



# Call for Working Group Discussants

## NCPH 2022 Annual Meeting

March 23-26, 2022 | Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
May 4-6, 2022 | Virtual

### What are NCPH Working Groups?

Working groups, involving up to five facilitators and up to twelve discussants, allow conferees to explore in depth a subject of shared concern before and during the annual meeting. In these seminar-like conversations, participants have a chance to discuss questions raised by specific programs, problems, or initiatives in their own public history practice with peers grappling with similar issues. Working groups articulate a purpose they are working toward or a problem they are actively trying to solve. They aim to create an end product(s), such as a report, article, website, or exhibition. In 2022 most of our working groups hope and plan to meet in-person in Montreal in March, while one will convene virtually to share their work with attendees at the online conference in May.

Your working group discussant application is due Sunday, November 7, 2021.

### 2022 Working Groups

For 2022, the following groups are seeking discussants:

1. Developing Partnerships and Teaching Cultural Heritage and Heritage Tourism in the University Classroom (IN-PERSON)
2. DIY, Together: A Pre-Conference Zine-Making Series (IN-PERSON)
3. Records, Repair, and Reckoning: Productive Collaborations for Archivists and Public Historians (IN-PERSON)
4. Rethinking Black Museums in the Era of Black Lives Matter (IN-PERSON)
5. Revolutionary Houses, Revolutionary Narratives: Historic House Museums on the Eve of America's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (IN-PERSON)
6. Strategic Planning for Resilience (IN-PERSON)
7. Trauma Informed Practice in Teaching with Primary Sources in Public History Settings (VIRTUAL)

To apply to join one of these working groups, please [fill out the form](#) describing the issues you wish to raise with your peers, together with a one-page resume, CV, or biographical statement, by November 7, 2021. We welcome submissions from individuals across a range of professions and career stages. Please see the specific working group descriptions below. Individuals who are selected will be listed as working group discussants in the conference *Program* and will participate in the working group session at the annual meeting.

### Expectations

This fall the group facilitators will ask discussants to contribute a 500-1,000-word case statement. The case statement will describe a discussant's particular experience with the topic of the working group, define the issues this experience raises, and suggest strategies and/or goals for resolution. Case statements will be circulated among group participants and posted to the NCPH website. Discussants are expected to read and provide written comments on one another's case statements well before the conference date. Some working groups may also have additional shared background reading materials

identified by their facilitators or may choose to open up case statements for wider public input. Discussants for in-person working groups should plan to meet in person next March at the National Council on Public History's annual meeting in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Discussants for virtual working groups should plan to convene virtually as part of the follow-up online conference in May.

## To apply

Please fill out the [discussant application form](#), making sure to select which working group you are applying to join. (You may apply to participate in a working group whether or not you are participating in another presentation or session. You may apply for only one working group.) All working group discussants are expected to register and pay for the annual meeting within six weeks of acceptance.

**Apply at <http://ncph.org/conference/working-group-discussant-application/>**

## About the 2022 Working Groups

### Developing Partnerships and Teaching Cultural Heritage and Heritage Tourism in the University Classroom (IN-PERSON IN MONTREAL)

#### **Facilitators:**

Sandra I. Enríquez, University of Missouri--Kansas City

Shannon Murray, Calgary Stampede

Katrina Phillips, Macalester College, St. Paul, MN

Lindsey Wieck, St. Mary's University

In this working group, participants will consider how public history pedagogy is changing in the 2020s. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we stretched our bounds as we adopted more flexible ways of teaching, facilitating community partnerships, and organizing internships. In this working group, we'll discuss topics including:

- How do we form meaningful relationships with organizations?
- How do we adapt partnerships with organizations that faced dramatic cutbacks during the pandemic?
- How do we provide opportunities for students to get experience (particularly in the Heritage Tourism sector?)
- What are the challenges of teaching cultural heritage and heritage tourism in the classroom?
- How is this teaching changing as we transition out of phases of pandemic lockdown?
- What ethical concerns do you have teaching students, preparing them for a field in which jobs are limited?
- How are the ethics of the tourist experience changing in the post-pandemic world? Are concepts of voice and "authenticity" also evolving? How does this impact partnerships between tourism entities and universities?
- As our world maintains virtual and hybrid options (both in the classroom and the cultural heritage/heritage tourism sectors), how does that change how we create these opportunities for students to get experience in this field?

Not only is the environment of interactions changing, but so too is the employment market. The pandemic contracted the PH world. Museums, in particular, shrank and recent surveys show that they

won't be hiring back for a few years. Given the already competitive market for PH grads, Heritage/Cultural Tourism is a sector that could be incorporated more into student training. Studies show that post-pandemic, pent up demand for tourism will reignite the tourism industry from its 16-month+ dormancy. How do we prepare students to participate in this sector growth? This working group will aim to build and strengthen partnerships between universities and heritage/cultural tourism organizations, building on the opportunities available as sites reopen.

In this working group, we seek discussants who teach public history in university settings, as well as those working in heritage and cultural tourism industries. More specifically, we hope to engage:

- Professors looking to better understand how to create and grow partnerships with cultural/heritage tourism organizations and sites, especially in this changing landscape of the 2020s
- Those in Heritage/Cultural Tourism who have created successful partnerships or who want to work on creating partnerships with University partners, especially those that want to reflect on how transitions between virtual/hybrid/in-person interactions are shifting these relationships.

### DIY, Together: A Pre-Conference Zine-Making Series (IN-PERSON IN MONTREAL)

#### Facilitators:

Meral Agish, Queens Memory Project, Queens Public Library  
Siobhan Hagan, DC Public Library - Memory Lab Network  
Julie Lynch, Chicago Public Library

Supporting community and personal archiving offers a more expanded voice within the historical record, empowering traditionally underrepresented groups to preserve their own stories. But for many in the public history sector, such projects may exceed staff capacity, budgets, or expertise. Our group would like to lay out a series of starting points, in zine form. Together, we will prepare a series of zines focused on practical approaches to archiving and engagement. Rather than a set of best practices that can feel impossible to achieve, these zines will offer sound advice and accessible tools for doing this type of work well.

Our working group will lay out a series of starting points, in zine form. In the first "Maximum Preservation" zine, Michele Casto of DC Public Libraries includes this definition: "Short for 'magazine,' zines are self-published books or pamphlets that are often shared, traded, or sold for a small cost. People write zines about politics, social justice, art, comics, personal stories ('perzines'), music, DIY, poetry, stories, cats, pizza, or whatever captures the zinester's interest." Zines traditionally have been used to publish and amplify the voices of subculture community groups with limited resources. Zines are an accessible format for makers and readers, offering flexibility and a lower barrier of production.

Our group will convene remotely in the months leading up to the 2022 conference to review and prepare a series of zines focused on practical approaches to community archiving and engagement. Rather than a set of best practices that can sometimes feel impossible to achieve, especially for those working solo or in under-resourced settings, these zines will offer sound advice and accessible tools for doing this type of work well. The group will meet in person at the conference to assemble zines together.

While the three facilitators work within large urban public library systems (Chicago, IL Queens, NY and Washington, DC), we welcome those from smaller institutions and individuals who are working on their own independent projects to join the conversation and collaboration.

## Records, Repair, and Reckoning: Productive Collaborations for Archivists and Public Historians (IN-PERSON IN MONTREAL)

### Facilitators:

Brenda Gunn, University of Virginia

Sharon Leon, Michigan State University

For the past twenty years, colleges and universities around the world have been forced to grapple with the histories of their own participation in perpetuating inequality and inflicting harm on individuals in their environments--propelled both by the work of their own scholars, but also by pressure from students, alumni, members of the community, and descendants. The most visible evidence of this phenomenon is the more than 100 institutions that have joined the Universities Studying Slavery coalition. But, of course, this reckoning about institutional history reaches far beyond enslavement to include the long reach of racial segregation, anti-Semitism, gender and sexuality-based inequality and violence, and many other forms of structural harm and violence. Furthermore, the movement goes well beyond institutions of higher education to touch private, parochial, and residential schools.

Since institutional history is at the heart of efforts not only to have difficult discussions about the past but also to surface and make accessible the source materials that hold the evidence of the events of the past, these moments of reckoning provide prime opportunities for archivists and historians to rethink the ways that their roles and methods intersect. This working group will invite participants —archivists and public historians engaged in this important reparative work—to use their local case studies to think through the necessary conditions and methods for fostering productive collaborations between archivists and public historians to support this work.

In the months prior to the NCPH annual meeting, participants will reflect on their work and collaborations in response to a set of period prompts. Key areas of exploration will include:

- How can archivists and historians work together to create reparative description for essential collections?
- What are the long-held assumptions and practices in the fields of Archival Enterprise and History that serve as roadblocks to productive collaboration?
- How do developments in critical archival theory and public history theories and methods complement one another? At what points do they diverge?
- How do public historians' practices around community engagement and co-creation intersect with archival practice?
- What kinds of new forms of description and engagement result from these collaborations?
- How might these new forms contribute to ongoing collaborative partnerships?

Then, at the annual meeting, participants will come together to synthesize their reflections into a set of guiding principles that will support others in engaging in similar collaborations. The group will produce a set of open access essays and materials to foster ongoing collaboration between historians and archivists.

## Rethinking Black Museums in the Era of Black Lives Matter (IN-PERSON IN MONTREAL)

### Facilitators:

Ashley Bouknight-Claybrooks, American Association for State and Local History

Yvonne Therese Holden, The Whitney Plantation

Jennifer Scott, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

Janera Solomon, writer, independent curator, and cultural strategist

In her book *Negro Building* (2012), architectural scholar Mabel O. Wilson describes the emergence of black museums in the 1960s as a unique blending of 1940s left radicalism and 1960s black nationalism that recombined to address the Civil Rights Era. These fledgling museums with enormous promise utilized exciting frameworks that were shaped by nuanced ideas of blackness and identity evolving during this time. They demonstrated a sharp departure from 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas of progress best articulated by historian W.E.B. Dubois, and a decisive move towards 20<sup>th</sup> century influences of Pan-Africanism, Negritude, cultural nationalism and anti-imperialism.

Grassroots black history museums that began at this time, such as the DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago (1961), the Museum of African American History in Boston (1963) and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit (1965) were explicit about their goals. Beyond 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas of elevating black pride and encouraging self-improvement, they intended to reject erasures and dispel myths of black communities, show evidence of black contributions, detail enslavement and other oppressions and present black history as locally, nationally and globally relevant. They were acutely aware of anti-black structural racism and how it restricted access and power. The founders wanted these museums to serve as monuments to local and global black freedom struggles against racial oppression and to participate as agents of that change. Ahead of their time, they were diasporic, socially engaged, activist, community-centered and inclusive.

They, indeed, paved the way for the opening of the long-awaited Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington DC (2016). In anticipation, *The Public Historian* journal planned a thoughtful reflection on the "State of Black Museums" with a dedicated issue exploring the history of black museums, their leadership, the growth of the field and several case studies (2018). It built upon prior important work such as Andrea Burns' volume *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of Black Museum Movement* (2013). Now, almost six years since NMAAHC's opening, we have experienced a global pandemic, accelerated civic unrest and social protest, triggered by a series of brutal murders of black people and other injustices. It is an important time for black museum scholars and practitioners to build collectively upon these discussions.

Considering their powerful grassroots and activist histories, how can we think about black museums in the era of Black Lives Matter and in the age of a national black museum? Is it possible to situate black museums historically and uniquely 'in their own right,' not as past 'rehearsals' for a larger national museum? In the age of DEAI, where museums nationally and globally are being called to task for failing in areas that black museums addressed more than 60 years ago, how do we recognize and advance the work that black museums already have done in these areas? What can we learn from the tremendous history of community engagement of black museums as to what is possible for them and for all museums?

The facilitators of this working group have collectively worked almost 40 years with a range of black museums, from historic houses to art museums to historic plantation sites in a variety of cities and states across the Midwest, West Coast, Southern states, and Northeast regions. Some of these institutions were start-ups, while others were more established or beginning to go through a strategic planning process and other major transformations to refine their missions and structures. They include the August Wilson Center in Pittsburgh, NMAAHC in Washington, DC; San Francisco's Museum of the African Diaspora (MOAD); Whitney Plantation in Edgard, Louisiana; Weeksville Heritage Center in Brooklyn, New York; and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, Michigan. We have worked with these museums in a variety of roles, as directors, educators, interpreters, curators, fundraisers, consultants, advocates, volunteers and more.

Our intention is to build upon our extensive professional experience and theoretical knowledge with other colleagues who are grappling with similar issues. We want to connect with those who are attempting to re-imagine black museums and to realize their possibilities in the present moment and in future, while considering their long historic pasts of community engagement, activism and grass roots organizing.

Working group goals are:

- To bring together black museum scholars and practitioners to collectively explore the history of black museums and help to situate them in relationship to the current era of Black Lives Matter, DEAI and the opening of a black national museum and other new black history sites
- To create case statements and an online public discussion prior to the 2020 conference using the NCPH format/tool
- To host at least one zoom brainstorming meeting among working group members to plan for 2022 conference meeting and discussion
- To host an in-person discussion at the 2022 conference with working group members that present and discuss various (and often overshadowed) case studies which engage both the histories and the futures of black museums, identifying prominent themes and making links across studies to think about the possibilities of the future.
- To create a blog with edited case studies and analyses of specific black history museums in relationship to the present time and future goals. (We would want to make these publicly available and would be especially interested in working with NCPH to see if we could partner through the organization's blog or through other platforms).
- We would also like to consider, dependent upon capacity, an ongoing discussion on this topic through a podcast, but we plan to begin with a blog.

[Revolutionary Houses, Revolutionary Narratives: Historic House Museums on the Eve of America's 250th Anniversary \(IN-PERSON IN MONTREAL\)](#)

**Facilitators:**

Sara Evenson, SUNY Albany

Anne Lindsay, California State University, Sacramento

Laura Macaluso, Independent Scholar

Hilary Miller, Golden Ball Tavern Museum and Pennsylvania State University

Amy Speckart, Rare Book School at the University of Virginia

In the US, the Revolutionary-Era historic house museum plays a long-standing and central role in the presentation and interpretation of early American history for the public. Successive generations of historians and heritage practitioners, from the amateur to the professional, have built a substantial and enduring narrative around the theme of the heroism of the American Revolution, uplifting individual canonical figures, commemorating selected historic sites, including the homes of Founding Fathers, and celebrating patriotism —while writing out the role of many others who contributed to the shape and development of the new nation. Today, the American struggle with this problematic overarching narrative continues to play out in the public sphere: from schools and curriculum, to monuments in the public square, to politics at the local and national levels. Historic house museum staff in collaboration with teachers, scholars, and community activists for the past thirty years have implemented momentous changes to the presentation and interpretation of their sites, and their work continues to evolve in response to new challenges.

This working group will convene virtually in the fall/winter of 2021 and in-person at NCPH in Montreal. The working group’s facilitators encourage scholars and historic house practitioners from inside and outside the US to address marginalization, the overwhelming masculinity of the narratives of this era, and the dependence on gendered language in the interpretation of the period. How are historic sites addressing the challenges of centering marginalized stories in curation, interpretation, and education? Where and how are we making room for more complex, nuanced Revolutionary-era narrations? How are we balancing new interpretation with perceived ideas of the meaning of “revolutionary” and the positive reception and/or pushback against change? We welcome participants who can broaden the geographic scope, including especially those working with houses in the Caribbean, Canada, and the early US borderlands.

Participants may become contributors to a publication dedicated to the same topic in development in anticipation of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation's founding in 2026. The publication will consider the anniversary’s implications for historic house museums and historic sites; offer a brief survey of pertinent case studies highlighting the revision of narratives at Revolutionary-era historic house sites; and analyze techniques for researching and interpreting history at historic houses that address inclusivity and equity.

## Strategic Planning for Resilience (IN-PERSON IN MONTREAL)

### **Facilitators:**

Amy Bartow-Melia, South Carolina State Museum

Lauren Safranek, National Museum of American History

Megan Smith, National Museum of American History

What makes a strategic plan useful? How can a strategic plan set an institution up for resilience and success in an unpredictable future? How is a strategic plan turned into action?

In 2019, the National Museum of American History (NMAH) developed a new strategic plan for 2020-2030. The strategic planning process was ambitious, transparent, and designed to include key audiences and stakeholders in decisions that will shape the museum’s next ten years, and was organized around our new vision to be the “most accessible, inclusive, relevant, and sustainable public history institution in the nation.” The process focused on extensive explorations of our staff, audiences, and other stakeholders, and included work with Nina Simon’s Of/By/For All initiative, internal and public surveys, in-depth staff reflection and visioning, opportunities for anonymous staff and volunteer feedback, and multiple focus groups with volunteers, board members, and other stakeholders.



While the strategic planning team couldn't have directly prepared for the upcoming upheaval of twin global pandemics of COVID-19 and flashpoints in ongoing racial injustice, the exploration of the museum's previously unspoken fault lines, ambitions, and needs set the institution up to not only weather the storm, but emerge with a clear path forward to better serve our audiences and mission.

The working group will use NMAH's strategic plan process as a jumping off point to explore how to create a strategic plan that is honest yet ambitious, direct yet flexible. The group will discuss what worked and what didn't in NMAH's process and plan, and will explore key differences between public history institutions and how that affects their long-term needs. The working group will together develop a list of questions and a roadmap for a new way to strategic plan in the emerging New Normal.

The team would love to work with a group of visionary public historians who are engaged and interested in future planning and strategic planning for their institutions. The working group will develop a list of questions and guiding principles that will serve as loose methodology for strategic planning for a New Normal, with an emphasis on resiliency, inclusion, and equity. These resources can be brought back to each participant's institution as a starting point for long-term strategic planning that is meaningful, honest, and useful.

## Trauma Informed Practice in Teaching with Primary Sources in Public History Settings (VIRTUAL)

### **Facilitators:**

Krystal Appiah, University of Virginia Library  
Brenda Gunn, University of Virginia Library  
Kara McClurken, University of Virginia Library

This working group will build upon the work of Canadian and Australian archivists and memory workers who are developing trauma-informed practices as reparative work. While many of these emerging practices focus on vicarious trauma in special collections reading rooms, we propose focusing on the potentially traumatic responses of students in educational settings or responses of visitors at museums/historic sites as they explore primary sources, artifacts, and places of memory.

Vicarious trauma can occur when individuals are indirectly exposed to violence or trauma when using primary source material in any format or presentation. Vicarious trauma can be immediate or can build up over time. This working group will focus on the experiences of students and public history audiences exposed to traumatic material and content in a formal classroom setting or in spaces such as historic sites and museums. As interest in and commitment to using primary sources in the broadest sense continues to grow in public history settings, students and visitors encounter these trauma-filled collections and trauma-infused sites as they meet course requirements, complete assignments requiring research with primary sources, explore historic sites and landscapes, and visit exhibitions. Students and visitors, especially those who are part of marginalized groups, are often unprepared for the trauma they encounter in these materials and spaces, and don't recognize the symptoms of vicarious trauma they may experience as a result.

This working group will develop tools (tutorial/webinar/slides to be used in classrooms and public history settings) to educate students, other researchers, and visitors about vicarious trauma. Additionally, the working group will develop tools to encourage a self-awareness about the potential for vicarious trauma when conducting primary source research and when visiting historic sites and



museums. The working group will create or adapt a self-assessment tool for vicarious trauma to be used in these various instructional and educational settings. Finally, the working group will identify appropriate contemplative practices (such as mindfulness and meditation) that can be used to prepare for primary source engagement with traumatic material and to mitigate symptoms of vicarious trauma during use, during visits, and afterwards.

We hope to convene a wide range of practitioners and instructors in formal and informal learning environments. These include:

Archivists

Librarians

Museum educators

Historic site interpreters

College instructors

Conservators

Curators