

IN MEMORIAM: G. WESLEY JOHNSON, JR. / APRIL 28, 1932-NOVEMBER 16, 2018

REBECCA CONARD / REBECCACONARD@GMAIL.COM

G. Wesley Johnson, Jr., founding editor of *The Public Historian* and a founding member of the National Council on Public History, died November 16, 2018. He is survived by his wife, Marian Ashby Johnson, four children—Cynthia, Carolyn, George III, and Benjamin—and their families.

Wes became a legendary figure among public historians although his career touched many bases. He grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, where his family served leadership roles in the political and cultural life of that fast-growing city. He studied history at Harvard, graduating in 1955. While at Harvard, he was an associate editor of the *Harvard Lampoon*, penning cartoons as well as articles alongside John Updike, who was then chief editor. After Harvard, he served a two-and-a-half-year mission for the Mormon Church. Based in Paris, he traveled to many countries and, by his own admission, developed a broad view of history. He also observed the role that journalism played in French intellectual life. After returning to the United States, he briefly studied law at Stanford University, then took up graduate work in history at Columbia University. With the aid of a three-year Ford Foundation grant, he undertook dissertation research on the emergence of modern African politics in Paris and Dakar, Senegal. He obtained his PhD in 1967, and his dissertation was published as

The Emergence of Black Politics in Senegal: The Struggle for Power in the Four Communes, 1900-1920 (Stanford University Press, 1971). He also edited, co-edited, or co-authored three more books as well as many essays on twentieth-century African political history.

Wes began his teaching career in 1965 as assistant professor of history at Stanford University. While at Stanford, he served as a research associate at the Hoover Institution and, with Eugene England, co-founded *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, the first independent journal in Mormon studies. In 1972, he joined the faculty at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), where he taught African history and began to develop a second field in what would become known as public history. Wes left UCSB in 1984 to become professor of history and political science at Brigham Young University (BYU), additionally serving as professor of business history in the Marriott School of Business. He also directed the Family and Community History Center at BYU and brought the Mormon Outmigration Leadership History Project (MOLHP) into the Marriott School. He retired from teaching in 1997, but, with his wife Marian, continued to administer the MOLHP until it was finished in 2007. He and Marian also teamed as consultants under the name Ashby and Johnson. In addition to undertaking several corporate history projects, they coauthored *Centennial Utah: The Beehive State on the Eve of the Twenty-first Century* (1995).



Wes Johnson at the 2018 NCPH Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada. Photo by j.l.r. holler.

During the twelve years that Wes was at UCSB, he and Robert (Bob) Kelley laid the groundwork for public history as an academic field. The process began shortly after he arrived. At the invitation of the mayor of Phoenix and with the aid of a National Endowment for the Humanities grant, he took a year's leave from UCSB to organize the Phoenix History Project, a massive oral and community history project that would ultimately result in two published books. With this project, Wes was able to lean on his deep roots in the community to involve many people in documenting the city's history. When he returned to UCSB, he and Kelley, who was experimenting with a class he called "public history," which combined history and policy studies, collaborated to establish a graduate program in Public Historical Studies. With generous

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

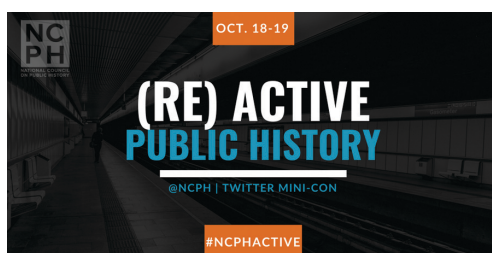


STEPHANIE ROWE / ROWES@IUPUI.EDU

NCPH is in the middle of three years of celebrations: 2018 marked the 40th anniversary of *The Public*

Historian, our Hartford

conference next month will mark the 40th anniversary of the first national public history gatherings (in Montecito, California and at the National Archives, 1979), and 2020 will mark the 40th anniversary of NCPH's official founding and incorporation. To mark these occasions, we've convened an ad hoc committee of members both longtime and new to help us consider what forty years of NCPH and a defined field of public history mean, as well as where we think the field is going. We're also heading into year two of our *2020 Vision Endowment* fundraising campaign with the goal of pushing our Endowment over \$1 million—



NCPH held our first-ever Twitter Mini-Con in Fall 2018.

helping us build our capacity to provide new and innovative professional development opportunities, to grow our awards program in ways that focus on inclusion, and to increase our fiscal independence. This is an exciting time to be a part of NCPH to be certain.

Thanks to those who have already pledged and donated to the *2020 Vision Campaign*, our early success can already be seen in our Board-approved 2019 operating budget. For several years we've had a modest fund for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 ►

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS: NCPH IN HARTFORD



MARLA MILLER / MMILLER@HISTORY.UMASS.EDU

Welcome to Hartford! It is not always the case that the NCPH president gets to host an annual meeting in her home region, so I'm especially thrilled to welcome you to Hartford, the Connecticut River Valley, and New England.

I have been smitten with the city of Hartford since I first laid eyes on it over thirty years ago, when as an undergraduate attending the Historic Deerfield Summer Fellowship Program I passed under the Gothic Revival castellations of the Wadsworth Atheneum—the nation's first public art museum—founded in 1842. I've since come to appreciate the city's literary history, as home

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

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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 – IUUI, 425 University Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46202-5140. E-mail: ncph@iuui.edu. Tel: 317-274-2716. Join online or renew at www.ncph.org. Headquartered on the campus of IU School of Liberal Arts and the Department of History.

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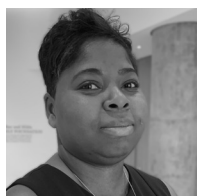
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Thank you to the voters and the Nominating Committee, and special thanks to all of the individual candidates who agreed to allow their names to be placed on the ballot!

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In 2018, you provided a total of \$5,313 for the Annual Fund, \$26,247.50 for the Endowment, and \$670 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.

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As we enter our second year of our three year 2020 Vision Campaign to bring our Endowment over \$1 million, we want to recognize all those who pledged to donate over multiple years. Your commitment is vital to our success and we are grateful!

It is not too late to join your colleagues in making a pledge to help us reach our goal by NCPH's 40th Anniversary at the 2020 Annual Meeting. Visit <http://ncph.org/giving/endowment> for more information.



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

increasing diversity and inclusion at our annual meeting, distributed and used at the discretion of our program committee chairs. This amount has increased in 2019, a first step in the development of a more openly accessible diversity and inclusion award for the annual meeting. We have also created a new line in the budget for accessibility accommodations for the annual meeting. Right now this covers the cost of a nursing mothers' room and American Sign Language interpreters for attendees who request them. The building-out of this fund will be accompanied by a new conference accessibility plan, which will help us formalize and ramp up our accessibility work.

We have also already begun experimenting with more inclusive and accessible programming formats—having piloted our first Twitter Mini-Con with no registration fee last fall. To read more about this dynamic event, read our write-up on the event from *History@Work* (<https://ncph.org/history-at-work/breaking-down-ncphs-first-twitter-mini-con/>). We'll also be using our mini-con seed money to support several unique partnerships in 2019. Already on the books are a day-long History Relevance workshop in Indianapolis; a second CampingCon, held this time in the San Juan Island National Historical Park in Washington State; and a collaboration with the Society for History in the Federal Government later this spring. These mini-con opportunities provide new ways for public historians across the country to connect with the NCPH community with low (or no) registration fees and little-to-no cost for travel.

We're looking forward to beginning our celebrations in Hartford, CT where our 40th Anniversary Ad Hoc committee will be honoring the attendees at the 1979 Montecito and National Archives meetings in

our Exhibit Hall in the Connecticut Convention Center. We'll also be sharing our history and future hopes throughout the next two years on *History@Work* and in the pages of *Public History News*, and we'll have much in store for our anniversary meeting in 2020 in Atlanta, Georgia—so we'll see you there!

**NC
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Building Our Future
2018-2020 Endowment Campaign

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"I could not do my job without NCPH. The opportunities for graduate students, tenure and promotion guidelines, and the ability to collaborate with so many talented, supportive, and creative colleagues from across the world are priceless."

Melissa Bingmann

IN MEMORIAM: G. WESLEY JOHNSON, JR. // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

support from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Rockefeller Foundation, they launched the program in Fall 1976. Their pedagogical model was built on the premise that public historians should be generalists capable of bringing historical methods and perspectives to bear on many issues of contemporary life. Toward that end, the curriculum they inaugurated included a broadly ranging seminar in American historiography; newly developed seminars crossing disciplinary boundaries, such as land-use history and policy, and quantitative methods; and a core team-research seminar in public history.

UCSB's program did not emerge in a vacuum. Generations of historians had built productive history-based professional careers, and by the 1970s a scattering of history departments nationwide were training students for jobs other than teaching. Wes Johnson's contribution to this activity, however, was singular: he gave it an identity and a structure. Drawing on his journalism background, he founded *The Public Historian* in 1978, announcing in the first issue that the journal heralded "the birth of a new field," a pronouncement that seemed rash to many at the time. Initially financed with seed money from the Rockefeller Foundation, *TPH* joined the University of California Press's stable of journals in 1980, with editorial offices at UCSB. Wes also arranged for the newly formed National Council on Public History to become the journal's cosponsor. NCPH represented the other half of Wes's strategy.

In 1979, he organized a gathering of academics and history practitioners at Montecito, California. This successful brainstorming meeting led to a second gathering at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and the official founding of NCPH in 1980.

Wes served as editor of *The Public Historian* for ten years and chaired NCPH from 1980 to 1983. During the remainder of his time at UCSB, he also began cultivating an international presence for public history, organizing meetings in England, France, Holland, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Cameroon, Togo, Senegal, and elsewhere. This spadework produced a few articles published in *TPH* and a small cohort of international members in NCPH, but a true international presence would not emerge until much later. He also promoted the establishment of public history programs at other universities, most notably through a 1984 NEH summer institute in public history at Arizona State University, which he codirected with Noel Stowe.

After Wes stepped down as *TPH* editor in 1987, he redirected his attention to business and Mormon social history, but he left a living legacy in the journal and in NCPH. Public history became a recognized academic field richer than he or Bob Kelley fathomed in the mid-1970s. In a 2015 interview, Wes summed up their collaboration this way: "Bob started classes and so forth at Santa Barbara. I'm the one who went out and spread it. . . . He didn't have the stomach for the stuff I was



Marian and Wes Johnson during a 2012 visit to the IUPUI campus and NCPH's archives.

doing . . . going to conferences and organizing things and so forth, trying to spread the public history gospel all over." In addition to coining the term "public history," Bob also "gave it some currency . . . and he was a great mentor for me, a great friend." The same could be said of Wes Johnson, who was a mentor, friend, and inspiration to many of the public historians who followed in his wake. NCPH honored him in 2015 as the first recipient of the NCPH Founders Award.

Rebecca Conard is professor of history emeritus, Middle Tennessee State University, and former director of the Middle Tennessee State University Public History Program. She is a past president of NCPH and currently serves on the NCPH Council of Past Presidents, Development Committee, and 40th Anniversary Ad Hoc Committee.

NCPH IS TURNING 40!

The first national symposium on public history was held at Montecito, California in April, 1979. In September, a second meeting at the National Archives resolved to organize a National Council on Public History. On May 2, 1980, NCPH was incorporated in the District of Columbia.

NCPH will be commemorating its 40th birthday over the next two years. For more on celebrating four decades of public history and NCPH, visit the NCPH40 booth in the Hartford Exhibit Hall.



PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS: NCPH IN HARTFORD // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

to the poet Wallace Stevens, to novelists Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Twain, and so many others, and not long ago made a deep dive into the city's African American past to understand the lives and labors of 19th century dressmakers Mehitabel Jacobs Primus and Addie Brown—women who well knew the work of mending and repair, remaking and restoring.

The work of public historians so often involves restoration and conservation, revitalization and reparation as we attend to tears, breaks, and ruptures, deterioration and damage, both tangible and intangible. Our theme, “Repair Work,” invites us to consider the various ways in which public historians labor to mend, to rebuild and reclaim, and to heal. Ours is an appropriate theme as we confront challenges of deindustrialization, decline, and violence, while also pursuing paths toward recovery and rebirth. Hartford offers a productive setting for such contemplations. The Connecticut River itself is a story of repair and recovery. Once plagued by industrial and agricultural run-off, four decades of focused advocacy and effective conservation partnerships restored the waterway's health; by 1998 the Connecticut was named an American Heritage River and in 2013, the Connecticut River and its watershed was designated the nation's first National Blueway. Across the city, Hartford is reclaiming its abundance of

onetime industrial sites for housing, for the arts, and for modern work spaces. Perhaps nothing says it better than the vivid royal blue onion dome that sits atop Samuel Colt's Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company (and the utopian village he created around it): once the height of industrial design, Coltsville in time faced a long period of decline and eventual abandonment, until decades of advocacy brought forth its restoration (partial) and now renewal (forthcoming) as a National Historical Park. From the award-winning preservation of Charles Bullfinch's Old State House (1792) to the renovation of the Modernist Hotel Sonesta (1964), Hartford's embrace of, and investment in, its historic fabric is advancing efforts to revitalize the city—work that provides an energizing backdrop to these important conversations.

To help us think through our own relationships to repair work, our hardworking and thoughtful Program Committee has gathered together sessions teeming with opportunities to share strategies, concerns, failures, and successes. The conference also offers means by which to acquire and sharpen the tools of our practice. The meeting will include Preservation Leadership Training in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation alongside workshops on podcasting, grant-writing, oral histories, history relevance, consulting, and immersive gameplay.

Meanwhile, our stellar Local Arrangements Committee has arranged outings to advance conversations around development and redevelopment, the preservation of Indigenous, African American, and Anglo American pasts, and the role historic sites can play in addressing contentious contemporary issues.

We particularly hope that this gathering can help us all confront epidemic gun violence and contemplate ways that public historians can help the nation address this crisis. From the plenary to sessions to tours—including a digital hackathon workshop on the documentation of mass gun violence and a tour to the emerging Coltsville National Historical Park—we will look hard together at this pressing issue.

Our annual meeting is itself an occasion for repair and renewal; we gather to restore our vision, to reset our priorities, to refresh longstanding ties, and to create new ones. In the 18th century (the historical era I know best), the verb “repair” also meant to return, or to make one's way—and so I invite you to repair with me to Hartford, and to NCPH!

Marla Miller is the President of NCPH and is Professor and Director of the Public History Program in the History department at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

NCPH AWARD WINNERS FOR 2019

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 Hartford next month. We hope you will celebrate with us at the Awards Breakfast on Saturday, March 30, at the Connecticut Convention Center, 8:00 am – 10:00 am.

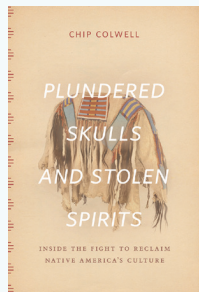
OUTSTANDING PUBLIC HISTORY PROJECT AWARD

NCPH acknowledges the generous support of Stevie and Ted Wolf that makes this award possible.

We are the Roots: Black Settlers and their Experiences with Discrimination on the Canadian Prairies, **Jenna Bailey**, Centre for Oral History and Tradition, University of Lethbridge; **Deborah Dobbins**, Shiloh Centre for Multicultural Roots; and **David Este**, University of Calgary

HONORABLE MENTION

The Orange Story, **Jasmine Alinder** and **Patrick Hall**, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; **Erika Street Hopman**, Chavo Bart Digital Media; **Jason Matsumoto** and **Eugene Sun Park**, Full Spectrum Features



NCPH BOOK AWARD

Chip Colwell, Denver Museum of Nature and Science, *Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits: Inside the Fight to Reclaim Native America's Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 2017)

HONORABLE MENTION

Christine M. Delucia, Mount Holyoke College, *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (Yale University Press, 2018)

G. WESLEY JOHNSON AWARD

For the best article in *The Public Historian*.

Fath Davis Ruffins, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, for "Building Homes for Black History: Museum Founders, Founding Directors, and Pioneers, 1915-95," *The Public Historian* Vol 40, No 3

HONORABLE MENTION

John E. Fleming, National Museum of African American Music, for "The Impact of Social Movements on the Development of African American Museums," *The Public Historian* Vol 40, No 3

EXCELLENCE IN CONSULTING AWARD

GROUP AWARD

Jackie Gonzales, Emily Greenwald, Dawn Vogel, Jessi Frank, Kayla Blackman, and Nick Kryloff, Historical Research Associates, Inc., *Commemoration and Collaboration: An Administrative History of the Lewis and Clark National Historical Trail*

INDIVIDUAL AWARD

Josh Howard, Passel Historical Consulting, "Our Only Alma Mater": *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the C&O Canal*

HONORABLE MENTION

Paul Sadin, Historical Research Associates, Inc., *A History of the Cushman Hydroelectric Project: Tacoma Power, the Skokomish Tribe, and the Skokomish River, 1910-2016*

STUDENT PROJECT AWARD

Owning Up: Racism and Housing in Minneapolis, **Denise Pike** and **Kacie Lucchini Butcher**, University of Minnesota

HONORABLE MENTION

An Extraordinary Look into Ordinary Lives: Uncovering Dorchester's Industrial School for Girls, 1859-1880, **Sarah Black**, University of Massachusetts Boston

NEW PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL AWARDS

HRA NEW PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL AWARD
Porsha Dossie, National Park Service, Park History Program

NCPH NEW PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL AWARD
Sonya Laney, Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum and North Carolina State Historic Site

GRADUATE STUDENT TRAVEL AWARDS

Nichelle Frank, University of Oregon
Holly Genovese, University of Texas at Austin
Daniel Milowski, Arizona State University
Heather Stanfiel, University of Notre Dame
Jackie Swihart, IUPUI

NCPH awards and travel grants are possible in part due to your donations to the NCPH Endowment. A primary goal of our 2020 Vision Endowment Campaign is to "expand travel grants and award offerings to increase diversity and inclusion in the organization and field." To help grow our future award and travel grant offerings, please consider giving or pledging to the campaign:
<http://ncph.org/giving/endowment>.



Save the date for #NCPH2020!

March 18-21, 2020 | Atlanta, Georgia
Call for Proposals coming soon on ncph.org

Program Committee Co-Chairs

Ashley Bouknight, *The Hermitage*
Brian Joyner, National Park Service

Local Arrangements Committee Co-Chairs

Julia Brock, University of Alabama
Amy Wilson, Independent Consultant

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PUBLIC HISTORY NEWS

National Council on Public History

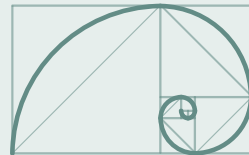
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