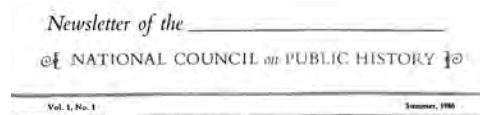


PRESENT AT THE CREATION: A CONVERSATION WITH PIONEERS OF THE PUBLIC HISTORY MOVEMENT – PART I

This plenary panel of distinguished public historians was planned to open the 2020 NCPH Annual Meeting and kick off our celebration of the 40th anniversary of NCPH in Atlanta. Our “Founders” panel was intended to be a conversation on center stage, facilitated by moderator and public historian Shelley Bookspan, who, as a University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) graduate student, attended the first national symposium on public history at Montecito, CA, in April 1979. Several of our panelists attended this symposium. Others attended an October 1979 meeting at the National Archives in Washington, DC, where the concept of a National Council on Public History took shape, and where NCPH was incorporated May 2, 1980. The organization’s first annual meeting took place in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1980.



Masthead from *Public History News* Vol. 1 No. 1. All back issues of the NCPH newsletter are available on our website.

In preparation for our “Present at the Creation” conversation, panelists Arnita Jones, Philip Cantelon, Andy Anderson, and Patricia Mooney-Melvin were sent a series of questions in advance, and in turn offered written responses with their reflections on the past, present, and future of NCPH and the field of public history. Although this plenary panel did not come to pass due to the cancelation of the Atlanta meeting, fortunately we can still share these reflections of our panelists with the public history community. What follows is Part I of these reflections. Part II will appear in the September 2020 issue of *Public History News*.

Moderator Shelley Bookspan: “I am sorry I missed the opportunity to introduce each of these distinguished public historians in Atlanta this year, and possibly the chance to provoke some dialogue among them and with the audience. I owe them each a debt of gratitude for believing in and contributing to the growth of our profession. It is hard to overstate how important their validation was for those of us dipping our toes in and wondering if it was safe to swim.”



Arnita Jones (AJ) attended the Montecito and National Archives organizing meetings as an American Historical Association (AHA) staff associate with the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History. She was among NCPH’s founding incorporators in 1980, served two terms on the board in the 1980s, and was NCPH Chair 1987-1988. She is executive director emerita of the AHA and former executive director of the Organization of American Historians.



Philip L. Cantelon (PC) attended the National Archives meeting, was among NCPH’s founding organizers, and was its first executive secretary from 1981-1983. He taught American history at Williams College and founded the college’s oral history program. After completing a Fulbright Professorship in Japan, he returned to Washington in 1979 to write a history of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ▶

PANDEMICS AND PUBLIC HISTORY



GREGORY E. SMOAK /
GREG.SMOAK@UTAH.EDU

In the past several months all of our lives have been turned upside down. In January, as I began teaching my environmental history course at the University of Utah, the emergence of a new and dangerous virus was a noteworthy event that, over the subsequent weeks, became an all too teachable example. Today, the terrible human toll of the COVID-19 pandemic has been compounded by a global economic crisis that has thrown millions out of work. As entire nations experience lockdowns and we all do our best to practice social distancing, it is worth considering the importance of history in this moment as well as the roles public historians can play during a pandemic.

Now more than ever, history must be part of our public discourse. We are living in one of

those rare times that most of us recognize as being historical. Questions and comparisons abound. How does COVID-19 compare to earlier pandemics such as the Black Death that ravaged Europe in the 14th century or the Great Influenza of 1918? How did communities and governments respond to these earlier crises? Why do some communities suffer far more than others? Public historians can help answer these questions, as well as ensure that future histories of the present pandemic are inclusive and broadly relevant. We can record and preserve the stories of communities struggling with COVID-19 and, in an era when disinformation is prevalent, provide the historical context that our publics demand and deserve. Indeed, many public historians have already turned their attention toward COVID-19, which undoubtedly will be the most documented pandemic in human history. Here I have space to highlight just two of the current projects, led by NCPH members,

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REFLECTIONS FROM NCPH STAFF DURING COVID-19



From Executive Director
Stephanie Rowe

When the year started, all things NCPH looked promising: we were poised to announce that we had achieved our goal of growing the Endowment to (actually, over!) the \$1 million mark much earlier than we had hoped and the 40th anniversary conference was on pace to break another record. Then it all began to unravel. Now, in month three of remote work for our staff, we’re starting to see what our new path forward might look like and envision how, despite the chaos of the first quarter, NCPH will continue to be a vibrant, healthy organization.

While our Endowment has taken a hit and the announcement of our success no longer holds,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ▶



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the \$1 million goal is still within reach thanks to years of strong fiscal management and a committed membership. When the board made the call to cancel our in-person meeting the financial picture looked bleak; while we're still calculating the final impact, it looks much less daunting now, thanks to strong partnerships with several of our vendors and sponsors and to the many attendees who sacrificed their refunds to support the organization. This is essential to NCPH's long-term health, as the projected annual meeting income goes to support the many hours of time our staff put into the planning and execution. This issue of *Public History News* will provide many accounts of what the meeting cancellation has meant, how our 40th anniversary celebrations are being adjusted, and how our committees, board, and members are adapting. I'm also sharing my column this issue with the NCPH staff so they can add how their professional lives and work have been impacted.



From Program Manager Meghan Hillman

A lot goes into planning a national conference, but it turns out it's a lot harder to *un-plan* one.

NCPH's annual meeting was due to be held March 18-21 in Atlanta, Georgia. Over eight hundred people had their rooms booked and their travel plans made; four hundred plus presenters were finalizing presentation plans; catering orders were placed, buses were booked, and badges were stuffed. Then COVID-19 came, and every day we woke up to a different world. Less than one week before we were due to fly to Atlanta, our board made the decision to cancel our in-person meeting—something that had felt almost unimaginable even two weeks before.

At the time the decision felt scary and surreal. While the loss of our NCPH family's yearly opportunity to gather is by no means the worst loss many of us have experienced or will experience as this pandemic runs its course, it was a loss. I felt an enormous sense of regret for our Program and Local Arrangements committee members in particular, who had given over a year of their time and energy to make plans that I would have to *unmake* in about four days.

From home we finished the work of unplanning the in-person conference and made a speedy shift to a virtual conference. This pivot was a little fly-by-night, being

accomplished in about a week. This was only possible because NCPH's board jumped into action, taking on hours of work during what turned out to be a time of stressful transition for all of us. Had we known then what the back half of March would be like for many in our community—the furloughs and layoffs, the switch to online teaching and learning, the struggles to adapt to working from home while managing childcare—we would likely have pushed the virtual meeting to the summer.

However, by proceeding quickly we learned a lot in a short time about what worked for us and what didn't, and got some firsthand experience with virtual options that will come in useful as we make contingency plans for the future and prepare as best we can for whatever life has in store in the months ahead.



From Membership Coordinator Stasia Tanzer

I only just started working with NCPH in this role in February, which means

I've now worked more from home than in office, a very interesting (read: difficult) transition into the workforce. While I was disappointed not to meet anyone in person at the annual meeting, I have had the opportunity to communicate with many of you via email, Twitter, and Facebook, and I believe that through these mediums we can uphold our community bonds.

Our goal is always to support our membership, but this is particularly important right now as we are all facing an uncertain future. As a result, we've been brainstorming how we can keep members engaged without being burdened. This has included utilizing our Facebook Members Forum more, to encourage you to talk through issues and share successes, and organizing our first virtual working group on online teaching. We also introduced a new membership benefit: free access to 25 online courses provided by the ARCUS Leadership Program in topics ranging from community outreach and advocacy to financial management and fundraising. We emailed members a discount code in April, which you can use through November 1, 2020. Please visit <https://arcusleaders.com> to view the courses and sign up. If you cannot find your code, email ncph@iupui.edu.

We invite you to participate in any way that suits you. Do you have a little time on your hands and want to gather virtually with other public historians? Maybe we can turn it into

an online Mini-Con or After Work event. Discovered a virtual internship model that worked really well? Share it on social media, or write about it for *History@Work*. Have an idea for something else we could do? Just let me know!



From Graduate Assistant David Sye

When I started as the NCPH graduate assistant last August, I learned that a major component of

both my internship and the

life of the organization is the annual meeting. While there were other tasks and projects I worked on, my focus became increasingly conference-related as we got closer to March. As we entered the final stretch of conference planning, the COVID-19 outbreak hit and the decision was made to cancel the in-person conference. My internship concludes at the end of May, and I won't get an opportunity like this anytime soon. So what do I take from this experience? While I won't get to see if my volunteer structure was effective, spending months coordinating with over thirty volunteers taught me a lot about group planning and communication. I didn't get to participate in the events I planned, but I became better at time and task management as a result. I also helped with the transition to a virtual conference, which will be useful if organizations plan to go digital for the foreseeable future. This was not the internship experience I expected, but it was valuable nonetheless.

The conference is not the only aspect of this internship, as I work behind the scenes to update the job page and post the bi-weekly Around the Field listings. One lesson learned is that the field has drastically changed in only two months. I've seen approximately a 50% reduction in jobs posted online and mass cancellations of conferences and in-person learning opportunities. As I look for jobs and articles to post, I get to see to see how the public history community is coming together to support each other. From sharing online internships through Google docs to state and regional organizations raising money to help local organizations, public historians are looking out for each other.

ACTIONS OF THE NCPH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

After the October 26 meeting of the NCPH Board of Directors in Indianapolis, Indiana, and through the May 5 Virtual meetings, the board convened electronically and by telephone and took the following actions:

- Reviewed and discussed the Committee on Environmental Sustainability's draft Green Meetings Report.
- Discussed Annual Reviews of the Executive Director, *The Public Historian* (TPH) Editor, and TPH Co-Editor/NCPH Digital Media Editor.
- Heard a report from the co-chairs of the Board-Led Subcommittee on Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment on their work to date.
- Heard a report from the Governance Committee chair on work to revise the NCPH Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- Heard an update from the Secretary/Treasurer on sub-contracted operational support.
- Voted to cancel the in-person annual meeting to be held in Atlanta, Georgia March 18-21, 2020 and to pursue moving as much content as possible to virtual platforms.
- Approved temporary financial processing procedures in light of staff remote-working due to COVID-19.
- Sent a letter to Congressional Leadership to include associations and nonprofits in financial support to the travel and tourism industry as a result of COVID-19.
- Discussed institutional collaboration negotiations.
- Heard reports from the President, Executive Director, and TPH Editor.

- Recognized incoming and outgoing board members.
- Heard a report from the Secretary/Treasurer and reviewed the 2019 finances.
- Voted to update signatories on the NCPH Bank and Endowment accounts (to replace outgoing President Marla Miller with incoming President Gregory Smoak).
- Heard an update from University of California, Santa Barbara Dean John Majewski on the forthcoming search for a new TPH Editor.
- Discussed business matters for TPH including approval of an increase to institutional subscription rates as requested by the University of California Press.
- Approved postponement of the previously scheduled rate increase for NCPH memberships.
- Discussed the new Master Cooperative Agreement between NCPH and the National Park Service with Turkiya Lowe.
- Reviewed and discussed progress towards achieving goals outlined in the 2017-2022 Long Range Plan.
- Reviewed early financial implications of canceling the in-person annual meeting in Atlanta.
- Heard a report from the Development Committee co-chairs regarding the 2020 Vision Endowment Campaign and discussed continuing plans to celebrate NCPH's 40th anniversary.
- Approved the minutes of the Fall 2019, Virtual December 2019, Virtual February 2020, Virtual March 2020, Virtual Spring 2020, and Virtual April 2020 Board Meetings.

- Reviewed and discussed reports from NCPH committee chairs.
- Discussed ways in which NCPH can support public historians during COVID-19.

During this time, the Advocacy Committee of the Board also voted to endorse the following:

- A letter expressing support for S 2827, the bipartisan African-American Burial Grounds Network Act.
- A statement from the American Historical Association Condemning the Use of or Threats to Historical Sites in Warfare.
- A letter from the Society of Architectural Historians Letter in Opposition to Proposed Executive Order "Making Federal Buildings Beautiful Again."
- The American Sociological Association's Call to Higher Education Administrators Regarding Faculty Review and Reappointment Processes During the COVID-19 Crisis.
- The American Historical Association's, Statement Regarding Historians and COVID-19.
- The American Sociological Association's Call to Higher Education Administrators Regarding Student Education Progress During COVID-19.
- A letter from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to Members of Congress advocating for inclusion of preservation priorities in the next COVID-19 health, recovery, and stimulus legislation.
- The American Philosophical Association's Statement Condemning Racism and Discrimination Against Asians and Asian Americans during COVID-19.



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PRESENT AT THE CREATION: A CONVERSATION WITH PIONEERS OF THE PUBLIC HISTORY MOVEMENT – PART I // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

With three partners he founded History Associates Incorporated, a historical, archival, litigation, and museum services company, where he currently holds the title of Chairman Emeritus.



Andy Anderson (AA) attended the Montecito public history symposium as a corporate archivist and historian for Wells Fargo & Co. He served on the

Board of Editors for *The Public Historian* and the NCPH Board of Directors. He is currently executive vice president and chief historian for Wells Fargo, and the founder and director of the Wells Fargo Family & Business History Center in San Francisco.



Patricia Mooney-Melvin (PMM) founded and directed public history programs at the University of Arkansas and Loyola University Chicago. She

is currently associate professor of History and graduate program director at Loyola University Chicago. She was not involved in NCPH in its earliest founding years, but in subsequent decades has served the organization as an officer and thought leader. She served on NCPH's Board of Directors, and as NCPH President in 1994-1995.

1) Do you remember when you first heard the term “public history” and what did you think it meant?

AJ: This answer I remember very clearly. In the Spring of 1977, I had gone to work at the AHA on a project or job—at the time it wasn't clear—to do something about the problem of jobs for historians and became the clearinghouse at the office for anything that had to do with jobs. So, when Bob Kelley sent in news of the new program at Santa Barbara, it landed on my desk. His take on “public” history seemed just right to me, so I called him. When he returned the call we talked for hours, literally. I miss him.

PC: I first heard the term public history when it emerged from Kelley and [Wes] Johnson at Santa Barbara in the late summer of 1979. No real opinion one way or another on the term, except to separate it from academic history, i.e., history outside the classroom. I later came to prefer the term applied history in keeping with other professional branches such as chemistry, medicine, anthropology, and the like. Also, the term public history became blurred, mainly by academics like Bill Cronin and others who said if they imparted their wisdom to a broader audience—being an information source on radio or TV—that made them a public historian. My understanding of the Santa Barbara term was that it applied to historians doing work for public bodies such as local municipalities and getting paid for it.

AA: I remember it well—a phone call out of the blue in March 1978 from Robert (Bob) W. Pomeroy III, a senior vice president and deputy advisor to the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC. Bob's opening line was: “Hello. I'm Bob Pomeroy and I'm helping put together a network of public historians across the country and I'd like to invite you to join us.” My brilliant reply was: “What's a ‘public historian?’” and “Who is ‘us?’”

I had just joined the newly formed History Department of Wells Fargo Bank in San Francisco after four years as an historian and archivist at Stanford University and its “semi-autonomous” Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. I was still searching for an identity in the netherworld between academia and the rest of the universe. Bob's great reply to my self-description was: “Perfect! You are a public historian and there are a surprising number of us.” I was thinking: ‘Good to know. There's apparently more than two of ‘us.’”

Pomeroy, my new colleague, went on to tell me there were three things he hoped I would do: First, participate in “Business and History: A Dialogue,” a seminar being presented by the Public Historical Studies Program at UCSB. Second, write an article about “The New Historian” for *The Maryland Historian* (X:1, Spring 1979), a publication of the History Department of the University of Maryland, College Park. His third ask was to imagine a national gathering of public historians in Montecito, California, in the spring of 1979, as a follow-up to the UCSB Business and History “Dialogue.” I jumped all-in on that too after a further—I'd say passionate—explanation of the program and possibilities by Wes Johnson and Tom Fuller of UCSB and my friend Noel Stowe of Arizona State University. This, of course, became the “First National Symposium on Public History” organized by The Public Historical Studies Program at UCSB, April 27-29, 1979. And here we are forty years later.

PMM: I first heard the term public history while I worked at the Ohio Historical Society [OHS]. Between 1977 and 1979 I was the curator for the Ohio Labor History Project. I was a PhD historian, one of the very few in OHS and, in the history division, one of the very few with any type of degree in history. OHS subscribed to *The Public Historian*. I remember reading that first issue and thinking, here is finally a term that can describe what I am doing. That first issue provided a vocabulary to talk about doing history in settings other than the academy while still being a historian.

In 1981, I saw an ad for setting up a public history program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and, because of the journal—which gave me not only language but the ability to talk about public history beyond my own frame of reference—and my curatorial experience, I possessed the right package to apply for this position.

2) What were your expectations at your first encounter with public history (at Montecito 1979, National Archives 1979, or Pittsburgh 1980)

AJ: Public history was not a new idea for me at any of these meetings, but my role was different in each. Organization of the Montecito meeting was done by the folks at Santa Barbara and by that time I had already met Wes Johnson at an NEH multi-discipline conference on alternative careers. I am not sure, but I think it was supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, which played a major role in early public history efforts. I talk about Rockefeller and Joel Colton a little more in an article I did for *International Public History* in 2018.

PC: The National Archives meeting was an outgrowth of historians not in the academy, many working for the federal government. That meeting was really the first time that professional historians operating outside the classroom had a chance to meet and discuss changes in the profession, largely driven by the job crisis and by responses to it such as the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, Bob Pomeroy, and the nascent Society for History in the Federal Government led by Jack Holl. By the time of the Pittsburgh meeting, we wanted to form a professional organization and fund it by raising \$100 from each organizational member as it was not to be a membership organization. I think we were surprised how quickly the organization formed. Wes Johnson, as I recall, was instrumental, especially when he brought *The Public Historian*, which he was running with a Rockefeller grant, into the NCPH fold. With Bob Pomeroy and perhaps Anna Nelson, I filed the incorporation papers for the National Council on Public History in DC.

AA: I had high expectations, bordering on exhilaration, of meeting and joining a new *national* community of confident and accomplished historians, archivists, and curators who were exploring the uses of history in “the far quadrants of the universe.” I felt like I'd just been invited to take a ride on the Starship Enterprise. Didn't know where we were headed, but felt certain it was going to be exciting.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ►

PRESENT AT THE CREATION: A CONVERSATION WITH PIONEERS OF THE PUBLIC HISTORY MOVEMENT – PART I

// CONT'D. FROM PAGE 6

3) Do you have a particular clear memory of the Montecito, National Archives, or Pittsburgh meetings?

AJ: The National Archives meeting I had a hand in organizing, and very much hoped some sort of ongoing organization would result. The Pittsburgh meeting is a bit of a blur now, even though I attended, because I had gone to work at NEH a few months earlier and was involved in learning a new job which, though it included a focus on humanities careers, it obviously had to be multi-disciplinary.

PC: The highlight of the DC meeting was the talk given by William Appleman Williams. We thought it was most appropriate to have a radical historian keynote what was, in many ways, a radical, or at least non-traditional, organization of professional historians. Jim Banner accused

us of “balkanizing” the profession. We thought that the academics had already done a pretty good job of declaring non-academic historians as second class or even second rate. The attitude was if you couldn’t get an academic job, you could always work for the government or the Archives. Public history might have been a terminology to escape that, though that really didn’t happen once academic programs became public history teaching areas and basically trained most historians for lower paying jobs such as the park service or local museums.

AA: One crystalline moment for me was the arrival in a big black limo and a cloud of dust of Governor Bruce Babbitt of Arizona. (He was later Secretary of the Interior). He was the brother of my friend Jim Babbitt, archivist of Bank of America, and he was scheduled to be one

of our keynote speakers. There was a real buzz when the limo pulled up and two dark-suited security guards wearing sunglasses and bearing deep tans stepped out and opened the car door for the Governor. It felt like a rock star had just appeared. My first thought was: “Wow! Public history has really arrived!”

4) Did your perception or understanding of “public history” change after participating in these events?

AJ: First I was enormously pleased at the wellspring of interest in public history nationally, but second I was a bit disappointed that historic preservation and cultural resource management seemed to be of much higher interest than policy history, [which was] so important to the federal historians I had come to know, and to Bob Kelley.

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PATRON PROFILE: HISTORY ASSOCIATES INCORPORATED

LAURA STARR, CA / LSTARR@HISTORYASSOCIATES.COM

History Associates Incorporated (HAI) is a leading professional services and consulting firm offering research, discovery, and experience services to government, commercial, legal, education, association, and museum clients. Our team of 35 historians, archivists, and museum professionals specializes in cultural heritage programming, content development, storytelling, archives and information management, and historical research and analysis.

HAI was born from four PhD historians’ quest to research and explain the Three Mile Island nuclear meltdown incident to the US Department of Energy. The feedback received from that endeavor inspired them to create a company that used historical research to answer modern legal questions. Our founders realized that history could do more than teach us about notable politicians or important milestones: maps, diaries, annual reports, and corporate records may contain critical details that completely change a legal case, but require a historian to track down and interpret them.

Starting in 1981, HAI’s earliest projects focused on legal research. Trained historians would dive into the archives to discover historical property ownership documents, government contracts, and city maps to determine responsibility in environmental clean-up cases, taking lessons learned from the Three Mile Island project and applying them to other legal matters.

The company quickly expanded to offer archival services, then writing corporate

histories, creating online content, developing museum exhibits, and conducting interpretive plans. Today, we continue to explore new ways to bring history to the public: we’ve collaborated on immersive educational modules for high school history students, curated online exhibits to celebrate corporate anniversaries, and executed web archiving projects to capture and preserve digital content that will be tomorrow’s history.

HAI is located in Rockville, Maryland. Just outside of Washington, DC, we have convenient access to major repositories like the Library of Congress and the National Archives. At headquarters, we have climate controlled storage and processing spaces for organizing, preserving, and cataloging document and object collections. We also travel across the country and around the world to assess, preserve, and describe our clients’ collections. We have had the distinct honor to serve world-class cultural heritage organizations, such as the National World War II Museum, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the National Park Service, the American Battle Monuments Commission, and the Smithsonian Institution. We have also provided historical research and archives services to 49 of the top 100 US law firms, more than twenty US Department of Defense and civilian government agencies, forty congressional offices, over 300 corporate brands, and more than 450 universities, non-profit organizations, and professional associations.

As dedicated storytellers and stewards of the past, we are thrilled to be a patron of the



Our archivists work with museum and cultural institution clients to assess, evaluate, process, catalog, and digitize their collections. Photo courtesy of History Associates Incorporated.

National Council on Public History, especially because HAI has a long history with the organization. In 1980, one of our founders, Phil Cantelon, cast the motion to officially organize NCPH during the second National Conference on Public History meeting in Pittsburgh, PA. Dr. Cantelon then served as the organization’s first executive secretary. As a patron member, HAI hopes to connect with and support a new generation of public historians. We have evolved alongside NCPH and the field of public history, and we are eager to support an organization that has done so much to advance and shape our profession.

As HAI’s Engagement Strategist, Laura focuses on growing and diversifying the firm’s relationships and service offerings, expanding brand presence, and creating valuable partnerships. Laura is a Certified Archivist, who began her career with HAI ten (10) years ago on preservation and description initiatives for the National Park Service, Library of Congress, and other cultural heritage organizations. She continues to serve the public history and archives communities through her work and volunteer efforts.

AWARD WINNER SPOTLIGHT // GATHER, CONNECT, AMPLIFY: THE IMPORTANCE OF GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY BUILDING AND DISMANTLING WHITE MIDDLE-CLASS PUBLIC HISTORY



GVKG TANG /
GVKG.TANG@GMAIL.COM

I was honored to receive the HRA New Professional Award from NCPH this year, and gave a talk via

Twitter addressing the importance

of grassroots projects created by, for, and about disenfranchised communities. I urged readers to consider the violence of traditional diversity and inclusion frameworks, and decolonize our methods for exploring the past. The following is a condensed and updated version of that presentation.

For over five years, I've supported storytelling projects involving schools, hospitals, and neighborhood coalitions through a public arts nonprofit in Philadelphia. Although I've previously worked at archives, museums, and foundations, I've learned that history-making cannot and should not be entombed within these contexts. Public history can be a catalyst for social change and empowerment, when people testify to their experiences in-community, on a grassroots level. But I've also experienced it as a tool wielded by those in power—commemoration projects used to usher in “neighborhood development” and gentrification, or oral history projects that steal people's stories and ideas without recompense.

The term “public history” is often narrowly defined to exclude activists and “nontraditional scholars” and, in turn, the identities and perspectives we represent. Limited support for our work highlights a power imbalance in knowledge production. Those who could testify to experiences of marginalization, who could be leading conversations around “diversity and inclusion,” are denied access because of racism and socioeconomic inequalities. We are rendered the *subjects* of others' projects, rather than participants, creators, or interpreters.

Young scholars of color are often told that institutions “need” us. We're told there's power in occupying and disrupting predominately white middle-class spaces like conferences, museums, and archives. But to whose benefit? Why are we repeatedly called upon to “improve” projects that exclude us and do us harm? I've witnessed too many brilliant peers burdened with the idea that our worth is measured by our presence in toxic spaces—that what we say or do or think can only be incubated within the confines of white

institutions. Just as journalist Adam Mahoney beautifully describes it, they can't and won't teach us the power of our own communities.¹

Public history and the humanities spend too much time funneling young scholars into poorly run programs, barely equipping them for the job market—especially young scholars of color, who help “diversify” the field. No one helps us navigate the stark realities of a dying industry. Class projects foist unhelpful short-term partnerships on community organizations and keep a revolving door of students preoccupied with the appearance of “service learning” rather than invested in the quality and impact of their work. More time is spent pontificating about the advantages of a liberal arts education than answering the looming question of “what now?”

This pandemic has exacerbated issues that low- and no-income Black, Brown, Indigenous, and disabled people have always faced. Only just now has this field—and the public at large—decided to take notice and dialogue around what it means to exist in a violently capitalist, racist, ableist system. When I listen to bored colleagues talk at length about their homes and their yards over Zoom calls, I think about friends who are dealing with food and housing insecurity. I bear witness to our field's ignorance and inaction. These colleagues are the same ones who claim to “specialize in” POC histories, and identify themselves as allies.

Public historians are taught to spend more time studying and talking *about* marginalized communities than supporting them. Projects about marginalized communities are rarely critiqued on their worth to those *within* said communities. As scholar Nina Vázquez incisively observes, “Just because you are an academic does not mean you are dismantling anything. . . To dismantle something is a lot more than simply discussing it.”²

I've seen white scholars who “specialize in” Black HIV/AIDS history invited to consult on exhibitions over the actual Black HIV/AIDS activists whose materials and oral histories were being exhibited. These scholars and their institutions received commendations and funding, while the activists whose histories they collected received none—despite donating their time and their emotional and intellectual labor. Such exhibitions are lauded because the content is “diverse” and “inclusive.” But, as Dr. Rosales Meza puts it, “Decolonizing

does not mean the same thing as diversity and inclusivity. You can have diverse spaces and still have colonialism and colonial mentality present.”³

So, who will tell the history of this pandemic, and how will it be told? Will white, degree-holding scholars be solicited for their commentaries before those most affected—and, most likely, in lieu of them? Will these scholars and their monographs, exhibits, and oral history projects reap emotional, intellectual, and material rewards? Will they continue to take ideas, stories, memories, and resources from low- and no-income Black, Brown, Indigenous, and disabled people?

Practitioners often cite “shared authority.” But it's a flawed and paternalistic framework. Most often invoked when “professionals” *generously* decide to involve marginalized “subjects” in interpretation, it assumes equal distribution as the ideal. We cannot continue to center the work of traditional public history practitioners and academics, reinforcing the notion that only “professional” public historians can bestow historical authenticity. Historiographic reparations can only be enacted when marginalized people tell their own stories, and control the flow of intellectual and material resources themselves. White institutions and those affiliated with them must be divested of their wealth to support and amplify community-led projects.

Contribute to mutual aid and solidary funds.⁴ Give money or volunteer your time, labor, and skills to support marginalized communities. The work of history-making happens every day and everywhere—at support groups, activist meetings, and family gatherings. True public history is grassroots and interdisciplinary—storytelling in its most fundamental and accessible forms. I look forward to the creation of new spaces and projects for us, by us.

GVKG Tang is a public historian and community organizer with a background in transnational queer politics. Connect on Twitter @gvgktang.

¹ Adam Mahoney, “Elite education left blood on my hands. Now it's my responsibility to heal the damage,” *RaceBaitr*, February 5, 2020, <https://racebaitr.com/2020/02/05/elite-education-left-blood-on-my-hands-now-its-my-responsibility-to-heal-the-damage>.

² Nina Vázquez (@NinaVzq23), Twitter, April 19, 2020, <https://twitter.com/NinaVzq23/status/1252062767718244352>.

³ Rosales Meza (dr.rosalesmeza), Instagram, February 3, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/B8F8oCWAPIR>.

⁴ Please consult this list: <https://airtable.com/shrfmIPvDggxiorqo>.

INTRODUCING OUR IMPACT SURVEY TOOLKIT

CECILY HILL / CHILL@NHALLIANCE.ORG



As of this writing, colleges and universities around the nation have closed their doors; most have shifted to online learning. In-person public programs are on pause, indefinitely. For the majority of us, large components of our work have come to a screeching halt, while we have had to abruptly shift to scores of new personal and professional challenges.

At the National Humanities Alliance, we are continuing our work to document the impact of the humanities in a variety of contexts, but with a particular eye toward how humanities organizations and institutions are serving their communities and constituencies during this challenging time. We are also using this time to support humanities faculty, practitioners, and organizations as they plan for the future.

With this in mind, we are launching a new resource for humanities faculty, practitioners, and organizations. Our new toolkit, *Documenting the Impact of Your Humanities Program*, is aimed at helping the humanities community collect data about the impact of programs such as professional development seminars, public humanities projects, and programs for students that prepare them for college and help them imagine humanities careers. By collecting this data, you can better make the case for the impact of your work and the resources to support it.

With funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, since 2018 our *NEH for All* initiative has been helping National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grantees document their impact through surveys of participants in their programs. In partnership with project directors, we've designed and implemented pre- and post-program surveys that take into account the programs' immediate goals and their broader social impacts, including impacts

on trust, empathy, community connection, and appreciation for and pride in local culture and heritage. Our goal has been to help these partners collect information that makes the case for their work to a range of stakeholders, including funders, organizational leadership, and policymakers. The surveys are designed to be broadly useful for humanities faculty and practitioners in highlighting and evaluating their programs.

The toolkit includes:

- An introduction to impact-driven surveys;
- Information about why to survey, how to construct a survey, and how to administer a survey; and
- Advice for interpreting and using your data.

Many programs that we have surveyed to date took place on college campuses, and the toolkit also includes a suite of editable surveys that can be used in programs run by faculty. These include:

- Pre- and post-program surveys for a humanities summer bridge program offered to first-generation college students. Among other measures, this survey includes questions about college preparedness, interest in internships with humanities organizations, and understanding of and interest in the humanities.
- Pre- and post-program surveys for two faculty professional development seminars, one focused on an oral history program and the other on integrating local culture and authors into humanities classrooms. The surveys focus on access to resources, the benefits of building interdisciplinary communities of practice, and gains in content knowledge and capacities appropriate to the curricula.
- Pre- and post-program surveys for humanities courses designed specifically for veterans, aimed at helping them reflect on their experiences through humanities texts.

These surveys assess how these courses respond to some of veterans' specific needs, such as help dealing with social isolation and building community. They also assess how humanities resources (art, film, literature, etc.) promote self-reflection and understanding.

Additionally, sample survey questions, grouped according to impact, are designed to help you build strong surveys that document your program's strengths. In addition to using these questions as they are presented, you can adapt many of them for pre- and post-program surveys, making your evaluations even stronger. These questions have been tested—we've used them across many programs and found them successful.

These surveys have provided us with compelling insights into how humanities programs—from professional development seminars to reading and discussion programs—have an impact on higher education institutions, their faculty and students, and the communities they serve. They have also provided our partners and us with robust quantitative and qualitative data that speaks to the humanities' broad-ranging impacts and can be used to engage policymakers, funders, leadership, and the public.

During this crisis, we know that humanities courses and programs are continuing to offer crucial opportunities for people to learn, reflect, and engage in dialogue. And we know that they will provide still more significant opportunities for reflection and connection in the months and years to come. As you plan for the future, we hope that you find this toolkit useful. And we want to hear from you! If you have questions or need advice, please contact Emily McDonald at emcdonald@nhalliance.org.

Cecily Erin Hill leads NEH for All, an initiative that documents the impact of NEH funding and builds the capacity of humanities organizations to communicate that impact.

THANK YOU TO NCPH'S SUSTAINING-LEVEL MEMBERS! SUSTAINING MEMBERS MAKE THE WORK OF NCPH POSSIBLE.

Anna Adamek Ottawa, ON, Canada	Philip Cantelon Rockville, MD	Suzanne Fischer Lansing, MI	Trevor Jones Lincoln, NE	Laura Lovett Pittsburgh, PA	Kristine Navarro- McElhaney Santa Fe, NM	Alan Rowe Indianapolis, IN	Santi Thompson Houston, TX
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	Michael Duchemin San Antonio, TX	Glenn Johnston Lutherville, MD	Alexandra Lord Washington, DC			Mark Speltz Lafayette, CA	

NCPH COMMITTEE UPDATES

These updates give a sampling of what NCPH volunteers are doing for the organization and the field of public history. The committees encourage your input throughout the year; a list of committee chairs and members can be found at: <http://ncph.org/about/governance-committees/>

2021 LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

The Local Arrangements Committee for the 2021 conference is so excited for NCPH to come to Salt Lake City! We have been working hard over the last several months to put together tours and events that will showcase both the city and the types of public history that are prevalent here. For many of you, this may be your first time to Salt Lake City, and you may have some preconceived notions of the city and the area itself. In collaboration with the fantastic program committee, we promise to bring you a conference that highlights Utah's many communities, landmark events, and present-day struggles. Our conference tours and events will center on native groups who have called the area home for centuries; white Mormons who colonized this region in the 19th century; women who mounted a grassroots campaign to secure suffrage for the Utah Territory, one of the first to grant white women the vote; Japanese American citizens forced into the Topaz "Relocation Center," or concentration camp; and Latinx people who have become the state's largest minority group, just to name a few. You'll hear from public historians who will share how they interpret these histories and how communities engage with and mobilize these stories in the present. We look forward to welcoming you to Salt Lake!

Submitted by co-chairs Sasha Coles and Matt Godfrey

2021 PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The 2021 Program Committee is gearing up to solicit your contributions to next spring's conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. We are especially interested in sessions that give voice to the under-told stories of diverse peoples, particularly Indigenous peoples living in the Wasatch Front, the American West, and other regions across the country. We also encourage participants to ground these stories in the places of their telling and highlight the ways in which story and place are connected. We are planning a vibrant plenary session that grapples with the impact of COVID-19 on our expectations of our most cherished places and calls into question whose parks and public lands these really are, considering the inequitable impacts of the novel coronavirus in Indigenous populations and the fears of local residents living adjacent to these spaces. We are well-suited to meet the challenges of crafting a conference in the midst of this crisis. We see all the archival and community engagement projects NCPH members have created to document this moment and we encourage everyone involved to bring these projects to Salt Lake City as well. We hope that you will add your voice to the conference and help shape the conversations of the organization and the field of public history at the beginning of its fifth decade.

Submitted by co-chairs Laurie Arnold and Leisl Carr Childers

BOARD-LED SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The subcommittee held a virtual meeting in April. The survey team continues their work drafting a survey that will gather data on who is most affected by sexual harassment and gender discrimination, at what stages in their training or career, and what form harassment

takes. The codes team's work has wrapped for now, and those members have joined other groups. The resources team is working with Chelsea Miller on developing resources for various NCPH audiences. That team also created a program insert with information specific to the Atlanta annual meeting. The policy team has been researching restorative justice and harm reduction policies in relation to gender discrimination and sexual harassment, along with drafting preliminary policies to share with NCPH's Governance Committee. The policy team hopes to have the first of these policy drafts ready for review by the end of the summer. For more details, see our blog post on *History@Work*: <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/sexual-harassment-committee-report/>. Please reach out to the co-chairs with comments or suggestions.

Submitted by co-chairs Kristen Baldwin Deathridge and Mary Rizzo

CURRICULUM AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Curriculum and Training Committee planned what we anticipated would be an engaging and useful Public History Educators' Forum for the 2020 NCPH Annual Meeting, including table topics for discussion and a report by the Board-Led Subcommittee on Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment. Then the pandemic happened. We are hopeful that some of our plans will be portable to the 2021 meeting, although this new world in which we live has changed the way most of us teach or deliver educational content. This presents a demand for a new best practices document—something that we are hopeful our committee can produce in the coming year.

We have completed an update to the list of NCPH professionals willing to serve as external reviewers for programs or promotion and tenure, and NCPH staff have posted the revised list on the NCPH website. Updates and new additions to resources for educators are underway, including a reorganization of the recommended readings and new best practices documents related to community engagement and teaching online. We are reviewing the balance of academic- and practitioner-focused sessions at previous conferences and will provide that data to the 2021 NCPH Annual Meeting Program Committee.

We are delighted to report that most of the committee members will return for another term, which will provide us with continuity and the time necessary to complete our charge of "promoting excellence in education and other training within the public history field."

Submitted by co-chairs Jennifer Dickey and Leslie Madsen

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Until COVID-19 wreaked havoc on NCPH's annual meeting and its investment account, the Development Committee expected to announce in Atlanta the success of *2020 Vision: Endowment Campaign for a Brighter Future*, with over \$1 million in our endowment account. Only the generosity of many individuals made this possible, so "thank you" to all who contributed. Recent events underscore the importance of having an endowment capable of both expanding NCPH's ability to serve its members and the ability to weather unexpected challenges. So, the Development Committee remains committed to the task and will soon be working toward NCPH realizing that long-sought milestone. In the next

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Presence and Persistence of Stories

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

Stories are the cornerstones of our relationship to each other and to the land. With each telling and re-telling, we reinforce relationships, we bridge past and present, and we lay foundations for the future. A single place might have many histories, it might have vibrant pasts distinct from our own, but through our stories, our memories, and our experiences, we become inextricably connected to that place. This conference celebrates stories and histories, and explicitly grounds them in the land of their telling.

At the dawn of NCPH's fifth decade, this conference invites sessions that illuminate the ways stories of the past bring meaning to the present and that consider how narratives form and reform 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.

The online proposal system is now online via <http://bit.ly/NCPH2021>; proposals are due by **July 15, 2020**.

Leisl Carr Childers, Photo of Jetsonorama (Chip Thomas) Art on the Navajo Nation near Page, Arizona 2012.



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few months the Development Committee, with the board's direction, will devise and begin implementing a strategy to make that happen. In the meantime, we ask that those who have yet to fulfill an earlier pledge and have the capacity should still plan to do so, and perhaps even consider increasing that pledge if finances allow. Those who made one-time contributions can likewise consider making an additional contribution, or even better make a new pledge that can be paid over a number of years as they can. However the contributions may be made, together we will secure a brighter future for NCPH.

Submitted by co-chairs Bill Bryans and Dee Harris

DIGITAL MEDIA GROUP

The Digital Media Group held our annual meeting virtually on March 20, 2020. The meeting included a lengthy discussion of the proposed Digital Public History Directory. This proposal would create a searchable, categorized directory of digital public history projects to be hosted on the NCPH website. We also discussed the decision to cancel the popular Digital Public History Lab that was planned for the NCPH Annual Meeting in Atlanta. We look forward to reviving the Lab at next year's conference.

NCPH's social media presence has expanded significantly in the past year. Our Instagram account, which we started in June 2019, currently has around 1,700 followers. We featured 25 "Instagram Takeovers" by NCPH members, which included students, board members, public history programs and professors, archivists, consultants, museum professionals, programmers, and international members. We also covered a handful of NCPH events on Instagram, including the #NCPH2020 Virtual Poster Session.

On the NCPH website, the *History@Work* blog remains second in popularity to the NCPH job board. From January 2019 to January 2020, the blog had over 52,000 page views; over 44,000 of those views were unique. We recently put out a call for blog posts related to commemoration and public history (<https://ncph.org/history-at-work/pitches-commemoration-public-history/>).

Last but not least, Will Walker, one of *History@Work*'s founding editors, recently stepped down from his post as one of the blog's lead editors. We are grateful for his years of service to the Digital Media Group, and he will be greatly missed! Evan Faulkenbury, who had been an affiliate editor, has agreed to move into this editorial role.

Submitted by chair Laura Miller

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Committee on Environmental Sustainability has been focused on our Green Meetings report. While the cancellation of the Atlanta conference did radically reduce NCPH's carbon footprint, that sort of reduction was not what we had in mind. The cancellation of the meeting broadsided our plans and we have yet to regroup during the stay-at-home period. Once things return to some semblance of normal—ideally this summer or fall at the latest—we will pick up where we left off. Sadly, the expected outcomes of the scheduled face-to-face meetings are largely lost, leaving several agenda items unaddressed. We will have a Zoom meeting once the spring academic semester is over. Members of the committee had planned to harvest feedback on the latest draft of the Green Meetings report. The goal had been to incorporate NCPH Board feedback and move towards completion and

submission this summer. The unsettling fact of the matter is that none of us know just how COVID-19 is going to affect the shape of all face-to-face meetings in the future. There is good reason to believe that future meetings will be somewhat changed as a result of the pandemic, and we will have to see how these changes segue with the issues discussed in the report.

Submitted by co-chairs Will Ippen and Phil Levy

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Following the completion of work on the NCPH Events Code of Conduct, the Governance Committee has turned its focus to updating and revising the NCPH Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. As part of this work, we solicited feedback from NCPH committees, wrote a *History@Work* post to engage the NCPH membership, and surveyed comparable codes of ethics. The Governance Committee continues to work on a proposed new draft of the Code of Ethics, to be shared with the office and board in the next couple of months.

The Governance Committee has also explored models for an ombud position that might help NCPH during the annual meetings and at other events as necessary. Additionally, the Committee has been evaluating existing on-boarding and exit processes for the NCPH Board of Directors and developing documentation to support committee chairs. We are continuing to have conversations about policy development and ways to strengthen the governance of NCPH.

Submitted by chair Krista McCracken

JOINT TASK FORCE ON PUBLIC HISTORY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The Joint Task Force is working to share the findings of its two major reports and bring its work to a conclusion. Recent discussions outlined a plan for preparing blog posts for *History@Work* and similar forums and consulting graduate students for their perspectives on the surveys of public history employers and alumni of master's programs in public history. The task force will share summaries of its accomplishments with the four sponsoring organizations later this year and recommend that it be disbanded.

Submitted by co-chairs Daniel Vivian and Philip Scarpino

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Long Range Planning Committee has been hard at work. In response to input from NCPH staff, board members, and committee chairs, we have revamped our system for monitoring and assisting with the implementation of the 2017-2022 Long Range Plan (LRP). A revised committee liaison system will maximize efficiency and improve communication between our committee members and those designated as responsible for undertaking the activities outlined by the LRP. We are currently developing a series of easy-to-use Google Form worksheets that distill the LRP into only those activities relevant to each "responsible party." These worksheets will be distributed every six months to the appropriate staff, board members, and committee chairs, helping to keep the important goals of the LRP at the forefront of all our minds as we build towards the future for NCPH.

Our committee has also been brainstorming ways in which we can help NCPH recover from the cancellation of the annual meeting and adapt to the new realities brought on by COVID-19. Each worksheet will include a special section for expressing concerns and providing input on how the LRP might respond to the present moment. Members can also look forward to a *History@Work* post in the not-too-distant future describing

what the Long Range Plan is and why planning for the future is so critical for NCPH during this crisis.

The LRP is a living document, and we encourage all members to take a few moments (or a lot of moments, it's very thorough!) to look it over and consider sending us their thoughts.

Submitted by co-chairs Abby Gautreau and Will Stoutamire

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

In February, the Membership Committee held a Twitter chat with practical advice and suggestions for those attending their first NCPH meeting. The committee hoped to replicate the successes of past New Member and First Time attendee meet-up events and the Shared Wisdom session at the annual meeting in Atlanta. Once the in-person meeting was canceled, the Membership Committee quickly pivoted to moving as much of its content online as possible.

The committee also used the timeslot for the New Member and First Time attendee gathering to host a welcoming Twitter chat. The participants in the "Shared Wisdom: NCPH From the Pros" session recalibrated their presentation in two ways. With NCPH Membership Coordinator Stasia Tanzer's assistance, three of the panelists recorded a YouTube video featuring their tips and suggestions for navigating an NCPH meeting, building professional networks, and engaging with NCPH. Additionally, during the session timeslot, the panelists and other committee members participated in a companion Twitter chat, which yielded a variety of thoughtful responses from the wider NCPH membership.

In the next year, the committee will continue to encourage NCPH members to hold events as part of the "After Work" networking program. The members will also continue to contact lapsed members with a personal email, encouraging them to renew their NCPH membership. Membership Committee co-chair Krista McCracken rotated off the committee this spring; Krista's dedication to and leadership of this committee will be missed.

Submitted by co-chairs Kristin Ahlberg and Krista McCracken

NEW PROFESSIONAL AND STUDENT COMMITTEE

In January, the NCPH board approved our committee's request to change our name from the "New Professional and Graduate Student Committee" to the "New Professional and Student Committee." Changing the name allows us to better advocate for our constituents, who increasingly include students from all levels.

Our committee was looking forward to hosting a new event at the annual meeting in Atlanta: an introductory breakfast during which our committee could share our works in progress, and field questions from new professionals and students about how we can best serve them and their needs within the organization. While we couldn't convene in-person, we did host a Twitter Chat Monday, March 23rd, during which we accomplished some of the same goals. We hope to continue hosting these #NCPHBeverageBreak chats on a semi-regular basis.

In addition to remaining active on Twitter, we seek contributions to the *History@Work* blog, and we are continuing to develop a Public History Navigator for the job market. Numerous committee members are

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PANDEMICS AND PUBLIC HISTORY // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

that point to ways that public historians can respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.



At the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Christopher Cantwell was teaching local history research methods as COVID-19 became a global crisis. Cantwell studies American religion and was using the city's houses of worship as an avenue for his students to engage community-based research. But halfway through the semester as the pandemic spread and schools including UWM shifted to remote instruction, he and his students came to the same conclusion—they had to hit the reset button and start the class over with a focus on COVID-19. Cantwell utilized the *History Harvest Handbook* to orient his students and then, working in pairs, the students took responsibility for a specific collecting area. The class identified communities and stories that captured Milwaukee's particular experience. The hard-hit African American community, which has suffered 70% of the city's COVID-19 cases and 80% of its associated deaths, was an obvious focus. Wisconsin also conducted a controversial in-person primary election in the midst of the pandemic, and so documenting the stories of poll workers and voters became another imperative. Fearing that focusing active collecting efforts on front line health-care workers would be a burden and a distraction, however, the class decided to save their stories for a later phase of the archive. The website *COVID-19 MKE* (<https://liblambp.uwm.edu/omeka/covid19mke>) now contains nearly three hundred items that include oral histories, images, video recordings, tweets, emails, personal statements, church bulletins, official orders, and school schedules. Cantwell figured that the project could be the best way “to show students how public history can respond to the needs of their community.” It has become something more, allowing his students to do something positive and tangible to help their community.



At Arizona State University, colleagues Catherine O'Donnell and Mark Tebeau brainstormed how they could help their students confront the pandemic while reimagining the role of the archive. As the realization set in that many public historians in many communities were thinking along the same lines, what began as a local impulse quickly expanded. Tebeau tweeted out an invitation for collaborators and the response was immediate. Among the first to answer the call were Victoria Cain of Northeastern University and Rebecca Wingo of the University of Cincinnati. The team now includes almost ninety historians at colleges, universities, and museums from around the United States, Canada, and Australia. And with funding provided by the Noel Stowe endowment at ASU, Tebeau and company launched *A Journal of the Plague Year: An Archive of COVID-19*. (<https://covid19.omeka.net>)

The project raises important questions about crowdsourcing, the nature of shared authority, and the purpose of the archive within the context of “rapid response history.” Any crowd-sourced archive intended to collect widely and give voice to many must necessarily be an exercise in shared authority. Yet mediation is necessary. Cain points to the tension between building an archive and creating a memorial site as one point of mediation. Tebeau believes that another critical role for public historians is to identify the silences that exist in the archive and curate them to make the collection more inclusive. With numerous COVID-19 projects launching, Wingo worries about a reverse “Field of Dreams” problem: “what if you build it and no one comes?” Will so many independent, unconnected projects get lost in the rush to document the pandemic, potentially reducing their impact? It is perhaps better, she believes, that public historians contribute to fewer but larger projects, thus sharing the stories of many communities. In this regard, Tebeau is hopeful that the linked data features of OMEKA S will make the project much more than a crowd-sourced archive, allowing users to identify intersections and magnifying the importance of individual archives.

The two projects I have touched upon here only scratch the surface of what is being done and what is possible. They point to the constructive value of public history practice in uncertain times. Echoing the experience of Cantwell's students in Milwaukee, Victoria Cain believes one of the most gratifying aspects of the work has been the “sense of meaning and purpose for those involved at a time when so many feel helpless.”

Gregory E. Smoak is the President of NCPH and is director of the American West Center and Associate Professor of History at University of Utah.

NCPH COMMITTEE UPDATES // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 11

also involved with collaborative projects with other committees.

Submitted by co-chairs Julie Peterson and Harvee White

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Professional Development Committee is reeling from the quick actions taken by NCPH for a virtual 2020 NCPH Annual Meeting and is grateful to have offered a virtual Speed Networking event.

Speed Networking: With the world in the state it is, we offered public historians new and experienced

the opportunity to come together for virtual speed networking. Beyond the positive comments we received from both rotators and non-rotators, the Professional Development Committee and the NCPH office are thrilled by our membership's proficient use of technology and are inspired to host more virtual events outside of the annual meeting going forward.

Workshops: The committee worked together in the summer of 2019 to choose appropriate workshops for the 2020 conference and were pleased with the quality of these workshops compared to previous years. We

are disappointed that many could not be moved to a virtual setting, but are very happy that some were made available.

Committee Reorganization: After five years as the co-chairs for the Professional Development Committee, Jessica Knapp and Nick Sacco will step down from their roles on this committee. Over the next few months, a new chair or co-chairs will be identified and will lead the committee to its next stage.

Submitted by co-chairs Jessica Knapp and Nick Sacco

PRESENT AT THE CREATION: A CONVERSATION WITH PIONEERS OF THE PUBLIC HISTORY MOVEMENT – PART I

// CONT'D. FROM PAGE 7

AA: Oh yes. There was now a strong sense of professional community and the value of history beyond academia—in public education, in government work (national, state, local and military), in private enterprise, and in cultural affairs. It was like there was suddenly a whole world of colleagues to talk to and seek or offer advice to.

5) What were your observations about the emerging field at the time?

AJ: I was impressed with the excitement and enthusiasm for public history in the academy; I was really worried that the academic interest in public history would subside once there was no longer a “jobs crisis.”

PC: I thought it might offer hope for professionals in transition and certainly respect and equality for professionals in the public history field. It did happen in part within the federal community, but not so much in public history, which had trouble identifying what it wanted to do—public policy, museums, archives, and other course work that would lead to jobs more than thorough professional training, depending on the programs that sprung up to retain history faculty whose traditional enrollments were dropping.

AA: It gave me great hope that students who were just starting to be trained in public history would make significant contributions to society, to the communities in which they lived, and to the organizations and agencies they worked for. I remember thinking the graduates of these programs would be great contributors to the family and business history programs I was working on. I subsequently was involved in hiring five public history graduates—from UCSB, NYU and Cal State, Fullerton—for fulltime jobs at Wells Fargo.

6) What did you think would be the value of creating an organization dedicated to public history?

AJ: I thought it was necessary, even though the interest and encouragement of existing national organizations—AHA, OAH, AASLH—continued to be important.

PC: I favored it as a broader umbrella for professional historians than the AHA or OAH. But Jim Banner may have been correct. The professional groups did not dance well together in the first decade of existence—more co-existence than cooperation.

AA: I was trained in French History. So, when I heard about NCPH, I was thinking “Aux armes citoyens!” This is the French Revolution of Rising Expectations, something social scientists now tell us is a critical moment in every revolution. The first thing you have to do is get organized. NCPH for me was like the creation of the French National Convention in the 1790s—a point of no return. Get organized and get on with it. Fortunately, in NCPH’s founding, there was no Reign of Terror (as far as I know), just a growing sense of legitimacy, confidence, and rising expectations for the successful employment of trained historians and archivists.

Editor’s Note: Stay tuned for Part II of this piece in the next issue of Public History News, where those present at the creation of NCPH discuss early and continued challenges, lasting relevance, and advice for the future. Special thanks to NCPH’s 40th Anniversary Ad Hoc Committee Chair Marianne Babal for working so hard to make sure these reflections are able to reach our members despite the meeting cancellation.

NCPH 40TH COMMITTEE – WRAP UP REPORT

MARIANNE BABAL / BABALM@WELLSFARGO.COM



Unfortunately, cancellation of the Atlanta meeting upended plans for sessions and events celebrating NCPH’s 40th anniversary.

Of four planned 40th themed sessions, “Public History and Gender Equity: A Long View,” was offered virtually. An International content panel may be re-proposed in 2021. Papers from “Threads of Origin” will appear in a future issue of *The Public Historian*. Reflections from the panel “Present at the Creation: A Conversation with Pioneers of the Public History Movement” are in this newsletter. In addition, a number of essays have been solicited for a 40th anniversary commemorative e-publication in the works for digital release in late summer. Co-editors are myself, Patrick Grossi, and NCPH digital media editor Nicole Belolan. Thanks to authors who have contributed essays so far.

We had plans to reprise our exhibit booth and NCPH “Founders” slideshow in Atlanta, and Barb Howe doggedly tracked down biographies and photos of folks who attended organizing meetings in 1979 and 1980. Kristen Baldwin Deathridge and students helped update the slides. Special letters of invitation to Atlanta went out to over 150 Founder-generation public historians and former NCPH board members. As a result, a number of early members reconnected for our 40th anniversary, which was very gratifying.

Plans had been made to conduct oral histories with three invitees prominent in NCPH history. Sue Verhoef and Kristine McCusker of Oral History in the Southeast graciously volunteered to conduct these, which may be revisited in the future. Thanks to Sue and Kristine, and Barb Howe, who drafted questions. Finally, NCPH member Jen Myronek, who is also a video producer, volunteered to film some 40th events and sessions. Hopefully we will be able to call on Jen’s talents for a future celebration. Thanks also to the Local Arrangements Committee and Atlanta event sponsors for all their planning and support.

Consider these activities celebrating NCPH’s legacy to be postponed, not ended. We will gather again next year to enjoy the fellowship of public historians and raise a glass to NCPH on our way to our 50th birthday! As chair of the 40th Anniversary Ad-Hoc committee, I’d like to thank Meghan Hillman and the NCPH staff for their support, and thank committee members Nicole Belolan, Rebecca Conard, Kristen Baldwin Deathridge, Patrick Grossi, Barb Howe, Amber Mitchell, Kristine Navarro-McElhany, Phil Scarpino, and Amy Wilson.

Marianne Babal is Senior Historian and Vice President at Wells Fargo. She is a Past President of NCPH and currently serves on our Development Committee. She is chair of the NCPH 40th Anniversary Ad Hoc Committee.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CONFERENCE WORKING GROUPS

Four of the working groups that met as part of the virtual 2020 conference have provided summaries of their discussions. NCPH working groups are seminar-like conversations that take place before and during the conference. The groups, comprised of eight to fourteen people, explore in-depth a subject of shared concern and work toward a common purpose and outcome. If you are interested in creating a working group for the 2021 NCPH Annual Meeting, proposals are due July 15, 2020. (See the Call for Proposals at <http://ncph.org/conference/2021-annualmeeting/calls-for-proposals/>.)

WG1. PUBLIC HISTORIANS IN OUR CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The twelve members of the “Public Historians in Our Climate Emergency” Working Group had already been commenting on one another’s case statements for a month when we received the news that we would not be meeting in person in Atlanta. This facilitated our ability to turn our session on March 19 into a video conference, and produced a recording that we would not have had otherwise. The participants discussed their own work and different actions that public historians can take in relation to the climate crisis, which included material contributions such as disaster preparedness and cultural resources monitoring, as well as contributions to public education and interpretation. Our discussions of how our quickly changed lives under a pandemic relates to the “rapid transition” required by climate change and of re-interpreting long-held museum objects in light of climate change awareness were especially interesting. Our conversation focused on how public historians can be guided by the principles of environmental justice to work with low-income people and people of color. One example offered by a participant is the Gullah Geechee in South Carolina, and the questions of loss and mitigation raised by helping to document and protect aspects of their heritage threatened by rising sea levels and the increased incidence of violent storms.

We anticipate compiling an online resource from the participants’ case statements that can illuminate various strategies public historians can use to work with communities using heritage as a tool for climate change education and mobilization.

- DAVID GLASSBERG AND DONNA GRAVES

WG3. CHALLENGING WHITE PUBLIC HISTORY

This working group was formed to begin to address behavior observed by the group leaders at previous NCPH meetings and in our institutional settings. At the core of our vision for the working group was the idea that white people must do the work to undo white supremacy. The working group’s primary goals were to nurture a reflective space for doing the internal and interpersonal work necessary to dismantle whiteness in our professional shared spaces, including the conference space itself.

Prior to the planned meeting, working group participants wrote case statements discussing what drew them to the working group, including previous work confronting white supremacy. We created a shared values document which guided our interactions and helped ground our work. We shared resources, including works by Layla F. Saad, Ibram X. Kendi, Museums as Site for Social Action, and Robin DiAngelo. Participants commented on the case statements, sparking a pre-conference dialogue about change making and shared experiences around confronting white supremacy.

We met via Zoom in early April to reflect on the work undertaken so far and to make plans for future work. Overwhelmingly, we found the work helpful and there was enthusiasm for creating an ongoing space to check in and share resources. We plan to produce a blog post of our resources and are in discussions of how to continue this work at the 2021 conference in Salt Lake City. While we were disappointed we could not meet in person and put our pre-work into practice in the conference setting, the group remained committed to our core vision and hope to share more in coming months.

-KRISTEN BALDWIN DEATHRIDGE

WG5. PUBLIC HISTORY PARENTS: LEANING IN, OPTING OUT, AND FINDING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The Public History Parents working group met virtually via Zoom on March 19, 2020, most of us with our children somewhere in the background, which seemed especially appropriate for our topic. Comprised of eleven professionals from academia, federal and local government, and the consulting field, we tackled a series of issues that came out as common threads within our individual case statements. Our broad goal is to create a set of guidelines for how public history institutions of all kinds can provide parents, and those trying to become parents, with the support they need.

Six themes emerged from our case statement prompts, which became the basis of our two-hour discussion: flexibility, lactation support, sense of community, clear explanations of benefits and rights, work culture, and staying relevant. What became abundantly clear from our lively discussion was not only that we all shared many similar experiences, but that there is an urgent need for public history institutions to provide more support for working parents. Obviously, this is a national crisis that is now being felt even more acutely within the current pandemic.

However, we did devise a list of concrete measures we will work on implementing in the upcoming months to provide resources for those balancing parenthood with careers in public history. Many voiced confusion over HR policies and not knowing the right questions to ask as they prepared for parental leave. To that end, we will create an online resource guide to include a checklist of questions to ask HR during pregnancy

and post-partum. Another component of this resource guide will be templates with example wording to best communicate with employers, community partners, and clients about the often intimate situations that occur on the road to parenthood and early parenthood, such as fertility treatments, prenatal doctor visits, breastfeeding, and emergency childcare situations. Secondly, we will examine the creation of a private “Public History Parents” Facebook group as a way for people to ask questions and find support. Thirdly, we will be looking into the possibility of forming an NCPH subcommittee on parenting and public history to ensure that we keep working on these pertinent issues. Our goal is that these resources will in some small way help others navigate parenthood and public history.

-EMILY MCEWEN

WG7. PHILANTHROPY AND PUBLIC HISTORY

Together, the members of our working group set out to explore the ways in which philanthropy (foundation, individual, and corporate giving) and public history interact within nonprofit organizations. We stated the goal to identify the ways in which philanthropy and public history can have a positive reciprocal relationship. Our method included sharing case studies that demonstrate the successes, challenges, and limitations of this relationship. We planned to review the case studies, determine key takeaways, and identify the best way to disseminate recommendations for philanthropy in public history institutions during our time at the NCPH conference.

Although we didn’t have the opportunity to come together in Atlanta, we contemplated case studies and real-life issues via a shared Google Document prior to the conference. I will take this opportunity to share some of the questions and discussion topics we had planned to delve into:

1. How can we communicate the potential of building a reciprocal relationship between philanthropy and public history to staff, board members, stakeholders, etc. within our institutions?
2. Is it possible to create more inclusive historical narratives/programming while meeting fundraising goals? What is the interplay between inclusive history and philanthropy?
3. How can we leverage the relationship between philanthropy and public history to advance the strategic goals of our institutions?
4. What does successful grant administration and project management look like and how can these actions serve as a means to secure future funding?
5. Is it possible for funders to take a leadership role in advancing inclusive public history?

-ABBY CURTIN TEARE

PUBLIC HISTORY PETS

Normally this issue of *Public History News* would include a spread of photos from our annual meeting, which of course was not an option this year. Instead, we came up with a hopefully cheerful alternative: animals! Many of you are working from home with new coworkers who are either helping you through this time or distracting you (or doing both simultaneously). In April, we put out a call for your #publichistorypets, and it was a joy to see so many of you embrace this effort. Please enjoy this spread of pet photos!



Meet Karen Wizevich's cats Mango and Juma (who looks like his brother's "Russian fur hat!"). Image courtesy Karen Wizevich.



Meet Rebecca Patillo's cats, Mulder and Jimmy Carter. "Both are retired from their federal government positions." Image courtesy Rebecca Patillo.



Meet Todd Jones' dog Emma, reading *The Public Historian*. Image courtesy Todd Jones.



Meet Cynthia Resor's dog Ruby, featured in a "read aloud" video. Image courtesy video by Cynthia Resor.



Meet B Hinesley's "Covid Kittens," Billie, Leona, Rommie, DG, & Remmie, born on March 15th. Image courtesy B Geneva Hinesley.



Meet Kristyn Scorsone's dog Shirley. "I could not get through this without her!" Image courtesy Kristyn Scorsone.



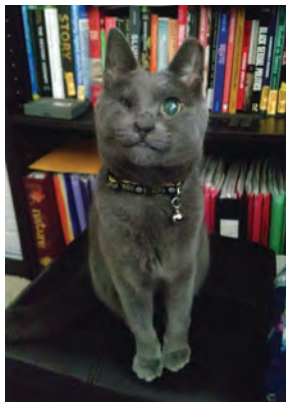
Meet Stevy Acevedo's dogs Nikko and Chloe. Image courtesy Stevy Acevedo.



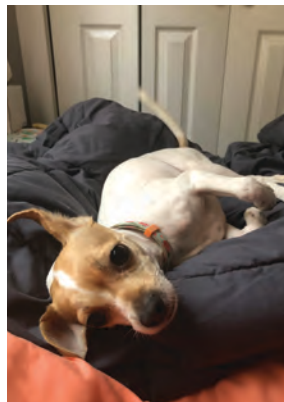
Meet Meredith Peruzzi's cats Hima (left) and Spot (right). "There's definitely some lazy coworkers out there." Image courtesy Meredith Peruzzi.



Meet John Marks's dog Ollie. "Having a rough time now that the toddler is always home." Image courtesy John Marks.



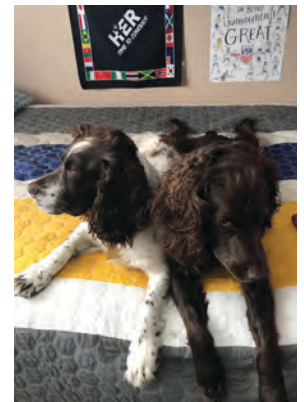
Meet Hilary Miller's cat Penelope, "one of the many #publichistorypets working hard right now!" Image courtesy Hilary Miller.



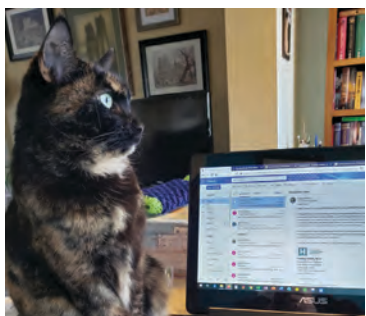
Meet Catherine Stiers' dog, Charlotte. Image courtesy Catherine Stiers.



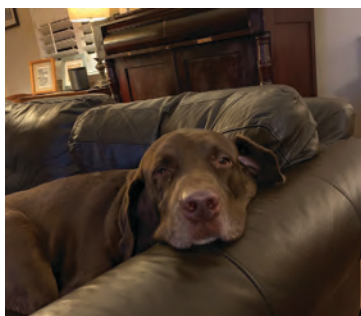
Meet Morgen Young's cat Sammy. "Unlike his human, he's loving the stay-at-home orders." Image courtesy Morgen Young.



Meet Kim Campbell's dogs Wyatt Earp (left) and Doc Holliday (right), "helping with remote work." Image courtesy Kim Campbell.



Meet Hayley Noble's cat, "the regal Artemis." Image courtesy Hayley Noble.



Meet A. Nicole Hill's dog, Chaucer. "He's a veteran of public parks and historic sites and my favorite research assistant." Image courtesy A. Nicole Hill.



Meet JJ Compton's dogs, Cassi and Vega, who are "wondering why I keep going to the car to do my oral history field research." Image courtesy JJ Compton.



Meet Will Stoutamire's cat Matsson, "helping me write a book review." Image courtesy Will Stoutamire.

PUBLIC HISTORY NEWS

National Council on Public History

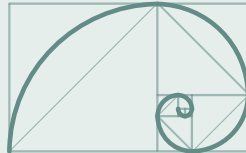
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