



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 two will convene virtually to share their work with attendees at the online conference in May.

The call for discussants for six of the eight following working groups has been extended, and applications are now due **December 1, 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 250th Anniversary~~ (**IN-PERSON**)
6. Strategic Planning for Resilience (**IN-PERSON**)
7. Trauma Informed Practice in Teaching with Primary Sources in Public History Settings (**VIRTUAL**)
8. World War II Home Front (**VIRTUAL**) – **NEW!**

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 December 1, 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.

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 19th century ideas of progress best articulated by historian W.E.B. DuBois, and a decisive move towards 20th 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 19th 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.

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

[World War II Home Front \(VIRTUAL\) – NEW!](#)

Facilitators: Allena Berry, University School of Nashville
Suzanne Fischer, Exhibit Coach LLC

Many National Park Service and other historic sites tell stories of the American World War II home front, stories that include those of the new industrial workers who made wartime production possible, the building of the atomic bomb, and the Japanese American incarceration experience. As the home front experience passes out of living memory, what new opportunities open up for interpretation? What challenges could these new interpretive opportunities present for NPS and other historic sites? What interpretive techniques could help tell these expanded stories? As part of a suite of projects dedicated to the home front, the National Council on Public History invites you to join a diverse set of individuals coming from NPS sites, academic institutions, and other museum and interpretive professionals in a Working Group to discuss new opportunities for helping the public engage with these familiar and not-

so-familiar stories. This working group will meet every year for three years, but you don't need to participate every year to learn together with your colleagues.

In our first year of working together, we would like this group to identify new interpretations in World War II home front historiography for specific sites. This outcome could take multiple forms, such as: (1) a blog post, (2) an annotated bibliography, (3) a visual representation, or some combination of all three. Additionally, we see our work this first year providing a foundation for future years of the working group. As we work together towards the above outcome, we will be considering questions related to the larger questions posed above, such as:

Site-specific questions

- How do we/should we emphasize the various constituencies that had different responses to Pearl Harbor (e.g. putting that event in the longer context of US imperialism)?
- How has the public perception of the nuclear bomb changed in the past few decades? Since the Smithsonian's Enola Gay exhibit?
- What do visitors assume about the home front war production workforce? How close/far is that from the reality of the wartime experience?

Larger interpretive questions

- What stories have not been told, or have not been emphasized, by NPS sites, about the home front experience and why?
- What does it mean to think about home front(s) and multiple experiences?
- With new interpretive possibilities, are there new languages or vocabularies we should attend to?

Implications for practice questions

- How do we prepare visitors to engage with/experience/learn from new interpretations of the home front(s)?
- What goals do we have for visitors when they are engaging with multiple interpretations?

While we anticipate that in this first year, we will primarily focus on *site-specific questions*, we offer these related questions as a roadmap to how we currently conceive the development of this working group.

We are looking for participants who would be interested in thinking about how practices connect with broader trends in historiography and museum education. Our goal is to create something that is meaningful to practitioners and researchers alike, and, in that spirit, we are looking for participants who are curious and willing to reflect on the state of current historiography about the World War II home front(s) in a group. We ask that participants have the capacity to:

- Write a case statement about why you would like to participate in this working group;
- If selected to participate, read colleagues' case statements; and
- Show up to our meetings ready to engage and discuss those statements.

We would have **three meetings** in advance of our meeting during the virtual NCPH Annual Meeting taking place **May 4-6, 2022**. Of course, this is our initial plan, and we are excited to collaborate with those in the group about outcomes and questions as we learn from each other.