

## EMBRACING THE VIRTUAL: LESSONS LEARNED FROM NCPH 2021

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Over the course of three weeks in March 2021, NCPH held its annual meeting virtually on the PheedLoop platform. We were deeply disappointed to not be able to meet in person in Salt Lake City, but we were determined to make the best of a tough year and embrace the opportunity to try new things and learn new platforms. NCPH has a small staff and limited capacity; if circumstances had not required it, we would have found it difficult to prioritize virtual events in the hustle and bustle of our usual work, but instead we got a crash course in virtual that gave us the tools to think more broadly about our programming even after things return to “normal”—if in fact they ever do.

Some of the things we tried at Virtual NCPH 2021 were probably one-time attempts. While post-meeting survey responses indicated that attendees were split about the three-week duration of the meeting—with 40 percent in favor, 40 percent neutral or ambivalent, and 20 percent finding it unworkable—we feel upon reflection that it was simply too long. Engagement started off strong and tapered with each week, as public historians who were already exhausted by a year of Zoom found less and less energy to devote to conference activities. While the schedule was in some ways more doable for staff than a shorter meeting would have been, giving us mornings to plan and attend to other NCPH business, in practice it resulted in punishingly long days and prolonged the stress of conference planning. As we look to the future of our annual meeting, and the likelihood that there

will be a virtual element to the conference going forward, we’ll plan for virtual content to be less spread-out.

The platform question remains a tricky spot for us. Zoom-based platforms have emerged as the primary format for virtual meetings. PheedLoop, like all the platforms we considered, uses Zoom (either Zoom Meetings, in which all participants can have their cameras and audio on, or Zoom Webinar, in which only presenters are visible) as the main content-delivery system. While Zoom Meetings and Zoom Webinar each have advantages and disadvantages, neither is a particularly tidy solution for NCPH’s presenters and attendees. Ours is different from many academic conferences; we’ve moved away from traditional panels to cultivate sessions that are conversation-based and participatory. Our presenters *want* to be able to interact with the audience more actively than Zoom Webinar’s Q&A function allows, and to pull conference attendees into more sustained dialogue in the course of their session—and attendees *want* to be pulled in. We have yet to find a neat, user-friendly, bandwidth-friendly way to do large events and sessions virtually that can preserve the level of collaboration that makes NCPH’s conference great.

However, some of the things we tried were so successful that we’re already planning to



This year's virtual conference featured our first-ever virtual exhibit hall.

make them a part of our regular programming. When asked to name your favorite parts of the annual meeting, attendees pointed to the informal events that spoke to a specific topic or served a subset of the public history field. At the Consultants’ Speakeasy, breakout groups allowed consultants to network more intimately. At the New Professional and Student Social, attendees went on a scavenger hunt in their own homes to share objects that spoke to their personal and family histories, a prompt that wouldn’t have been possible in person. Small group conversations about job-hunting in a pandemic, mid-career transitions, the challenges of leading by Zoom, and even the joys of reading fiction were productive and energizing, giving us a model for virtual networking going forward.

Virtual NCPH 2021 was more accessible in many ways than our usual in-person conference. The registration fees were lower across the board, with an extra-low

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## PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS // PANDEMIC YEAR + 1: THE NEW NORMAL



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Twelve months ago, in the midst of the growing global pandemic, I sat down to write my first column for *Public History News*.

I took as my subject the ways public historians were addressing the crisis – “rapid response” public history so to speak. It seemed timely and appropriate. Before that column appeared in print, however, it became tragically clear

that we were really facing a “double pandemic” – COVID-19 and our nation’s long history of discrimination and violence directed at people of color – that made finding ways to continue our work even more urgent. Now, one year later, it seems fitting to survey some of the adaptations that public historians made and think about what worked well and what did not, what we will keep in our toolkits and what was temporary. In short, what will the “new normal” look like in the post-pandemic landscape of public history?

One thing is all but certain, robust virtual programming is here to stay. The pandemic forced NCPH to shift both our 2020 and 2021 annual meetings to an online format and taught us some important lessons. In the process our members have come to value virtual content as a matter of equity and accessibility. What does this mean for our future? While virtual conferences can never provide the valuable face-to-face interactions possible at a regular meeting and a true “hybrid” (simultaneous in-person/virtual)

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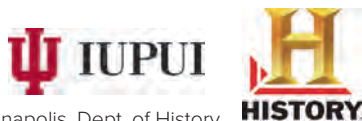
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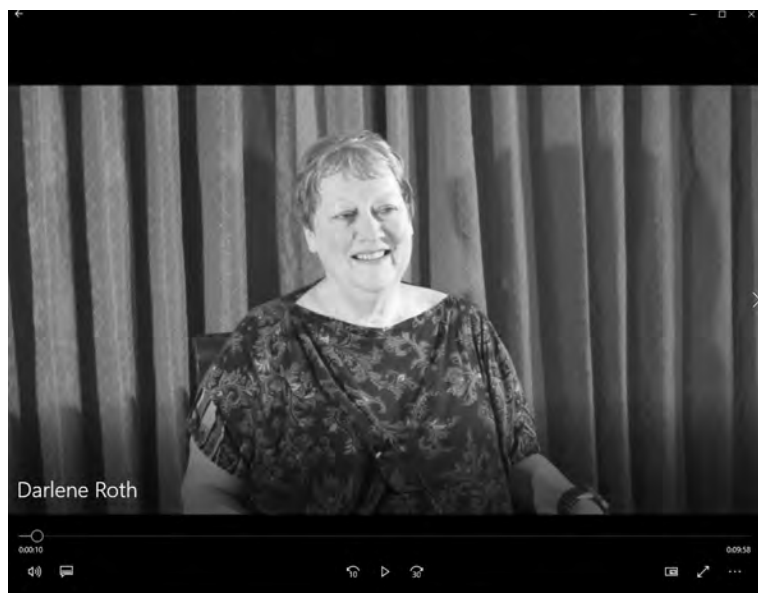
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# IN MEMORIAM: DARLENE REBECCA ROTH

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Darlene Roth during her 2009 interview at the Providence, RI conference.

NCPH has lost a founding member. Darlene was born in Burbank, California, on February 2, 1941. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of California Berkeley, MPhil in American Studies from Occidental, and PhD in American Studies from The George Washington University. Her dissertation on “Matronage: Patterns in Women’s Organizations, Atlanta, Georgia, 1890-1940” was published with Carlson in 1994.

“I was a public historian before there was public history.” That is how Darlene characterized her pioneering career in which she helped found one of the country’s first history consulting businesses, The History Group, in 1974. Darlene recalled that it “was formed to create meaningful, remunerative work and a job for at least one historian, namely me.” When Atlanta’s mass transit agency, MARTA, was planning and constructing its rail system in the mid-1970s, The History Group did some of the Section 106 work. Phil Cantelon, NCPH’s first executive secretary and founder of History Associates, Inc., called her “the mother of us all” as a consultant. Larry Tise, another NCPH founder, said, “We were all inspired by Darlene’s persistent and persuasive evangel of the private practice of public history from the earliest of moments of our discussions going forward,” and, despite occasional cash flow problems, “her spirit of enterprise placed all of us in her daunting shadow.”

Darlene developed an expertise in Atlanta history which, added to her PhD work in women’s history, led to an emphasis on local studies of underrepresented populations. Combining social history with study of the built environment, she developed walking tours on “Atlanta Women’s History,” “Black Atlanta,” and “Early Atlanta Suburbs.” They were the first local tours integrated into an Organization of American Historians conference. In the 1970s, while married to Dana White, she and Martha Gaines formed Gaines and Roth-White, focusing on developing affirmative action plans and leadership training. Darlene also lectured at Emory University from 1974 to 1982.

Darlene remembered, “When UC Santa Barbara coined the term ‘public history’ we snapped it up. At last we had a name for what we did. Then UCSB found The History Group: we were doing what they were preaching. I soon found myself on a plane to California at UCSB’s invitation.”

At the 1979 meeting in Montecito, California, which laid the groundwork for what became NCPH, she was blunt. As quoted in *The Public Historian* (Autumn 1979),

I am not really here... today as a teacher of history, although I have experience in teaching history. I am not here as a writer of history, although I’ve written history. I am not really even here as a practitioner of public history, although I am heavily involved as a practitioner of public history. Nor am I here as a manager of a historical agency, although certainly I do that since I own a small business [History Group, Inc.]. Rather I’m here as a peddler. I sell something. And that something is history: be it historical services, information, cultural interpretation. I sell history! I have been doing it for four years, and every year I am better at it. And I think that’s saying something for a kid who used to have a terrible time unloading Girl Scout cookies. I want to address myself to what might be called the three p’s of public history... peddling, packaging and products. Those are the kinds of things, the terminology, that I have to deal with. What I am chiefly concerned about in my business is what history has to sell and how I have to go about selling it. I talk history. I do not talk historians.

She attended the September 1979 organizational meeting at the National Archives, served on the acting executive committee to organize NCPH, was a member of the board of directors from 1980 to 1985, and was an incorporator of NCPH in 1980. In 1982 Darlene began to coordinate the distribution of our first media production: “History Goes Public:” a then “high-tech” slide carousel with cassette tape accompaniment. She is featured in “Public History Today,” an NCPH promotional video for public history; and served on the editorial board of *The Public Historian* from 2009 to 2014. University of West Florida students interviewed her at our 2009 conference.

As director of exhibitions and collections for the Atlanta History Center from 1989 to 1997, Darlene supervised approximately \$12 million in exhibition development and installation. She then owned Darlene Roth & Associates until retiring.

Darlene received the Council of Past Presidents’ Founders Award in 2017. Shelley Bookspan and Lindsey Reed then interviewed her for our archives.

In addition to *Matronage*, her nine books include *Atlanta Women: From Myth to Modern Times* (with Louise E. Shaw Roth, 1980), *The Heart of Atlanta: Historic Structures Survey* (1984), *Frederick Law Olmsted’s First and Last Suburbs: Riverside and Druid Hills* (1993), *Metropolitan Frontiers: A Short History of Atlanta* (with Andy Ambrose and the Atlanta History Center, 1996), *Greater Atlanta: An Illustrated History of the Region* (with Lori Parks, 2000), *Piedmont Park: Celebration Atlanta’s Common Ground* (with Jeff Kempf et al., 2003). She also published book reviews, op-ed pieces, creative writing, and was once working on a book entitled “The Inner Historian and the Tao of History.”

She was also a costume designer and sometime opera singer.

Darlene passed away on March 31, 2021, in Grover Beach, California.

-Barb Howe is retired from West Virginia University. She served as NCPH chair (1988-1989) and is currently active in the NCPH Council of Past Presidents.

# ACTIONS OF THE NCPH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*This winter and spring the board convened electronically and took the actions listed below.*

*At the December 1, 2020 Virtual Board Meeting the board took the following actions:*

- Approved the minutes of the October Fall 2020 Virtual Meeting.
- Voted to award Bill Bryans the Board Award for Extraordinary Service.
- Discussed an amendment to the bylaws to create a new Advisory Committee on National Park Service Collaborations.
- Heard updates on the pending University of California, Santa Barbara and Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities Memorandums of Agreement renewals.

*Between the December and February virtual meetings the board took the following actions:*

- Due to the pandemic, suspended the election for Secretary-Treasurer for 2021 and extended the incumbent's current term for one year.
- Amended the bylaws Section 7.04 to add a new clause k that creates the Advisory Committee on National Park Service Collaboration. The committee will advise and assist with the cooperative agreement between NCPH and the National Park Service (NPS), by consulting on (though not selecting) potential projects and project participants; advising the Board and NCPH staff on NPS issues; publicizing the program; and advocating for NPS within the organization.

- Renewed the Memorandum of Agreement between NCPH; the University of California, Santa Barbara; and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities at Rutgers University-Camden for the latter to continue to host the co-editor for *The Public Historian*/NCPH Digital Media Editor through 2023.
- Renewed the Memorandum of Agreement between NCPH and the University of California, Santa Barbara for *The Public Historian*.

*At the February 2, 2021 Virtual Board Meeting the board took the following actions:*

- Approved the minutes of the November 2020 and December 2020 Virtual Meetings.
- Heard a staff update on the status of planning for the 2021 Virtual NCPH Annual Meeting.
- Established a process for conducting a board self-evaluation.
- Heard updates on the finalization of the Memorandum of Agreement with the University of California, Santa Barbara and editorial transition for *The Public Historian*, as well as transitions in board terms after the annual meeting.

*At the March 2, 2021 Virtual Board Meeting the board took the following actions:*

- Heard a staff update on the status of planning for the 2021 Virtual NCPH Annual Meeting.

- Completed review of the board self-evaluation study and discussed improvements to board training and orientation.

*Between the March 2, 2021 and the April 24, 2021 Spring Virtual Board Meetings, the board took the following actions:*

- Approved a temporary agreement with the University of Georgia to fund a graduate student assistant for the summer months (May, June, July) of 2021 to assist the Editor of *The Public Historian*.
- Board members supported the virtual conference during the month of March 2021, monitoring chat and sessions.

*At the April 24, 2021 Virtual Spring Board Meeting the board took the following actions:*

- Heard a report from the president on Memorandum of Agreement renewal discussions with the IU School of Liberal Arts and regarding the 2022 and 2023 annual meetings.
- Thanked outgoing Board members and welcomed incoming Board members.
- Voted to select Nicole Moore to serve as the at-large member of the Executive Committee of the Board for the 2021-2022 term.
- Voted to renew the Memorandum of Agreement between NCPH and the International Federation for Public History.
- Approved the minutes of the February 2021 and March 2021 Virtual Board Meetings.

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# 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/>.

## BOARD-LED SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT



Screenshot of Kristyn Scorsone's blog post on *History@Work*.

As a board-led subcommittee, the gender discrimination and sexual harassment group was formed to address set tasks. The subcommittee held our spring meeting on February 19, 2021, and we will be meeting again in late May. Stephanie Rowe will join us for that meeting, and the board's Executive Committee may be invited as well. The co-chairs have urged the teams (Survey, Resources, and Policy) to meet before then as well to review the feedback from our conference session (Friday, March 19 and open to all attendees) and to talk through potential end dates and sustainability plans for our group. We anticipate that we will continue for at least another year, but we recognize that it is time to wrap up our work in its current form and to consider what comes next. It is likely that there will be suggested ongoing activities that would best be done either by a new standing committee, a subset of board members, folded into other standing committee duties, or a combination of these options. At the same time, we are continuing with our work as best we can under the circumstances. The survey, which asked public historians to report on their experiences with sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the field, closed on February 26. We had 446 responses. The survey team is working with our partners at the American Association for State and Local History on a plan for evaluating those responses for use in public reports and recommendations. Kristyn Scorsone of the resources team authored a *History@Work* blog post update (<https://ncph.org/history-at-work/a-call-for-resources-on-sexual-harassment-and-gender-discrimination-in-public-history/>), and Samantha Rosenthal authored one representing the policy team earlier this year (<https://ncph.org/history-at-work/how-should-we-respond/>).

-Submitted by co-chairs Kristen Baldwin Deathridge and Mary Rizzo

## CONSULTANTS COMMITTEE

Since our September report, the Consultants Committee worked primarily on programming for the conference. The Consultants' Speakeasy was

a combination of our usual networking speakeasy event and our typical training workshop. It was held the evening of Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, and we encouraged attendees to have fun with the St. Patrick's Day timing by wearing green or having green drinks and snacks, and we sent ideas for place-name themed cocktails/mocktails to attendees who pre-registered. We used breakout rooms to discuss various topics relevant to consulting, including how to get started, how to grow, and how to handle consulting during a pandemic.

We also provided support for the Best Practices in Consulting working group, which met Thursday, March 11. The working group met in February to begin discussing the topics to be included in the best practices document, and more detailed conversations took place during the conference. We also provided support for a Dine and Discuss session held jointly with the American Association of Museums Independent Museum Professionals network, which focused on supporting independent practitioners in public history during the pandemic.

Following the conference, we now turn our attention to the consulting-related resources on the NCPH website, including updates to the Consultants Directory.

-Submitted by co-chairs Jackie Gonzales and Cheri Szcodronski

## CURRICULUM AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Curriculum and Training Committee hosted a lively and successful Educators' Forum at the NCPH annual meeting. The forum featured break-out rooms on eight topics, each facilitated by a committee member and/or guest facilitator: holistic admissions and public history program administration, the online pivot in museums and museum education, remote internships, burnout and mental health, creating community among students in public history programs, career trajectories for public historians in higher ed, and potential topics for best practice documents. Each participant had the opportunity to join two of those conversations, as well as engage in discussion with the entire group.

In the coming year, the Curriculum and Training Committee will incorporate participants' ideas and concerns into their work. Among participants, one issue emerged as being of particular interest: working with other professional organizations of historians to update the tenure and promotion guidelines that many history departments use to evaluate faculty.

The committee co-chairs would very much like to grow the committee in the coming year. Faculty, students, and public history practitioners are all welcome to join. Anyone interested in learning more about the committee or its work should contact Leslie Madsen at [lmadsen@boisestate.edu](mailto:lmadsen@boisestate.edu). -Submitted by co-chairs Jennifer Dickey and Leslie Madsen

## DIGITAL MEDIA GROUP

The Digital Media Group (DMG) has stayed busy during the past few months. At the virtual

conference, members coordinated the Digital Public History Lab, a public history writing workshop and session about *History@Work* "From Pitch to Post," and a reflective conversation about "Public History Here and Now."

April 13, 2021, marked the official launch of the new Digital Public History Project Directory. As of the end of April, there are over 100 projects included, and it continues to grow quickly. NCPH is also featuring newly listed projects weekly on Twitter, with thanks to the DMG's team of volunteer social media managers. Take a look and spread the word! <https://ncph.org/digital-public-history-directory/>



Screenshot of the new Digital Public History Project Directory at [ncph.org](https://ncph.org).

*History@Work* has taken some time to reevaluate workload for editors and to recruit additional editors to the team. We are hopeful that we are laying the groundwork to create a more sustainable blog so that we can continue to showcase diverse perspectives from across the field (and beyond).

The pandemic has created an unprecedented opportunity to reflect on the "digital" and the "virtual" in our worlds. We hope to approach the coming year with a broader and deeper understanding of the labor, challenges, and opportunities reflected in the state of the art in digital communications and virtual spaces for doing public history, and we will continue to create opportunities for our members to reflect on the role and value of digital media in our work.

-Submitted by chair Adina Langer

## COMMITTEE FOR GOVERNMENT HISTORIANS

The Committee for Government Historians' mission is to support NCPH members who work for or with local, state, and federal government agencies, recognizing that government workers' experiences and needs can be different from those of other public historians. With representatives from local, state, and federal government agencies, we strive to promote public history done by governments throughout the United States and Canada. We hold monthly committee meetings, and can be reached at [NCPHgovhistorians@gmail.com](mailto:NCPHgovhistorians@gmail.com).

For the past year, we have been exploring how to better use social media to highlight what government historians do. We started a Twitter account (@NCPHGovHist), and we have encouraged our committee members to share their stories on the main NCPH Facebook page, participate in a takeover of the NCPH Instagram account, and write posts for *History@Work*.

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The Teaching Public History Online Working Group has a page of resources at [ncph.org](http://ncph.org).

conference would be costly and extremely labor intensive for our small staff, it is likely that virtual content will become a regular supplement to our meetings. In the past year NCPH also piloted virtual programming. After surveying our membership about how to best serve public historians facing reduced hours or lay-offs, NCPH facilitated a series of six webinars focused on professional development and critical issues facing the profession. (Check out Stasia Tanzer's article in the previous edition of *Public History News* to learn more about these programs.)

Virtual programming also became the backbone offerings of practically every other public history and humanities organization. At Utah Humanities, Megan Van Frank has been managing the statewide tours of two Smithsonian Institution exhibitions, including the development of accompanying local content, from her home office. Virtual programs have proven economical and when recorded can provide continuing access, effectively extending their reach. Attendance has been exceptional, at times drawing double or even triple the number of participants seen at similarly scheduled in-person events. She has also been gratified by the zest with which her partner organizations, many with only one or two professional staff members, have thrown themselves into the virtual realm. Yet Megan is quick to add that creating digital content also brings with it demands to manage that content, potentially straining the financial and technical resources of these

small institutions. In Michigan, where NCPH board member Suzanne Fischer oversees the Michigan History Center's statewide system of history museums, the public response has been similar. In the last year much of her focus has been on capacity development for digital programming and the result has been popular and well-attended programs.

For both Megan and Suzanne, and indeed for all public historians, the big question is how to create and maintain community in a virtual space? In normal years they log hundreds of miles, crisscrossing their respective states, visiting small museums, and helping the staffs build capacity. Videoconferencing is at best a stop gap, although Suzanne did discover one unexpected silver lining: system-wide Zoom meetings that included staff members from the state's widely dispersed museums functioned as a kind of virtual "water cooler," and created more of a sense of being a team. Nonetheless, the kind of personal relationships forged in-person simply cannot be replicated virtually. You literally cannot phone (or Zoom) it in! Both Megan and Suzanne are anxiously waiting for the time they can get on the road again.

The pandemic also largely drove public history education online. I found that teaching my own methods course remotely was workable, but not ideal. On the upside, pre-recording content allowed me to focus weekly Zoom meetings on discussions and bring in guest speakers, some from great distances. But the personal interaction that is at the heart of our work was missing. Moreover, some of the assignments that I previously used were just not possible. Thankfully, I benefited from the work of NCPH's Teaching Public History Online Working Group, which produced a best practices document as well as a range of assignments suitable for remote instruction. (Find out more about the working groups efforts on the NCPH website). While I will continue to use more digital content in my courses, I would be lying if I said I was not looking forward to being in the classroom and in the field the next time I teach.

The virtual environment also presents daunting challenges for managing internships. To what extent can we equitably recreate the hands-on experience that internships are intended to provide when the intern works remotely? Elyssa Ford of Northwest Missouri State University (along with Sarah Phalen, Laura Schiavo, and Gretchen Sorin) facilitated a working group at the 2021 NCPH meeting aimed at answering that very question. While acknowledging that internships should never be completely remote, Elyssa sought to focus on potentials rather than limitations. She teaches in a rural area where most students lack the resources to accept distant internships and where potential partner institutions don't always have the capacity to offer internships. In this context remote internships promise to democratize the process, bringing advantages to everyone involved. Of course, concerns remain, including technology gaps, accessibility to materials, and projects that simply cannot be done remotely. To find out more about the group's discussions keep an eye out for an upcoming *History@Work* post.

Finally, the pandemic has also got us rethinking workplace relationships. At NCPH's home office at IUPUI work-from-home mandates created the space, as executive director Stephanie put it, "to consider what was not so great about the old normal." The result was more flexible work patterns which allow for a better life balance and that will remain part of the workplace culture of NCPH.

The pandemic forced us all to find ways to continue serving our communities, clients, visitors, and students. Yet we cannot expect adaptations made in direct response to a crisis to remain useful without some tinkering. Innovation will demand more innovation. So if there is a lesson to draw from the past year it might just be that the "new normal" is and should remain a work in progress.

*-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.*

## ACTIONS OF THE NCPH BOARD OF DIRECTORS // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 5

- Reviewed the 2020 year-end finances and 2021 finances to date, and heard a report from the Secretary-Treasurer.
- Voted to move the 2020 surplus into the Operational Reserve Fund.
- Heard reports from *The Public Historian* Editor and Co-Editor and the NCPH Digital Media Editor.
- Discussed volunteer service time commitments for committee members and formed an ad-hoc

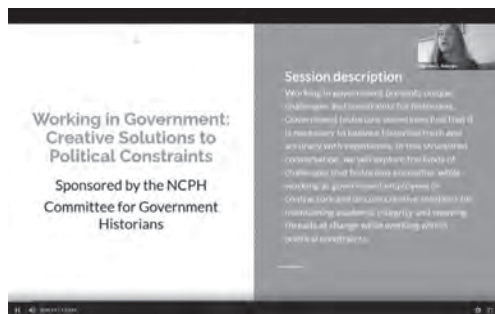
group of board members to create a short survey to understand committee member workloads.

- Reviewed reports from standing and ad-hoc committees and task forces.
- Reviewed and discussed an amendment to the bylaws to form a standing Committee on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility submitted via white paper from the existing Diversity and Inclusion Task Force.

- Reviewed and discussed an amendment to the bylaws to separate the Secretary/Treasurer position into two positions: Secretary and Treasurer. Both would run as uncontested seats. The Secretary would serve on the Governance Committee and Executive Committee of the Board and would be eligible for re-election. The Treasurer would serve on the Finance Committee and Executive

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 ►





Opening slide of the "Working in Government: Creative Solutions to Political Constraints" session at Virtual NCPH 2021.

Our committee members were also heavily involved in the 2021 Annual Meeting. The Government Historians Committee sponsored four sessions, a workshop on careers in government, and an hour-long social event where committee member Jean-Pierre Morin tasked participants to describe their work by answering six questions in six minutes.

We are looking forward to the coming year with a possible collaboration with *The Public Historian* on a special issue, more active involvement on social media, and welcoming the input of new committee members. We would like to thank all our committee members for their service this past year, and say good-bye and good luck to longtime committee members Jean-Pierre Morin, Michael Binder, and Carl Ashley, who are rotating off the committee this term.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Rebekah Dobrasko and Jessie Kratz*

## COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Committee on Environmental Sustainability (CoES) has been working on its ongoing projects and laying the groundwork for a new one. Three years ago, the CoES submitted its resource paper on Public History Education and sustainability. This document is a resource paper designed to help educators looking to expand curriculum and in-field professionals looking to diversify interpretive programs. We have learned, though, that the document is more "living" than we originally imagined as new scholarship and resources are constantly becoming available. The CoES has been revising and extending the existing draft. We are also now discussing ways to shift the paper to an online Wiki model so that revision can be done more easily on an as-needed basis. We also plan to run occasional *History@Work* pieces showcasing examples of environmental sustainability in public history training.

The CoES also drafted its Green Meeting Report which is now about to be sent in its last form to the Board. We had hoped to have input sessions at NCPH 2020 but COVID disrupted that plan. COVID in fact changed the entire context of small and large meetings in ways that for the time being has solved the problems presented in reducing events' carbon footprints. The current revisions address COVID's effect on the national and international meeting-scape.

Our newest undertaking advocates the inclusion of historical environmental impact and links to environmental justice as significance criteria for historic preservation. Early conversations have included a number of potential projects: technical bulletins to guide nominating National Register sites and amending listed sites under environmental history criteria, a list of National Register sites nominated for environmental history significance and those that would be good candidates for amendment, and nomination/amendment project templates for public history educators to incorporate into historic preservation courses. Given the potential labor demands, we hope to find ways to crowdsource much of this work. If you would like to get involved or share ideas, contact the committee chairs.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Philip Levy and William Ippen*

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Since last fall, the finance committee's work has been to monitor the financial stability of NCPH in light of the pandemic. At our April meeting, we were pleased to note that FY 2020 closed out with a small surplus, thanks to our staff's excellent fiscal management and to our membership's strong financial support. The committee recommended that the board place the small FY 2020 surplus into the operational reserve fund. We also reviewed and revised our investments to bring them into alignment with the allocations in our guidelines. The committee is cautiously optimistic about the budget projections for FY 2021. Receipt of a National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman's Grant will help to offset staff costs. From the finance committee's perspective, the work of the development committee, the endowment campaign, the board, and the staff to develop a culture of philanthropy among the organization's membership is helping us to weather a potentially difficult time.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Rosalind Beiler and Amy Wilson*

## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Governance Committee has continued to work on several items, including updating the onboarding documentation for new board members and creating a summary of the differences between ad-hoc committees and task forces.

The committee is also undertaking board exit interviews with this year's outgoing board members and reviewing NCPH policies, liability statements, and disclaimers.

Lastly, the committee has continued to work on the NCPH Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and will be continuing to work with this document over the coming year.

*-Submitted by chair Krista McCracken*

## NEW PROFESSIONAL AND STUDENT COMMITTEE

The New Professional and Student Committee had an absolute blast at the 2021 annual conference! Thanks to our dedicated committee members, the

New Professional and Student Committee hosted two successful events at this year's conference: a behind-the-scenes exhibit tour with the Atlanta History Center and a social and scavenger hunt. Attendance at the Atlanta History Center tour peaked at eighty conference participants and allowed folks to get a taste of what Atlanta has to offer when NCPH returns there in 2023. Our social and scavenger hunt, held near the end of the conference, brought together conference participants to network and hunt as teams for household items. Teams not only came up with some incredible names, but also shared some fascinating family heirlooms and adorable pets and plants. Our committee's Programming, Communications, and Member Resources working groups look forward to building from the success of our conference events by drafting pitches for *History@Work* blog pieces alongside curating content for the committee's Twitter account; updating and revising the *Public History Navigator*; and working with other NCPH committees to plan informal social and networking opportunities this spring and summer.

*-Submitted by Hilary Miller and Brian Whetstone*

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

This year, the Professional Development Committee focused its attention on conference-related activities. These included helping make workshop selections and, in lieu of our traditional speed networking event, organizing three professional development coffee breaks, all of which were well-attended. We have also liaised with the Membership and the New Professional and Student Committees about collaborating on our overlapping mandates. After a committee conference debriefing session and taking into account the feedback we received from members at the coffee breaks, we have set an agenda for the summer and the year ahead that will offer more networking and socializing opportunities for our members outside of the conference. We want people to get the most out of their NCPH memberships, and what we heard from members and from the committee alike is that networking is one of the most important opportunities NCPH offers. To this end, we are launching a reading group and a series of virtual networking events in the short-term, and in the long-term we are developing career advising and mentoring programs for both new and mid-career professionals (likely working with the Membership and New Professional and Student Committees). We also plan to introduce events specifically designed for mid-career professionals at the next NCPH conference. We thank our committee members for their hard work in less than ideal circumstances, and look forward to developing more robust professional development activities for our members going forward.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Patrice Green and Tracy Neumann*



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2021 WORKING GROUPS

Three of the working groups that met during the 2021 virtual NCPH 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 2022 NCPH Annual Meeting, proposals are due July 15, 2021. (See the call for proposals at <http://ncph.org/conference/2022-annual-meeting/calls-for-proposals/>.)

## CHALLENGING WHITE PUBLIC HISTORY

This working group was a continuation of the 2020 Challenging White Public History group. We invited all participants from last year's annual meeting to continue the work with us and opened the working group to new folks as well. The majority of our group continued from 2020, and those who were not able to participate were supportive of our ongoing efforts.

For the 2021 conference, we focused on the production of an infographic based on Michelle Caswell's "Identifying and Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives" for public historians. We met as a group prior to the conference session to learn more about ourselves and what brought us to the work. We also decided on the four areas we wanted to develop for the infographic: General Public, Institutions, Colleagues, and Community Partners.

During our well-attended session, we stated our shared principles, recapped our previous work, and spent the majority of our time in groups creating the text for the infographic. Each group created privilege and action statements, which will be translated into an infographic in the coming weeks. We will be sharing the infographic, a follow-up *History@Work* blog post, and an annotated resource list soon.

While our working group is coming to a close, we know this work never ends. We look forward to feedback and engagement around the infographic,

resources, and the work of challenging White Public History.

-KRISTEN BALDWIN DEATHRIDGE, AMANDA HIGGINS, LARA KELLAND, AND JODI LEWIS

## FOREGROUNDING STORIES OF CITIZENSHIP IN PUBLIC HISTORY

Citizenship is one of the most important and malleable concepts in our lives. It denotes membership, belonging, and a certain set of rights and responsibilities. Most formally, citizenship is something that a state grants to citizens, and this is documented through birth certificates, certain forms of identification, and various government databases. The concept, however, is also used in more informal forms, such as "corporate citizenship" and "digital citizenship."

Members of this working group feel that citizenship is "hidden in plain sight" at many public history institutions. Many exhibits and interpretations talk around the concept, and often in an under-nuanced way. Very often, the only explicit programs about citizenship at museums are voter registration drives and citizenship classes for green card holders. Citizenship is seen as something good to which everyone should aspire. Ambivalence towards and the negative effects of citizenship are rarely explored in public history institutions.

We are developing two resources that aim to help public historians and our visitors develop better ways of thinking through the concept of citizenship. The first is a terminology guide that promotes the use of precise phrasing in discussions about citizenship in exhibits, programs, and educational materials. A key inspiration for this is the reporting guides developed by the Native American Journalists Association (<https://najanewsroom.com/reporting-guides/>). The second is a guidebook—to be made available to visitors at public history institutions and high-school students—with scenarios that encourage readers to dig a bit deeper into their ideas about citizenship. A key inspiration for this is the Monument Lab's Field Trip Guide

(<https://monumentlab.com/publications/monument-lab-field-trip>).

-PATRICE GREEN, ERIC HUNG, MANDI MAGNUSEN-HUNG, AND ANDREW URBAN

## "NEVERTHELESS, SHE PERSISTED": PRESERVING LOCAL WOMEN'S HISTORY IN THE WAKE OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT CENTENNIAL

Our working group was comprised of public history professionals and students that contributed to the hundredth anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment in the United States. Archives, libraries, museums, non-profits, government agencies, and universities were represented. Our goal was to discuss the challenges and successes experienced during the commemoration and how to continue prioritizing the stories of women in our ongoing work. As part of our discussion, the group described a variety of programs that were originally planned as in-person events, almost all of which required pivoting to an online format as a result of lock-downs from the pandemic. It became apparent that virtual programming provided many benefits and will be key in upcoming work.

A common motif expressed by panelists was the difficulty in locating the stories of local women and their contributions to the suffrage movement. This difficulty was compounded when they looked beyond the traditional white, upper-class suffrage narrative to find the stories of women left out of the narrative. Panelists contemplated what guidelines would have helped them to research women's history and are planning on producing a helpful guide to researching local women in our communities. Participants in this working group are also eager and excited to apply lessons learned from the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment commemoration to the upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States' founding. Most participants are drafting case studies of their experiences for an anthology on doing women's history and how we can leverage this work for the 250<sup>th</sup>.

-BRANDI BURNS AND KATHERINE KITTERMAN

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

Anna Adamek Ottawa, ON, Canada	James Brooks Athens, GA	Natalie Fousekis Los Angeles, CA	Trevor Jones Lincoln, NE	Vanessa Macias Camacho El Paso, TX	Patrick Moore White Rock, NM	Edward Roach Dayton, OH	Santi Thompson Houston, TX
Chuck Arning Lunenburg, MA	Leisl Carr Childers Fort Collins, CO	Kathleen Franz Washington, DC	Brian Joyner Washington, DC	Rachel Maines Ithaca, NY	Kristin Morris Los Altos, CA	Alan Rowe Indianapolis, IN	Robert Townsend Alexandria, VA
Marianne Babal Mill Valley, CA	Robert Carrier Lafayette, LA	Alice George Philadelphia, PA	Ted Karamanski Palos Park, IL	John Majewski Goleta, CA	Linda Morton New Albany, IN	Stephanie Rowe Indianapolis, IN	Anne Whisnant Chapel Hill, NC
Kristen Baldwin Deathridge Boone, NC	Larry Cebula Spokane, WA	Emily Greenwald Missoula, MT	Lara Kelland St. Louis, MO	Brian Martin Rockville, MD	Kristine Navarro- McElhaney Santa Fe, NM	Fath Ruffins Mount Rainier, MD	Mieux Williamsen Northfield, MN
Rosalind Beiler Orlando, FL	Lindy Cummings New Bern, NC	Donald Hall Silver Spring, MD	Lynn Kronzek Burbank, CA	Jay Martin Mt. Pleasant, MI	Elizabeth Nix Baltimore, MD	Philip Scarpino Indianapolis, IN	William Willingham Portland, OR
Nicole Belolan Riverton, NJ	Hugh Davidson Logan, UT	Elizabeth Harris Boston, MA	Louis Kyriakoudes Murfreesboro, TN	Tanya Maus Wilmington, OH	Katherine Ott Washington, DC	Tom Scheinfeldt Storrs, CT	Amy Wilson Roswell, GA
Randy Bergstrom Santa Barbara, CA	Michael Devine Seattle, WA	Keith Hebert Trattville, AL	Modupe Labode Silver Spring, MD	Barbara McCaskill Athens, GA	Valerie Paley New York, NY	Constance Schulz Columbia, SC	Robert Wolff New Britain, CT
Andrea Blackman Nashville, TN	John Dichtl Nashville, TN	Tamsen Hert Laramie, WY	Zada Law Ashland City, TN	Denise Meringolo Alexandria, VA	Gale Peterson Cincinnati, OH	Rebecca Shrum Indianapolis, IN	Joan Zenzen Rockville, MD
Martin Blatt Cambridge, MA	Michael Duchemin San Antonio, TX	Alphine Jefferson Rutherford, VA	Michael Lawson Annandale, VA	Holly Metz Hoboken, NJ	Joel Ralph Winnipeg, MB, Canada	Angela Smith Fargo, ND	
Shelley Bookspan Santa Barbara, CA	Suzanne Fischer Lansing, MI	Claire Jerry Washington, DC	Alexandra Lord Washington, DC	Karen Miller Bellevue, NE	Mary Rizzo Newark, NJ	Gregory Smoak Salt Lake City, UT	
	Robert Forrant Lowell, MA	Arnita Jones Washington, DC	Katherine Maas Alexandria, VA		Mark Speltz Lafayette, CA		

# 2021 NEW PROFESSIONAL AWARD WINNER HIGHLIGHTS



NCPH's New Professional Travel Awards are for individuals new to the field and practice of public history. These two grants assist new professionals in attending the conference, helping them become more connected with other members of the profession early in their careers. NCPH acknowledges the generous support of Historical Research Associates, Inc. (HRA) for underwriting one of these awards and award committee members Patrick Moore (chair), Deirdre Clemente, and Bob Carriker for their work selecting this year's winners: Cheryl Dong and Jacqueline Hudson. NCPH asked our winners to share their experiences at Virtual NCPH 2021.

CHERYL DONG /  
CHERYL.DONG@UNI.EDU



Attending the NCPH conference of 2021 was one of the most rewarding experiences of my academic career as a public historian. The

conference helped me forge new friendships, renew old relationships, and provide space to critically think about the future of the public history program at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). Currently, public history at UNI consists of a public history certificate program, a public history minor, and an MA in History with a public history emphasis. I arrived at the university in August of 2020 as the first tenure-track faculty member in public history in several years. The program needed a revitalization of curriculum to align with the current debates that have animated our field and to deal with the crisis of COVID-19. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we managed to increase student enrollment and interest in our public history and museum studies courses as well as our internship program.

Perhaps the most useful experience at NCPH was participating in the Working Group on Remote Equitable Internships. This year, I dealt with the challenge of having an unprecedented number of students enroll in internships while seeing many of the traditional opportunities for internships for students dry up as museums and cultural institutions struggled to adjust to the crisis of the pandemic. Although students successfully completed internships in remote, hybrid, and in-person settings this year, we clearly have a long way to go in setting standards and best practices to ensure student success and learning. The thoughtful conversations

that emerged from the working group not only helped me think about how to approach remote internships, but how to restructure our entire internship program going forward.

As a primarily white institution, UNI is home to a small population of students of color, many of whom feel dismissed by the school administration. UNI is also celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Black Student Union in the 2020-2021 academic year. The public history program has been collaborating with the Center for Multicultural Education and the University Archives to research and interpret the history of Black student activism on campus that centers the stories and perspectives of past and present student activists. Panels at NCPH that addressed issues of social justice and telling the stories of the marginalized, especially the one on telling historically excluded stories, have helped further my thinking on sharing authority in public history.

*-Cheryl Dong is the director of the newly revitalized public history program at the University of Northern Iowa.*



JACQUELINE HUDSON /  
JPHUDSO@BGSU.EDU

About a year ago, a former public history mentor suggested that I join NCPH and directed me to a special issue of *The Public Historian* called "State of Black Museums: Historiography Commemorating The Founding and Existence of Black Museums Over Four Decades." After looking over some of the scholarship in this issue, I knew that I wanted to join this organization as a member! I registered as a student member for the annual conference this year, and although the conference was virtual, I took a chance to apply for the New Professional Travel Award. I was thrilled when I found out I received the award, and it was very cool to receive the certificate and award money - I just framed the certificate and I hope to find a space to hang it. Since the conference took place for almost a month, I looked through the program to figure out which sessions I wanted to attend and plugged them into my calendar to avoid missing any of them.

As a first-time attendee, I had a rewarding experience. I learned about more avenues of public history that I was not aware of like story/digital maps, which I want to incorporate into a project that I am looking to execute soon. I learned a lot about the

consulting route, which I hope to get into down the line. The pre-recorded sessions were just as informative; of particular interest, I learned a little bit about memorialization and digital storytelling. In attending the conference I hoped to build relationships with other public historians and learn new perspectives to support NCPH's mission to promote community engagement, particularly in communities of color. I am on my way to achieving this goal because I have networked with so many public history practitioners and set up quite a few meetings with them post-conference. It was also cool to be picked by Adina Langer to contribute a blog to *History@Work*. I have had a lot of positive feedback from family, friends, and colleagues regarding the story about refurbishing my grandparents' furniture as a project in historic preservation. It was a labor of love to pay a small tribute to them.

This conference experience opened my eyes to the many possibilities that can be achieved in the public history sector and I am looking forward to attending next year's event in Montreal, Quebec, Canada!

*-Jacqueline Hudson is a fourth-year doctoral candidate at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, OH, in the American Culture Studies program.*

## NCPH ANNOUNCES SUCCESS OF 2020 VISION ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN

We have exceeded the goal of our 2020 Vision campaign. Since launching the campaign in 2018, our community of nearly 400 supporters helped us grow our endowment fund to over \$1 million. Even with the challenges of the past year, NCPH's future is looking brighter. Growing our endowment and increasing our capacity will allow NCPH to become the "go-to" organization that public history professionals turn to day-to-day and throughout their careers.



We are extremely grateful to our donors—particularly our membership—who made this goal possible under extraordinary circumstances. To see the complete list of donors and continue to invest in NCPH's future, visit <https://ncph.org/giving/endowment>.





Screenshot of this year's virtual conference platform PheedLoop.

rate available for students and people whose employment was impacted by COVID-19. Our conference is already student-friendly, but without travel and hotel costs it became even more accessible to students, and to public historians without travel funding and institutional support for professional development (of whom there are many). PheedLoop's built-in accessibility tools helped us accommodate a range of attendee needs related to low vision and information processing, and between Zoom's auto-caption feature and an increased budget for live human

captioning we were able to provide some level of captioning support for most conference content. We don't want a return to "normal" to mean rolling back professional development opportunities for people who have been so often left behind by in-person conferences, and so we expect that in future years NCPH's conferences will incorporate some kind of virtual element or track—though for capacity reasons it's likely to happen at a different time than our in-person offerings.

We also have more immediate plans to grow our virtual programming. With in-person events still off the table at present, we're making our budgeted 2021 funding for mini-cons available for virtual gatherings instead. Proposals were due on May 21 for informal, modestly-sized virtual gatherings that will serve the NCPH membership through the rest of 2021, and we look forward to sharing more details about those in the coming weeks.

Beyond that, we can't say for sure what 2022 has in store. While in the United States vaccination against COVID-19 is progressing well and quickly, vaccination is slower in Canada. With Montreal the site of our 2022 conference, and the US-Canada border still closed to international travel, it's both impossible to be certain that we'll be able to meet in person there next March and also too early to give up on it. Right now we're actively planning for an in-person event, while envisioning ways to supplement with virtual content for those who can't make the trip. The 2022 theme is "Crossroads," reflecting the place of transition in which our field finds itself, and the Call for Proposals is open through July 15 at <https://ncph.org/conference/2022-annual-meeting/>.

*-Meghan Hillman is NCPH's Program Manager*

## ACTIONS OF THE NCPH BOARD OF DIRECTORS // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 7

Committee of the Board and would be eligible for reappointment of one term by the Board of Directors.

- Reviewed a report from the Long Range Planning Committee regarding progress on the current Long Range Plan and a timeline and proposed process for the creation of a new Long Range Plan.

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

- The Educating for Democracy Act - Senate version.
- A statement from the American Sociological Association's call to higher education administrators to support caregivers during COVID-19.
- A statement from the American Historical Association condemning "the actions of those who, on January 6, 2021 stormed the United States Capitol, the seat of the nation's legislature, the heart of its democratic form of governance."
- A statement from the American Historical Association condemning the report from "The President's Advisory 1776 Commission."
- A statement from the American Council of Learned Societies urging the Kansas Board of Regents to uphold employment protections for faculty.
- A statement from the American Council of Learned Societies condemning anti-Asian violence.

- The Smithsonian Institution's *Vaccines and US: Cultural Organizations for Community Health* initiative.

- A letter of concern from several organizations to the Georgia, Atlanta, and Savannah Convention and Visitors Centers regarding Georgia SB 202.



### Crossroads

Montreal, Quebec, March 23-26, 2022  
Le Centre Sheraton Montreal

If the last few years have shown us anything, it's that we are currently standing at a crossroads. We have all witnessed monumental changes in society that have fundamentally altered how we see one another, how we interact with each other, and how we will go forward together in the future.

Being at the crossroads allows us to reckon with the past while seeking solutions for repair and contributing to a more equitable society. As public historians, our work is critical in defining turning points, meaningful direction, and inspiring movement on paths toward progress.

Montreal is a city rich with diverse cultures, history, and art. Sharing borders with the US, Canada is an ideal locale to anchor discussions related to raising marginalized voices in reimagined narratives. This annual meeting will help create opportunities to reckon with and repair historical relationships, design experiences that enable groups to celebrate differences and similarities, and build tools and sustainable methods.

The online proposal system is now live via <http://bit.ly/NCPH2022>; proposals are due by **July 15, 2021**.



# PUBLIC HISTORY NEWS

## National Council on Public History

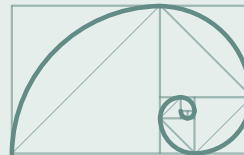
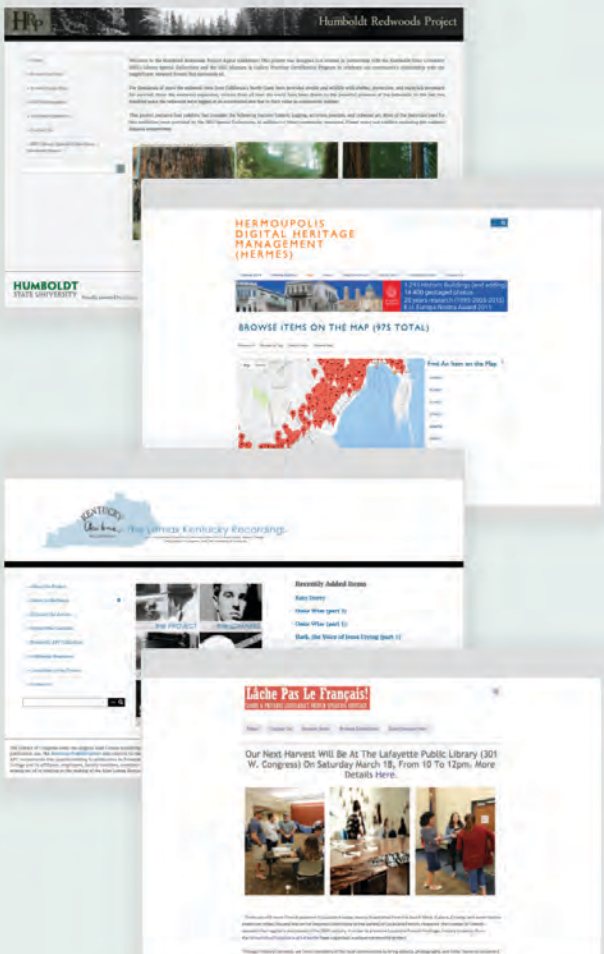
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