

PUBLIC HISTORY NEWS

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REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN ACTION



MARLA MILLER / MMILLER@HISTORY.UMASS.EDU

Every now and again, it's especially satisfying to stop being a producer of public history content and return to being a consumer of

it. That's especially true when the work you're engaging reminds you what our field and mission is all about.

A few weeks ago I had the enormous privilege of visiting Somerset Place in Creswell, North Carolina, one of 27 units within the system of North Carolina State Historic Sites. This was a trip decades in the making. As a graduate student at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in the 1990s, I had read Dorothy Spruill Redford's Somerset Homecoming: Recovering a Lost Heritage, a riveting account of her effort, inspired by the broadcast of the miniseries Roots (1977), to recover and reclaim the history of hundreds of people enslaved at this plantation. Somehow, though, I had never made it out to Washington County in the several years I lived there. But now here I was—and in the company of one of my most

thoughtful graduate school classmates fellow public historian Anne Mitchell Whisnant at last making the long drive toward the Albemarle, and this important site.

As readers of Redford's book know, in the wake of *Roots* and her daughter's questions about their own family history, Redford—a social worker by profession—launched what became a decade of research during which she documented not only her own family's past, but the entwined histories of the many people enslaved by the Collins family at Somerset Place. In August 1986, more than 2,000 descendants of the former plantation's enslaved community as well as those of the enslavers gathered at the site in an event covered by both national and international press. In 1990, Redford became the Executive Director of the site, a role she filled until her 2008 retirement.

Under Redford's leadership, Somerset Place was transformed. The traditional plantation tour, led at one time by white "hostesses" who walked visitors through the Collins house, was supplanted by an interpretive plan that encompassed (as explained on the



NCPH President Marla Miller (right) with Anne Mitchell Whisnant at Somerset Place. Photo courtesy Noah Janis.

site's webpage) not only the three generations of owners, but also the more than 850 enslaved people who lived and worked on the plantation over the years, as well as two free black employees and some fifty white employees. Reconstructions of two of the cabins occupied by enslaved families as well as the site's hospital appeared on the grounds (joining an early reconstruction of the overseers' dwelling) together with signage interpreting the archeological remains of now-lost structures like the Episcopal chapel and enslaved community kitchen.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 ▶

CHANGING HOW WE EAT (AND DRINK) AT NCPH 2020

MEGHAN HILLMAN / MEGHILLM@IUPUI.EDU

Last summer, as you may recall if you read "Introducing NCPH's Guidelines for Building an Accessible Meeting" in our September 2019 issue of *Public History News*, NCPH adopted a new accessibility plan for our annual meetings and other events. The plan guides how we think about, plan for, and communicate with attendees and presenters about accessibility at our events.



Atlanta Buford Highway Farmers Market Fish. Image courtesy the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Some aspects of this plan codified steps we were already taking as an organization to be accessible, but one area in which I think we were falling behind and needed to make concerted efforts to improve was in regards to food accessibility. In the past (as now), NCPH has included a box on our registration materials for attendees to check if they wish to be contacted regarding an accessibility request. However, we weren't as clear as we should have been that we included food and beverage accessibility in that broad net, and we included no other mechanism for finding out about attendees' food-related needs in more detail.

This was a relatively small oversight when our conference attendance was modest. NCPH's conference model keeps our number of meal events low on purpose to keep our registration rates within reach of student and new professional attendees, so food is less

WELCOME, STASIA!



NCPH is excited to welcome our new Membership Coordinator, Stasia Tanzer, this month! Stasia previously served as the NCPH Graduate Assistant for the 2017-2018 school year, while completing the public history master's program at IUPUI. She also interned at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art. Stasia comes to NCPH from the Chicagoland area, where she earned her BA in history and psychology at North Central College in 2017. Stasia is excited to return to NCPH and to serve the public history community!

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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 IUPUI, NCPH is grateful for the generous support of the IU School of Liberal Arts and the Department of History.

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In 2019, you provided a total of \$4,679 for the Annual Fund, \$41,367 for the Endowment, and \$205 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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If we have overlooked your name, please let us know. For more information about contributing in 2020, write to ncph@iupui.edu.

As we enter our final 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 the course of several years. Your commitment is vital to our success and we are grateful to all of you!

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.

Elyssa Ford*



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HOW WE GROW: A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY



ABBY GAUTREAU /
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Editor's Note: This piece is part of a series originally appearing on NCPH's History@Work blog that illustrates the role of the NCPH

Endowment in supporting and growing the field. To read the full series of posts on History@Work, please visit: https://ncph.org/history-at-work/tag/ncph-endowment/. To find out more about how the NCPH Endowment Fund supports the work of public historians and to make your pledge to the 2020 Vision campaign, please visit: https://ncph.org/giving/endowment/.

In this piece, we hear from Abby Gautreau, an Assistant Professor of History at Grand Valley State University, who reflects on how NCPH has provided her with valuable resources for professional growth, early career support, and a space to work through the emotional labor of public history alongside supportive friends and colleagues.

WHY ARE YOU A MEMBER OF NCPH?

I am a member of NCPH for a number of reasons. I became a member during graduate school because Rebecca Conard told us to join, and I had no reason to doubt her judgment. I'm still a member because NCPH has become my professional home. I'm currently an Assistant Professor of (Public) History at Grand Valley State University, but I spent a couple of years on the job market before winning that particular lottery. When I was looking for work, NCPH was my connection

to the field. Through annual meetings I was able to connect with my peers across the country, forming professional and personal relationships that both grounded me and helped me develop the skills I needed to string together the gigs that eventually became a job. For example, in 2016, I got a part-time job as a content developer at the Tennessee Historical Society, which was developing a new website. I ended up creating a temporary site so we could register students and teachers for Tennessee History Day while we waited on the developers. I was able to do this because I had attended a THATCamp at an annual meeting where Sharon Leon convinced me to develop a standalone website and someone there mentioned online coding classes.

Beyond these practical benefits, NCPH has also become an anchor for the emotional labor of public history. As practitioners, our work can be exhausting and isolating, but through NCPH, I've made friends who understand the field and are always open to listening and offering advice. The community has become an invaluable resource to me, to the point where annual meetings feel more like a reunion and a chance to meet new people than work (though I always learn a lot!).

HOW HAS THE NCPH ENDOWMENT HELPED YOU IN YOUR WORK AS A PUBLIC HISTORIAN?

My most direct connection to the Endowment is through the fund's support for Mini-Cons and expanded staff. Last fall I was able to bring a group of students to the Careers in

History Symposium in Indianapolis, and it's difficult to quantify the impact this had on all of the students who attended. For many of my students, it was their first chance to talk to graduate students in the field, and it was a welcome chance to meet public historians working outside of Western Michigan. These Mini-Cons are possible in large part due to the expanded staff, which allows NCPH to provide more opportunities for members to connect outside of the annual meeting, as well as creates opportunities for potential new members and future public historians to encounter NCPH on a smaller scale.

IN WHAT WAYS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE NCPH FURTHER SUPPORT PUBLIC HISTORIANS?

I would like to see NCPH continue to grow in thoughtful ways. I realize that I'm part of the explosive growth of the organization (since joined in 2012 membership has grown by 45%), and I've been impressed with the way that NCPH has created new opportunities for community building within the field. As co-chair of the Long-Range Planning Committee, I am probably rather biased, but I'm excited to see where NCPH is as we meet our goals in regards to both creating a more inclusive membership and organizing annual meetings that offer more opportunities for collaboration with local host communities.

-Abby Gautreau, is an Assistant Professor of History at Grand Valley State University and co-chair of NCPH's Long Range Planning Committee.

Thank you to NCPH's Sustaining-level members! Sustaining members make the work of NCPH possible.

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2019 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT



SHARON LEON, SECRETARY/TREASURER / SHARONMLEON@GMAIL.COM



STEPHANIE ROWE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / ROWES@IUPUI.EDU

The 2019 fiscal year ended very well, with a healthy surplus that will help us prepare for an important set of financial transitions in the coming years. Membership numbers and subscriptions to *The Public Historian* both grew modestly. The largest membership increases were in Patron and Sustaining level memberships; these higher levels of support provide important, predictable income for the organization, and we've been pleased to see so many individuals supporting our work in this way and encourage others to do the same. The 2019 conference far exceeded income goals due to city subsidies that were not guaranteed and high attendance. The board fell just shy of its goal for the Annual Fund, but focused attention on the final push for the Endowment campaign, which is well on its way to a successful conclusion. This was also the first year NCPH took on the full cost of the salary and benefits for the Program Manager position (this new financial arrangement began July 2018, our host university previously contributed to the position) and the Board used surplus funds from 2016 to partially cover that increased cost. The surplus for 2019 is a good indication that once that encumbered surplus funding runs out, the organization will continue to be able to bear that additional expense, moving us every closer to fiscal independence.

Administrative costs for the organization came slightly under budget in salary and benefits with the membership position being filled only part time for the fourth quarter. Membership and publication costs were also slightly under budget because of a reduction in activity during the staffing shortage. Annual meeting costs were slightly over budget because of increased attendance.

NCPH 2019 Operating Budget

January-December

•	2018 Budget	2018 Actual	2019 Budget	2019 Actual
Income				
Memberships & Partners/Patrons	\$121,000	\$124,476	\$126,200	\$131,631
TPH Institutional Subscriptions	\$19,500	\$20,827	\$19,500	\$23,417
Annual Meetings & Mini Cons	\$158,000	\$156,987	\$168,450	\$214,455
IUPUI Projects & O'Brien Lecture	\$9,500	\$19,000	\$9,500	\$4,750
Interfund Transfer from DIF & Endowment Earn	ings \$37,450	\$33,995	\$39,170	\$35,493
Miscellaneous	\$2,450	\$3,299	\$1,400	\$3,166
Grant Projects	\$0	\$12,500	\$0	\$0
Contributions to Annual Fund	\$5,000	\$5,068	\$5,000	\$4,679
Encumbered 2018 Surplus	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$15,000	\$15,000
Total Operating Budget Income	\$360,400	\$383,652	\$384,220	\$432,591
Expenses				
Membership	\$21,654	\$21,381	\$22,150	\$19,099
Annual Meeting	\$124,764	\$126,908	\$125,300	\$128,449
Publications	\$28,250	\$29,509	\$28,150	\$26,462
Awards	\$7,850	\$6,892	\$7,900	\$7,181
Administration	\$163,431	\$168,845	\$178,528	\$173,971
Board & Committees	\$4,800	\$6,261	\$5,050	\$6,443
Biennial Audit/Review	\$0	\$0	\$4,200	\$4,600
Advocacy & Participation in Other Associations	\$8,530	\$8,530	\$8,185	\$8,185
Grant Projects	\$0	\$12,500	\$0	\$0
Total Operating Budget Expenses	\$359,279	\$380,826	\$379,463	\$374,390
Net Operating (Deficit)/Surplus	\$1,121	\$2,826	\$4,757	\$58,201

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN ACTION // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1



Somerset Place, Creswell, North Carolina. Image courtesy Marla Miller

During our Friday afternoon visit, led by skilled historian, interpreter, and fellow UNC-Chapel Hill graduate, Noah Janis, we experienced the outstanding tour that now covers the history of the site from the 1780s arrival of the first eighty enslaved workers to the Collins family's departure from the site during the Civil War. Because of the rich archival record that survives, visitors encounter a range of individuals whose stories can be told in unusual detail, an asset the site taps effectively to offer both the big picture of change across the region and up-close glimpses of the lives that unfolded here.

It is a powerful site and its stories well-told. So much so that we were keen to return the next day for what we later learned was only the third offering of a new tour, "Somerset Place in the New South," which narrates the site's history from the Civil War to the present essentially the "making of" the historic site visitors encounter today. We learned about events in the years immediately following the Civil War, through the tenure of the Farm Security Administration, to the site's 1967 recreation as a unit of the North Carolina's Department of Archives and History system of historic sites, to the work of Dorothy Redford and the reinterpretation of Somerset Place since the 1980s.

This form of reflective practice, in which sites invite visitors to contemplate the histories and decisions of past generations in order to understand the making of a historic site as visitors now experience it is all too rare. NCPH past presidents Rebecca Conard and Bob Weyeneth have urged us all to embrace more reflective practice, and to "pull back the curtain" on the processes and decisions (internal

and external, large and incremental) that shape the forms public history products take, while National Park Service (NPS) curator Patricia West has drawn attention to the ways in which the choices of founders constrain the aspirations of later generations of practitioners.1 When Anne and I, together with Gary Nash and David Thelen, coauthored Imperiled Promise: The State of

History in the National Park Service (Organization of American Historians, 2011), we urged the agency to devote more attention to this kind of interpretation—work that engages, and surfaces for visitors, the ways in which pastkeepers are themselves historical agents with power over landscapes and resources. In my neck of the woods here in western Massachusetts, Historic Deerfield has long offered tours of Allen House, the home of museum founders Helen and Henry Flynt, where guides talk about the history of collecting in the early 20th-century US, and the priorities and preoccupations of the Flynts that shaped the village as we know it today. But such opportunities remain all too rare, which makes the ones we can encounter especially exciting.

Our journey was guided, too, by the outstanding Duke University dissertation of Alisa Harrison, "Reconstructing Somerset Place: Slavery, Memory and Historical Consciousness," which "examines the gradual invention of Somerset Place State Historic Site in order to explore the nature and implications of representations of slavery, and the development of Americans' historical consciousness of slavery during their nation's long transition into freedom."2 The minute we returned to the car on Friday afternoon we opened up Harrison's fascinating text, me reading passages to Anne as we drove back to our lodging, and she reading passages to me as we continued our lively conversation well into the evening.

These experiences taken together—the thoughtful tour of the site's history before 1865, grounded in the experience of the enslaved population; the fascinating account of the site's journey to the present; and the

substantive scholarship on the history of public history practice that helps inform that account—left us both feeling inspired and optimistic about the prospects of this interpretive approach. There's good reason to think that this and other work that aims not only to tell new stories, but to tell them in fresh ways that demystify the evolution of historic places and situates them in larger, complicated and more recent pasts, is helping drive rising interest in visiting such sites. According to the American Association for State and Local History's (AASLH's) National Visitation Report of 2019, visitation to historic houses is up almost nine percent in the years between 2013 and 2018 (Table 6) and historic site visitation is up just over ten percent nationwide (table 7)3. Additional analysis by AASLH and the National Park Service suggests that "while it is true that visitation to some of the larger institutions such as Colonial Williamsburg and Gettysburg has fallen in the past few years, this may be less a result of Americans becoming disinterested in their history (as some commenters claim) than it is a result of Americans becoming interested in different kinds of history... NPS data suggest that Americans are not ignoring historic sites, but rather visiting those that tell more relevant and engaging histories."4

We live in challenging times for public historians, as budgets drop and resources are constantly threatened and/or shrinking. The excellent and innovative work unfolding in and around Somerset Place—and, I will add, the enthusiastic response of our fellow visitors each day—offered a welcome opportunity to appreciate the successes of our shared field, too.

-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.

¹ Rebecca Conard, "Facepaint History in the Season of Interpretation," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Fall 2003): 9-24. Rebecca Conard, "Public History as Reflective Practice: An Introduction, "The Public Historian, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Winter 2006): 9-13. Robert Weyeneth, "What I've Learned Along the Way: A Public Historian's Intellectual Odyssey," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (May 2014): 9-25.

² Alisa Y. Harrison, "Reconstructing Somerset Place: Slavery, Memory and Historical Consciousness" (PhD dissertation, Duke University, 2008), abstract.

³ John Garrison Marks, "Announcing the AASLH National Visitation Report," AASLH Blog, American Association for State and Local History, November 4, 2019, https://aaslh.org/announcing-the-aaslh-national-visitation-report/.

⁴ W. Maclane Hull and John Garrison Marks, "National Park Service Visitation and American Engagement with History," AASLH Blog, American Association for State and Local History, October 10, 2019, https://aaslh.org/nps-visitation/.

CHANGING HOW WE EAT (AND DRINK) AT NCPH 2020 // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

central to the NCPH conference experience than other conferences using different models. However, over the last few years of planning, it became clear to me that the number of NCPH attendees who eat vegan, vegetarian, or glutenor dairy-free was on the rise along with our overall attendance numbers. I heard anecdotally from some attendees after conferences that they felt alienated by the food options available for NCPH events, or felt they weren't given enough information to know if they could eat something.

Before this year we had no data to back this up, because we had never specifically asked registrants to provide that information—and so we also had no information before the event to help us plan. With that in mind, for the first time this year we included a space on the registration form for attendees to let us know about any specific food needs or allergies they might have. This information is tremendously helpful to me as I work with the hotel to plan menus that the majority of our attendees can eat. It also helps me advocate for the importance of providing clear signage with food displays that help attendees make the safe and right choices for them.

To date, fourteen percent of NCPH 2020 attendees have used the new question on the registration form to let us know about a special food need. About eight percent of our registrants at the time of writing indicated that they are either vegetarian or vegan. These numbers are not insignificant. With this data mind, we will be ramping up our vegetarian and vegan offerings at the conference this year, and seeking to provide alternatives for those who are dairy- or gluten-free wherever possible.

We're also making another change related to food and beverage accessibility: we're doing away with drink tickets. You may have noticed that this year's opening reception is a couple of dollars cheaper than usual. You may also have noticed the description states that a cash bar will be available. In the past, the ticket to this event has come with a complimentary ticket for a free drink. However, we think it is important to begin moving NCPH away from the conference model that views alcohol as de rigueur and builds the consumption of it into various receptions and events. Conferences are social gatherings but they are also, at their core, professional events. No person should have to feel pressure to drink alcohol in order to reap the full benefits of a conference. This is an issue of accessibility, but also one of inclusion and safety.

For now, cash bars will still be available at select NCPH receptions and events. Attendees can purchase alcohol at these events if they want. However, we'll be shifting the money we save from not providing drink tickets into providing a greater range of complimentary non-alcoholic beverages for all to enjoy—and you'll save a few bucks on a cocktail you might not have wanted in the first place.

We hope these changes will make the conference experience better for everyone. The food we eat and the beverages we drink (or don't) are not an incidental part of the conference experience, they are fundamental. Everyone has to eat, every conference attendee has to budget for their food expenses, and everyone who pays for an NCPH meal event should be able to do so in full confidence that their dining options won't be limited to carrots on a bed of lettuce.

Thanks to all attendees who let us know, either in person at the conference or following the event in a post-conference survey, how NCPH could step up our game to be more proactive about our food and beverage selections at the conference. Your feedback is invaluable and appreciated!

-Meghan Hillman is NCPH's Program Manager.



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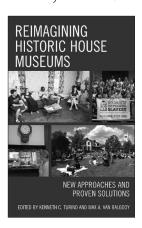


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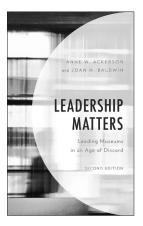
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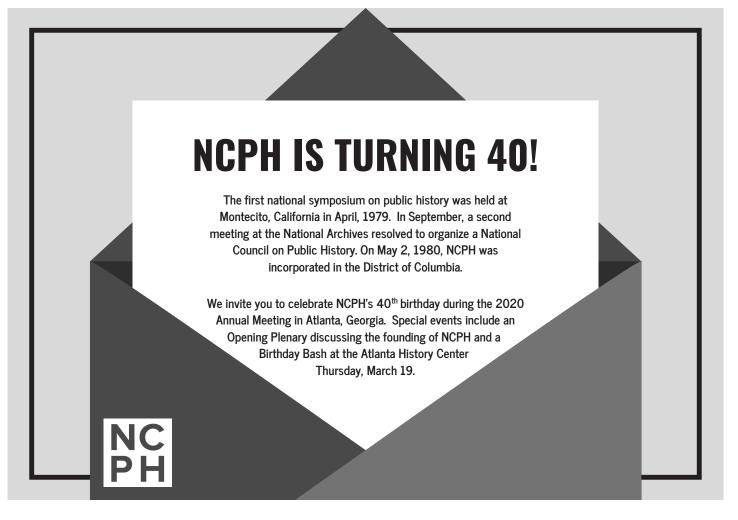
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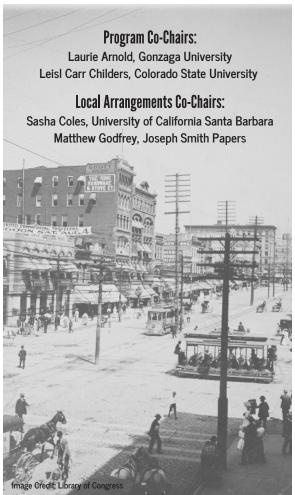


"The Presence and Persistence of Stories"

Save the Date for #NCPH2021

March 24-27, 2021 // Hilton Salt Lake City Center Salt Lake City, Utah

The 2021 conference theme centers on the presence and persistence of stories. All stories are inextricably linked to place; this conference will explicitly ground them in the land of their telling. We invite sessions that illuminate the ways stories of the past bring meaning to the present and will consider how narratives form and re-form through the ongoing nature of their interpretation. While the theme is particularly focused on Indigenous storytelling, the telling of under-told stories, and what it means to speak stories to future generations, we also hope to engage histories that reveal the dynamism and complexities of all communities, known and less-known.



NCPH AWARD WINNERS FOR 2020

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 2020 NCPH Annual Meeting in Atlanta. We hope you will celebrate with us at the Awards Breakfast on Saturday, March 21, at the Westin Peachtree Plaza, 8:00 am – 10:00 am.

OUTSTANDING PUBLIC HISTORY

NCPH acknowledges the generous support of

Stevie and Ted Wolf that makes this award

At the Bronzeville Community Playhouse, June 29, 2019, Step 15 of the "Multimedia from Bike Tour: Visualizing the 1919 Riots in Today's

Karen Christianson, Elizabeth Cummings,

D. Bradford Hunt, and Liesel Olson, Newberry



PROJECT AWARD

possible.

ROBERT KELLEY
MEMORIAL AWARD
Martin Blatt,
Northeastern University

HONORABLE MENTION

Lisa Blee, Wake Forest University and Jean M. O'Brien, University of Minnesota, Monumental Mobility: the Memory Work of Massasoit (University of North Carolina Press, 2019)

G. WESLEY JOHNSON AWARD

For the best article in *The Public Historian*.



Stephen Vider, Cornell University, for "Public Disclosures of Private Realities: HIV/AIDS and the Domestic Archive," "Queering Public History: The State of the Field" special issue, *The Public Historian* Vol 41, No 2

NCPH BOOK AWARD

Elizabeth Wood, The

Huntington Library;

Rainey Tisdale; and

Nebraska

Active Collections

(Routledge, 2018)

Trevor Jones, History

HONORABLE MENTION



GROUP AWARD

Amy Lonetree,
University of California
Santa Cruz, for "A
Heritage of Resilience:
Ho-Chunk Family
Photographs in the
Visual Archive,"
"Conversations on
Critical Cultural
Heritage" special issue,
The Public Historian
Vol 41, No 1

HONORABLE MENTION

Chicago 1919: Confronting the Race Riots

Chuck Barber, Jan Levinson Hebbard, Amma Ghartey-Tagoe Kootin, Barbara McCaskill, Mary Miller, Emily Sahakian, Sidonia Serafini, Jill Severn, University of Georgia; and Keith Arthur Bolden, Julie Johnson, Kathleen Wessel, Spelman College The New South and the New Slavery exhibit and [The Georgia Incarceration Performance Project]

Lori Osborne and Ella Wagner, Frances Willard House Museum and the Women's Christian Temperance Union Archives at the Center for Women's History and Leadership Truth Telling: Frances Willard and Ida B. Wells

EXCELLENCE IN CONSULTING AWARD



Tom Van Dewark leading an oral history interview. Image courtesy Know History, Inc

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Megan Crutcher, Duquesne University Ari Green, Cal State Sacramento Lindsay Mulcahy, University of Southern California

Erika Slocumb, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Carlie N. Todd, University of South Carolina

Submissions for the 2021 Book Award and Kelley Award are due November 1, 2020. All other award submissions are due December 1, 2020.

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