and funded by the Indianapolis Art Center, is a 30-minute interactive museum theater play about two contemporary college students from Westfield, Indiana who discover a historic racial incident that challenges their notions of identity and their hometown. Immediately following the play, attendees will have the opportunity to explore the intersections of public history and performance in a Q&A.

Following the play, the reception will kick off with light appetizers and a cash wine and beer bar (with the first drink covered by your free ticket to the opening reception), and the opportunity to explore IHS after dark. All exhibits will be open for attendees, including the innovative You Are There series, which allows you to “walk into” select photographs from the Indiana Historical Society’s collections and interact with period interpreters. The current slate of You Are There exhibits will allow you to “time travel” to 1877 to visit with Colonel Eli Lilly in Indiana’s first Eli Lilly and Company start-up; converse with Italian prisoners of war being held at Camp Atterbury circa 1943; and meet the women working at the Ball Brothers community canning center in Muncie, Indiana in 1948.

The opening reception is an excellent start to a conference packed with ways to dig deeper into Indy. The 2017 Local Arrangements Committee has put together thirteen tours and service trips that are designed to take attendees beyond the stereotypes and into the true Indianapolis. These include a rare opportunity to go inside the walls of the Indiana Women’s Prison to hear inmates present their groundbreaking research on the history of women’s prisons, gynecology, and eugenics in the 19th century; a hands-on service trip to help the Indiana Deaf History Museum sort its collections; and a bus tour to one of Indy’s weirdest and coolest museums—the Indiana Medical History Museum, formerly the research center of Central State psychiatric hospital. Those willing to get their hands dirty can help clean up a downtown stretch along the bank of the White River while learning about the 1913 flood that devastated sections of the city.

There are also several featured events which will bring NCPH attendees together with the Indianapolis public. On Thursday, April 20, attendees are invited to the local opening of the Humanities Action Lab’s traveling exhibit States of Incarceration at Indianapolis Central Library. On Friday morning at 10:30 am, the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art will be hosting the special off-site session “The Indigenous Middle: Native Perspectives on and Participation in Public
HISTORY supports the NCPH for promoting the value and significance of history every day.
2017 NCPH ELECTION RESULTS

Thank you to the voters and the Nominating Committee, and special thanks to all of the individual candidates who agreed to allow their names to be placed on the ballot!

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NCPH would like to extend a special thanks to all our new Patron and Partner members:

Lamar University, Department of History (Patron)
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In 2016, you provided a total of $10,289 for the Annual Fund, $2,535 for the Endowment, and $1,262 for the Digital Integration Fund. Thank you all!

NCPH is also deeply grateful for the many sponsors of the annual meeting, and the Patron, Partner, and Sustaining members who provide additional support for the organization.

### $300 AND UP
- Kristin Ahlberg†
- Chuck Arning**
- Marianne Babal†‡*
- Melissa Bingmann†
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If we have overlooked your name, please let us know. For more information about contributing in 2017, write to ncph@iupui.edu.
As fears about avian flu and smallpox swept the nation, history suddenly seemed incredibly important. I often joked to my colleagues that our office was, at least on most days, “1918 Flu Pandemic Day”—off-days were reserved for “Smallpox Before 1947 Day.” As a medical historian, I found the conversations I had with reporters and others about these topics fascinating.

But even as reporters pushed me to think about and to explain and analyze the past in new ways, I struggled with the assumptions non-historians made about the ways in which the past could be used to plan for the future. I fell back, repeatedly, on the historian’s stock response—“it’s very complicated”—when I was asked how we could use information from the past to plan for a potential flu outbreak.

I found myself walking a fine line. On the one hand, I explained, the rapid spread of influenza in 1918 was probably shaped, in part, by the failure to understand that a virus causes influenza. Today, physicians, scientists, and public health experts have a knowledge and understanding of influenza our ancestors lacked. But unlike in 1918, travel across borders is extremely common today, meaning that a disease can jump across continents faster than it ever could before. Pointing out that other lesser-known pandemics (such as those in 1957 and 1968) might provide a more provocative insight into a new pandemic helped slightly, but even that approach had its issues.

I became a master of deflection. I steered reporters toward what I saw as some real parallels between the present and the historic event which they were focused on, but I also worked hard to encourage them to see and cover historic events which I thought might be more relevant.

In turn, they pushed me to think more deeply about how their readers understand the past and how we—the reporter and the historian—could educate people about the meaning of the past. This was a steep learning curve for me. Thinking like a reporter had not been a part of my training in graduate school.

This was unfortunate because reporters are natural partners for historians—especially if we want to make sure that the vast majority of Americans can find and learn about historic events which are relevant to us today.

Like historians, reporters do fantastic research; they also use story-telling in a sophisticated way. In fact, I would argue that we have a lot to learn from reporters in terms of how to use a story to make a complicated point.

Unlike many academic historians, reporters work to deadline. Becoming comfortable with that culture was very difficult as reporters pressed me to answer questions quickly. But while deadlines were real, they were also flexible if the story warranted it. What was important to the reporter, I came to realize,
was my readiness to engage in a dialogue—to begin to answer questions and to show a willingness to conduct additional research which could nuance the story. I learned that if I wanted to work with reporters, I needed to understand and work within their culture. Sometimes I found myself conducting research which never made it directly into the article (there was a blow to my ego!) but that research often provided an important, if invisible, scaffolding for the piece. Similarly, I also found myself making what I thought was an important connection between the past and present, only to discover (as I am not a public health or policy expert) that the connection I thought I saw was overly simplistic or even erroneous.

In other words I made a lot of mistakes.

Given the recent attention to the past, I suspect that the media will approach many of us in the coming months. For some of us, working closely with the press will be nothing new, but for others, this will be something not only new but also deeply challenging.

We will all have different responses to the questions reporters ask us. And you will discover, as I did, that no reporter relies on just one historian (I was amused to discover when I worked with a reporter on a piece about smallpox that the reporter went to one of my dissertation readers as well).

Regardless of how reporters approach us and what they ask, this historic moment presents, for many of us, an incredible opportunity for us to demonstrate what we all know—history is fundamental in helping us to understand who we are as a nation and where we have been.
Please join us in congratulating the recipients of this year’s awards for outstanding achievement in a variety of public history formats. Full details about the award winners’ projects will be released in conjunction with the NCPH Annual Meeting in Indianapolis next month. We hope you will celebrate with us at the Awards Breakfast on Saturday, April 22, at The Westin Indianapolis, 8:00 am – 10:00 am.

ROBERT KELLEY MEMORIAL AWARD
For distinguished service to the field of public history.

Lonnie G. Bunch III, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

NCPH FOUNDERS AWARD
The NCPH Council of Past Presidents developed the Founders Award in 2015 to recognize those individuals who were present at the creation of NCPH and who played critical roles in the organization’s success.

Jack M. Holl
Darlene R. Roth

OUTSTANDING PUBLIC HISTORY PROJECT AWARD
NCPH acknowledges the generous support of Stevie and Ted Wolf that makes this award possible.

Mann-Simons Interpretive Enhancements, John Sherrer, Historic Columbia

HONORABLE MENTION
The Stages of Memory: Reflections on Memorial Art, Loss, and the Spaces Between (University of Massachusetts Press, 2016)

MICHAEL C. ROBINSON PRIZE FOR HISTORICAL ANALYSIS
Awarded biennially for historical studies that contribute directly to the formation of public policy.

Robert Lee, Florida Gulf Coast University and Joseph Vonasek, Auburn University, Police and Fire Pensions in Florida: A Historical Perspective and Cause for Future Concerns, Florida League of Cities and Florida City and County Management Association

G. WESLEY JOHNSON AWARD
For the best article in The Public Historian.


HONORABLE MENION
Prisons Today: Questions in the Age of Mass Incarceration, Annie Anderson and Sean Kelley, Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site

NCPH BOOK AWARD
James E. Young, University of Massachusetts Amherst, The Stages of Memory: Reflections on Memorial Art, Loss, and the Spaces Between (University of Massachusetts Press, 2016)

HONORABLE MENTION
Michelle Moon, Newark Museum, Interpreting Food at Museums and Historic Sites (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016)

NEW PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL AWARDS

Lily Anne Welty Tamai, Japanese American National Museum & University of California, Los Angeles

Victoria Throop, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Aiden M. Bettine, DePaul University; Chris Fite, University of Pennsylvania; Cheryl Jiménez Frei, University of California, Santa Barbara; Leslie J. Leonard, University of North Carolina at Greensboro; Harvee White, University of West Georgia

history,” Finally, on Friday evening NCPH will host several speakers to talk about “Making LGBTQ History American History: A Public Conversation on Stonewall and Beyond.” We welcome both attendees and the public to join in this moderated conversation on the evolving landscape of LGBTQ historical memory.

History.” Finally, on Friday evening NCPH will host several speakers to talk about “Making LGBTQ History American History: A Public Conversation on Stonewall and Beyond.” We hope you’ll get a chance to investigate our city on your own. Check out pages 8-11 of the conference Program for recommendations from the Local Arrangements Committee about what to do, where to eat, and where to unwind at the end of the day. Check out www.visitindy.com/ncph2017 for hotel reservations, local discounts, and great guides and maps of the city. Have a drink at Indianapolis’ oldest bar, The Slippery Noodle, founded in 1850; take a stroll along the canal, home to some of the city’s finest public art, monuments, and museums; or grab a bite to eat at the historic Indianapolis City Market, opened in 1886. Downtown is rich with cultural heritage, so whether you choose to investigate the city by bus, bicycle, or on foot, you’ll always be right in the middle of history.

UNCOVER THE UNEXPECTED IN INDY! // CONT. FROM PAGE 1

Photo courtesy of Drew Endicott Photography.

Kyle McKay is Vice President, Education & Exhibits at the Indiana Historical Society and Philip Scarpino is Director of IUPUI’s Graduate Program in Public History. McKay and Scarpino serve as co-chairs of the Local Arrangements Committee for the 2017 NCPH Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, IN.
Call for Proposals

Public historians want our work to matter. We use our skills at uncovering, sharing, facilitating, and collaborating to advance a vision of a rich, variegated collective past that contributes to shared interests in the present. For decades, “community” has been our catchphrase and our aspiration. How does our field’s longstanding embrace of the collective stand up in a time of divisiveness? Do our commitments to individual agency, group identity, social justice, and civic engagement reinforce or, perhaps, strain against each other? In drawing lines between past and present, delineating distinctive communities, and underlining the contributions of overlooked actors, how can public history bring us together and when does it pull us apart?

NCPH invites proposals for its 2018 conference in Las Vegas that address the power of public history to define, cross, and blur boundary lines—work that explores public history’s power in all its complexities, idealism, and, perhaps, unintended consequences.

The online proposal system opens in April; proposals are due by July 15, 2017.