

## NCPH 2022: LESS IS MORE



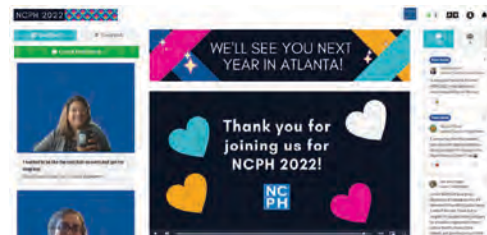
MEGHAN HILLMAN /  
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As I write this, NCPH 2022, which we held virtually May 2-6 on the PheedLoop platform, has only very recently concluded.

It was our third virtual annual meeting in a row, and our second with any substantial lead-time or intentionality. (We canceled our in-person 2020 conference in March 2020, about ten days before the event, due to the sudden spiraling of the COVID-19 pandemic.)

Each year since, there was a period of time when we thought this year would be back to normal—by which we meant back to a standard in-person annual meeting that looked more or less like the model you expect from an NCPH conference. Each year it wasn't to be, as COVID variants rewrote our plans and played havoc with our best intentions. We remained determined to go to Montreal this March, until Omicron steamrolled through our international travel ambitions in December of 2021.

So again we were virtual, on a platform we've become comfortable with, working again with the Hutchinson Design Group, who provided consulting services to us and tech support to our presenters and proved an invaluable resource for our small staff. Attendees were engaged, both in sessions and on social media. The platform itself was improved from last year, offering more functionality and better Zoom integration. Sponsors helped us offer more live human closed captioning for a higher level of accessibility. Perhaps most importantly, we scheduled deliberately to avoid attendee burnout. Session blocks were light on concurrent sessions, there were fewer committee networking and social events, and the conference was confined to just one week. We've learned that when it comes to virtual conferences, sometimes less is more: less burden of choice, fewer commitments to pull at attendees' attention, reduced strain on our staff, board, and committee volunteers. In every way but one—financial—NCPH 2022 was a clear success.



Screenshot of the NCPH 2022 PheedLoop platform.

We deliberately set prices as low as we could, to keep the virtual conference accessible to students, unemployed and under-employed public historians, and people who work in fields adjacent to public history. Our registration numbers were as low as they've been in several years, as finals week kept students and educators busy and burnout has reduced the capacity of so many in our field. Virtual expenses are lower than in-person conference expenses, but so is income, leaving every year of virtual conferencing something of a budgetary question mark.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 ▶

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS



KRISTINE NAVARRO-MCELHANEY /  
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Congratulations to the NCPH team and our many partners that made our May 2-6 virtual conference a great success! As expected,

the program was robust, inspiring, insightful, and was a reflection of the real issues that are impacting the public history field in difficult times. There are so many people to thank. Our amazing program co-chairs, Kimberly Springle and Jean Pierre-Morin, the program committee and the local arrangements co-chairs, and everyone (you know who you are) that put in countless hours to ensure that despite the continuing dark cloud of COVID, we could present an event that is relevant and meets the needs and expectations of our members. While we were not able to enjoy the experience of visiting historic Montreal, we look forward to seeing everyone in Atlanta in 2023!

The last couple of years have been a challenge for us all, yet we have learned so much about ourselves, and each other. Continuing in the spirit of gratitude, it is important to note that as an organization, we have persevered thanks to stellar leadership and particularly the efforts of Marla Miller, Gregory Smoak, Stephanie Rowe, and Sharon Leon. We are financially stable because of the tremendous generosity shown during our endowment campaign and through judicious stewardship of our finances. I also want to thank all of our current and former board members and committee chairs and members who have served NCPH over the last several years. Because of your commitment and dedication, we are ready for whatever lies ahead. You challenge us to make our field stronger, and for that we are so very grateful. I am thankful for each member because without you, there would be no NCPH.

As we move forward and push new boundaries, I want to recognize the important work of two committees that are asking difficult questions

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 ▶



### GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC HISTORY

REPORT AND WEBINAR:

[HTTPS://NCPH.ORG/NEWS/  
REPORT-ON-GDSH-IN-  
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# 2021 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT



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Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, NCPH has taken a very conservative approach to budgeting. The 2021 budget predicted lower income in membership dues and meeting registration than in recent years and called for a restricted approach to expenses. That approach is part of an ongoing effort to insulate the organization for the recession-like budget situations facing our members and their employers. When we closed the books on 2021 with a surplus, we were gratified to see that this approach is working and that NCPH's finances are stable and healthy.

During the year, prudent management from the staff and the board resulted in our expenses totaling \$20,000 less than our budgeted total. Staff travel and professional development costs, as well as Board travel costs, were almost non-existent due to COVID restrictions, and a planned sponsorship of the International

Federation for Public History's 2021 conference in Berlin, Germany, was canceled. Since the NCPH Board made prudent and timely decisions about moving forward with a virtual annual meeting rather than in-person event, we were able to avoid exorbitant hotel cancellation fees while containing production costs.

At the same time, we benefited from several difficult-to-predict sources of income, totaling roughly \$57,000 more than we had anticipated. First, a Chairman's Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities underwrote a significant amount of programming during the year. Though we applied for and were awarded that funding in 2020, it did not arrive on our books until 2021. Second, our cooperative agreement with the National Park Service is a source of income that is dependent on the programming needs of the parks, making it difficult to predict. Nonetheless, that source of funding exceeded our expectations in 2021. Third, we were gratified that our members retain their commitment to the organization by renewing their annual memberships, with many moving to the Sustaining Member level. Finally, through the generosity of our members and associated organizations, we had an outstanding fundraising year.

In sum, we have closed out 2021 with a surplus of slightly more than \$78,000. In the

context of an individual year, that amount certainly seems significant, and it is. However, viewed in the context of a five-year economic forecast for the organization, that surplus is necessary savings and insurance for what is to come. Budget forecasting is often more art than science and especially in the current economic environment, we do our best to work with the information we have at hand. Right now, we expect an ongoing and delayed financial contraction across the institutions in our sector, from universities to museums to independent consultants. As a result, we are continuing to prepare for reduced membership and annual meeting income in the years to come. At the same time, we are facing the elimination of salary and benefits support from our host institution beginning July 1, 2022 representing an annual cost increase of \$35,000 for NCPH. Therefore, the bulk of the 2021 surplus has been designated by the board to recognize the extraordinarily difficult circumstances of the past two years with 2022 bonuses, and to underwrite staff salary support for the coming five years as we adjust to these changes. The remainder of the surplus is available if needed to offset a small projected budget shortfall in 2022.

As always, we appreciate your confidence and dedication to the organization as we navigate these uncharted financial waters.

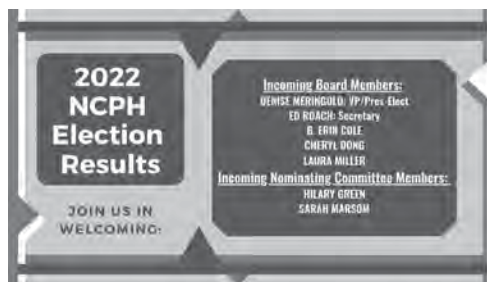
## NCPH 2021 Operating Budget

January-December

	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2021 Budget	2021 Actual
<b>Income</b>				
Memberships & Partners/Patrons	\$131,090	\$133,330	\$94,400	\$137,747
TPH Institutional Subscriptions	\$19,500	\$23,237	\$19,500	\$22,105
Annual Meetings & Mini Cons	\$169,150	\$57,271	\$122,538	\$109,954
IUPUI Projects & O'Brien Lecture	\$9,500	\$9,500	\$4,750	\$9,500
Interfund Transfer from DIF & Endowment Earnings	\$42,070	\$36,196	\$46,070	\$19,940
Miscellaneous	\$1,750	\$3,285	\$1,850	\$1,827
Grant and Contract Projects	\$0	\$14,860	\$10,000	\$42,467
Contributions to Annual Fund	\$7,000	\$13,551	\$7,500	\$30,223
Encumbered 2016 Surplus	\$15,000	\$2,400	\$10,276	\$0
Total Operating Budget Income	\$395,060	\$294,630	\$316,884	\$373,763
<b>Expenses</b>				
Membership	\$23,650	\$17,402	\$22,400	\$18,449
Annual Meeting	\$126,400	\$31,247	\$60,150	\$40,647
Publications	\$28,750	\$32,949	\$30,250	\$31,188
Awards	\$7,900	\$7,332	\$7,500	\$6,767
Administration	\$194,111	\$167,868	\$186,148	\$185,248
Board & Committees	\$5,000	\$-168	\$1,250	\$747
Biennial Audit/Review	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,200
Advocacy & Participation in Other Associations	\$8,185	\$7,070	\$8,185	\$7,070
Grant and Contract Projects	\$0	\$12,560	\$0	\$0
Total Operating Budget Expenses	\$393,996	\$276,260	\$320,883	\$290,410
<b>Net Operating (Deficit)/Surplus</b>	<b>\$1,064</b>	<b>\$18,370</b>	<b>\$-3,999</b>	<b>\$78,447</b>

# ACTIONS OF THE NCPH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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



At the December virtual meeting the board took the following actions:

- Voted to pursue cancellation of the 2022 in-person NCPH Annual Meeting scheduled to be held in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in light of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and to extend the planned virtual conference.
- Discussed the possibility of a 2026 joint annual meeting with the American Association for State and Local History.
- Voted to approve rate increases for memberships to become effective Fall 2022 and to create new membership categories and rates for underemployed public historians, grassroots public historians, and organizations.

At the February virtual meeting the board took the following actions:

- Conducted a self-evaluation of the board's work during 2021.
- Heard an update on negotiations with IUPUI for a new 5-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

At the March virtual meeting the board took the following actions:

- Voted to approve the minutes of the Fall 2021 Virtual Board Meeting and the November 2021 Virtual Board Meeting.
- Discussed a proposal for development of a Congressional Fellowship.

- Heard an update on negotiations with IUPUI for a new 5-year MOA.

Between the March virtual meeting and the Spring 2022 virtual meeting the board took the following actions:

- Approved a three-percent increase in institutional pricing for *The Public Historian* as proposed by University of California Press.
- Approved an NCPH Website Terms of Use Policy.

At the Spring 2022 virtual meeting the board took the following actions:

- Heard a report from the president on MOA renewal discussions with the IU School of Liberal Arts.
- Thanked outgoing Board members and welcomed incoming Board members.
- Voted to select Rachel Boyle to serve as the at-large member of the Executive Committee of the Board for the 2022-2023 term.
- Approved the minutes of the December 2021 and February 2022 Virtual Board Meetings.
- Heard a report on organizational activities and performance from the Executive Director.
- Reviewed the 2021 year-end finances and heard a report from the Secretary and Treasurer.
- Voted to earmark the 2021 surplus in the following ways: Up to \$10,000 to cover potential 2022 budget shortfall, up to \$11,000 for a new membership database, the remainder for staffing costs over the next three years.
- Amended the financial policies and procedures to allow for ACH payments for National Park Service contractors.
- Updated the signatories on NCPH bank and Vanguard Accounts from Gregory Smoak (outgoing President) to Kristine Navarro-McElhaney (incoming President).
- Reviewed a draft RFP for Auditors created by the Finance Committee.

- Heard reports from *The Public Historian* Editor and Co-Editor and the NCPH Digital Media Editor.
- Discussed a proposal from the Digital Media Group Chair to dissolve the committee and tasked the Executive Director to work with the Digital Media Group members to draft the related necessary amendments to the bylaws for future adoption.
- Discussed volunteer service time commitments for committee members and re-formed the ad-hoc group of board members working to create mechanisms to understand committee member workloads.
- Reviewed reports from standing and ad-hoc committees and task forces.

After the Spring 2022 virtual board meeting but before the June virtual meeting the board took the following actions:

- Approved signature of a 5-year Memorandum of Agreement with IUPUI's IU School of Liberal Arts for institutional hosting.

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

- A statement from the Council of State Archivists on the preferred qualifications of the Archivist of the United States candidate.
- A statement from the American Historical Association condemning violations of the Presidential Records Act.
- A statement from the American Historical Association condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- A statement in support of the Montpelier Descendants Committee.
- A statement in support of the staff at Montpelier.
- A letter from the American Society for Environmental History to the Environmental Protection Agency opposing the sunset of the agency's online archive in July 2022.

## ARCHIVES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AS HUMANITIES COLLECTIONS AND REFERENCE RESOURCES

MOLLY HARDY / MHARDY@NEH.GOV



NATIONAL  
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*Editorial Note: This piece first appeared on the blog of the National Endowment for the Humanities at <https://www.neh.gov/blog/archives-environment-humanities-collections-and-reference-resources>*

The Biden Administration has made clear that the current climate emergency is one of its top priorities, pledging “to take swift action to tackle the climate crisis.” Federal agencies have been asked how they will integrate this priority into their work. We in the Division of Preservation and Access (DPA) know that cultural heritage

professionals are responding to climate change in many ways, from building energy efficient storage solutions to creating disaster preparedness plans to recovering from extreme weather events. As we search for new ways to adapt and prepare in our current climate emergency, recent turns in Indigenous and environmental studies also have us thinking about what collections themselves can teach us about our relationship with the natural world.

In the middle of the last century, conservationist Aldo Leopold poetically described the relationship between nature and archives while felling an oak tree. “[T]he stump yields a collective view of a century” Leopold reflected and then concluded, “By its fall the tree attests the unity of the hodge-podge called history.”<sup>1</sup> Early American historians

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 ►

1 A Sand County Almanac, with Essays on Conservation from Round River (1949): 18.

# 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/>.*

## ADVOCACY COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD

Since May of 2021, the Advocacy Committee of the Board has been a forum for consultation regarding ten statements ultimately issued or endorsed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of NCPH. In back of those statements is thoughtful group discussion and a shared drafting process for documents originating with NCPH, like the September 8, 2021 letter calling on the Governor of Missouri to act to reinstate the exhibition *Making History: Kansas City and the Rise of Gay Rights* at the Missouri State Museum at the Capitol; the April 4, 2022 statement of support of the Montpelier Descendants Committee (MDC); and the April 22, 2022 statement in support of Montpelier staff. The last two of these were supplemented by outreach from committee co-chair Melissa Bingmann to Greg Werkheiser at Cultural Heritage Partners, which is representing the MDC. Our work on these statements has been at the center of the committee's activities, while other charges have remained for the most part on the to-do list.

The 2017-2022 NCPH Long Range Plan calls for exploring the "feasibility of partnering and collaborating with other humanities/history practitioners" (Pillar 5, Goal C, Activity 2), and this translates into a charge for the Advocacy Committee. We have moved forward by engaging in conversation with the National Humanities Alliance (NHA). In November, committee co-chairs Bingmann and Michael Brown, along with Stephanie Rowe representing NCPH, met with Steve Kidd and Bea Gurwitz, the executive and deputy director, respectively, of the NHA. The conversation yielded several ideas for collaboration going forward, and one outcome was the Advocacy Committee's assistance in recruiting participants for Humanities Advocacy Day from states that otherwise lacked representation.

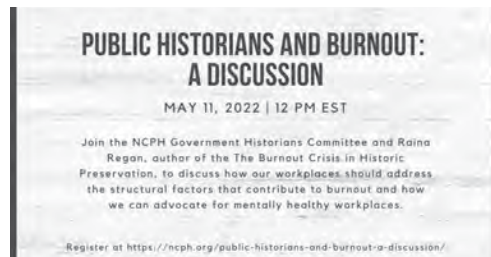
The committee is also charged with reviewing the NCPH Advocacy Policy, last revised in 2017. This review is one of the key items on our "still-to-do" list.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Melissa Bingmann and Michael Brown*

## COMMITTEE FOR GOVERNMENT HISTORIANS

The Committee for Government Historians supports 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. You can follow us on Twitter @NCPHGovHist or email us at NCPHgovhistorians@gmail.com.

After spending most of the past year exploring how we can better use social media to highlight what government historians do, the committee is pivoting to a new work plan and meeting format for our next term. We are piloting an open meeting format using structured conversations. Our open meetings will have a discussion topic and we will advertise the topic to the government historian community within NCPH. We will send an article to read or questions to consider in advance and then hold a discussion about the topic with the attendees.



We tested our new format during our May 11, 2022, meeting on the topic of burnout in the government historian community. The meeting featured a guest speaker, preservation professional Raina Regan, who wrote an article on burnout in historic preservation. Future meeting topics we may explore in the coming year include the impacts of new elected officials on historical work, sunshine law requests, and records management issues.

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

## CONSULTANTS COMMITTEE

The Consultants Committee meets virtually once a month. In light of the virtual format of this year's conference, we planned a virtual Consultant's Speakeasy, similar to the event last year. We updated the Consultants page of the NCPH website (thanks to Heather Carpini and Rachel Boyle!). We are also in the process of considering how best to update the NCPH Consultants Directory. If you have any ideas

for how to improve the Consultants Directory, or if you would like to join the Consultants Committee, please reach out to Cheri Szcodronski ([cheri@fireflypreservation.com](mailto:cheri@fireflypreservation.com)) or Jackie Gonzales ([jgonzales@hrassoc.com](mailto:jgonzales@hrassoc.com)).

*-Submitted by co-chairs Jackie Gonzales and Cheri LaFlamme Szcodronski*

## CURRICULUM AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

We met virtually to discuss planning for the Public History Educators' Forum. Since we had initially believed we'd be meeting in person, we generated a lot of discussion regarding topics and formatting for the breakfast. Once we learned it was virtual, we decided to adapt the successful virtual breakfast format we used for the 2021 NCPH conference. We are in the final stretches of planning for this forum and figuring out 'staffing' for the breakout rooms. We look forward to resuming our work in 2022-23, and we hope to meet in person. We have also received a report from the NCPH 2021 working group on remote internships, which sent us a set of recommendations to review. They would like our committee to include this set of recommendations as part of the best practices documents on the NCPH website. We plan to review this document during the virtual forum.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Andrea Burns and Leslie Madsen*

## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Governance Committee advises the Board and committees on governance matters, focused on helping NCPH work in a way that sustains and nurtures the organization, public history, and public historians. This season we are addressing some organizational issues, big and small. We developed a liability statement for the website, which is now up. We are currently working on succession planning documents and on the ongoing Code of Ethics development, in consultation with other NCPH stakeholders. We are also continuing our yearly work of conducting Board exit interviews.

*-Submitted by chair Suzanne Fischer*

## LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee has met regularly to continue work on developing the new LRP for NCPH, which will cover 2023-2028. We spent the fall months processing the results of the various surveys distributed in August 2021 (Membership, Committee Chair, and Past Board Member), as well as the feedback received during a Board exercise in October. Those results have been

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 ►



# ARCHIVES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AS HUMANITIES COLLECTIONS AND REFERENCE RESOURCES // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 5

took Leopold's poetic musings quite literally and to great effect, fusing their readings of the colonial record with that of the land, increasingly considering it, too, as historical evidence. In his field-defining study, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, William Cronon combined seventeenth-century descriptions and colonial records of New England with "less orthodox sorts of evidence which historians borrow from other disciplines and have less experience in criticizing... [such as] analyzing tree rings, charcoal deposits, rotting trunks, and overturned stumps to determine the history of several New England woodlands."<sup>2</sup> More recently, Karen Halttunen reminds us that current-day environmental history is, in many ways, an extension of nineteenth-century local histories because "[t]he guiding assumption of these works was that local history had literally taken place on the land. Indeed, local history had actively made place and had in turn been shaped by place." Leopold, Cronon, and Halttunen were right.<sup>3</sup> When we open ourselves to new source pairings—local histories read with piles of sawdust, early American herbaria next to topographies of woodlands, eighteenth-century almanacs next to dendrology—we see that climate research is as much a humanist endeavor as it is a scientific one.

DPA's Humanities Collections and Reference Resource program has supported preservation and access for collections that tell us about the land and humans' interactions with it. In recent years, we have funded the digitization of the papers of nineteenth-century naturalist John Torrey at the New York Botanical Garden, the conservation and

digitization of rare botanical books at the Chicago Botanical Garden, and the processing of the papers of contemporary landscape architect and urban planner Walter Hood at University of California-Berkeley's College of Environmental Design.

We are not new to this understanding of environmentally focused collections as paramount to humanist inquiry, but the current moment increases our attention to them. We are keenly aware of how collections of books, manuscripts, and specimens of "natural philosophy" were perceived in the early modern period, and for this reason, we maintain that such collections must be understood in the context in which they were created. Records of the natural world complement, but also complicate, the written historical record by challenging anthropocentric constructions of the past. If you are working to make environmentally focused collections more available for humanities research, education, or public programs, please consider the ways NEH might support your efforts.

If you have ideas or questions about such a project, please contact us at [preservation@neh.gov](mailto:preservation@neh.gov). Please note that the current deadline for HCRR applications is July 19, 2022, and we are happy to read drafts submitted before June 7, 2022.

*-Molly Hardy is a Senior Program Officer in the Division of Preservation and Access, where she is the coordinator for the National Digital Newspaper Program*

<sup>2</sup> *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (1983): 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Grounded Histories: Land and Landscapes in Early America." *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (October 2011): 514.

## NCPH 2022: LESS IS MORE // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

It's not that money doesn't matter. Organizations need money to function, after all. We need money to do programming, to support our members with resources, to make substantive and permanent strides on inclusion and accessibility, and to pay the salaries of the three full-time staff members here who do these things (including mine). But NCPH 2022 was a reminder, for me, that numbers are not what fundamentally drives a conference. Sometimes organizations fall into the trap of associating numerical growth with ultimate success: a conference is more successful if it is bigger, if it serves more people, if it makes more money. Always more.

It has been liberating and healing for me to watch this year's smaller conference host such stellar sessions with passionate presenters and enthusiastic, plugged-in audiences, and to remember that this isn't true. Downsizing a conference creates a different atmosphere, to

be sure, but sometimes it's a more productive and more deliberate space for working and learning. Sometimes less is more.

NCPH 2023, scheduled for April 12-15 in Atlanta, Georgia, will likely be a big conference. We hope to bring back attendee favorite events that can only shine in person, like our Speed Networking event, and to reprise 2020's canceled evening at the Atlanta History Center. However, we'll be supplementing that big event with smaller virtual events throughout the year, so people who favor a downsized experience or just can't travel will have ample opportunities for professional growth.

The in-person conference itself will also look different. It will have been four years since we were last together in a room. Like you, I'm not sure what in-person conferences should be, or whether "back to normal" is preferable

or even possible. The 2023 theme is "TBD." According to the CFP, TBD is "a device that holds space for unknown futures. It indicates that the process of knowing and planning is still actively unfolding... 'to be determined' has other meanings, too, signaling resolve, commitment, and intention."

Addressing the problems our field and our society face will require every bit of that determination. We'll be accepting fifty or so sessions via the usual proposal submission process, but we will also be holding space for an afternoon of unconference-style, highly participatory conversations on a few particularly urgent and relevant topics. We suggest you come to Atlanta ready to have fun, to see friends and colleagues, and to learn—but also to *work*. What comes after that is to be determined.

*-Meghan Hillman is NCPH's Program Manager*

distilled into a series of summary documents that identify core themes and objectives for NCPH which we might consider incorporating into the new LRP. We've found this process very helpful for thinking through the structure and major pillars that will provide the foundation for the 2023-2028 LRP.

In January 2022, we began work as a committee on developing a series of new pillars for the new LRP. We incorporated the feedback received from our previous exercises and examined the pillars of the existing LRP with a critical eye, understanding that some of these larger objectives will likely carry over from plan to plan with minor revisions. In developing these new pillars, we also considered trying to develop a structure that enabled better communication of the LRP with the broader NCPH membership. The pillar statements in the current plan, while helpful for developing the goals and objectives of that plan, were not so easy to communicate clearly and simply during conferences and other LRP-related events.

We eventually landed on pillar "terms" with elaborated statements expanding upon those terms. The terms are intended to quickly express the core vision for each pillar, while the statements will provide guidance for shaping the goals and objectives of the new LRP. While the statements are still in development, the five pillars of the new LRP will be: Community, Diversity, Advocacy, Practice, and Stewardship.

In the coming months, once the pillar statements have been finalized and approved by the Board, we intend to shift our emphasis to holding a series of focus groups with key constituencies within NCPH. We are currently working as a committee to identify what

those constituencies might be and to consider individuals who might want to join a one hour focus group discussion. Members who would like to be considered for a focus group should contact the LRP Committee co-chairs, Abby Gautreau and Will Stoutamire.

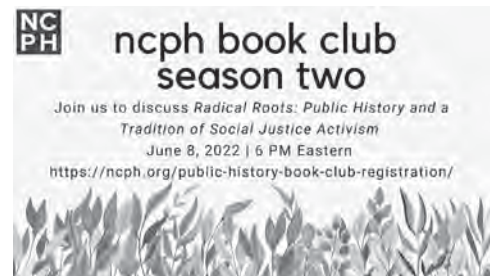
The feedback received during these conversations, as well as the information already gathered through our various surveys last year, will then inform the next phase of LRP development—writing the specific goals and objectives for the new plan.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Abby Gautreau and William Stoutamire*

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee is looking forward to the upcoming annual meeting. Members of the committee will be hosting a pre-conference Shared Wisdom session. After consulting with meeting organizers, the Twitter group decided to cancel its pre-conference session in favor of supporting the Student and New Professional Public History Hangout. The Virtual programming/collaboration sub-committee has also initiated discussions with the New Professional and Student Committee on partnering on future events. Additionally, in November and December 2021, the Membership Committee reached out to lapsed NCPH members via email. The committee intends to reach out to complete another round of outreach later this year. Our terms as co-chairs are coming to an end, and we'd like to thank the committee for all of its work during a challenging time. We hope the incoming co-chairs will find this experience as satisfying as we have.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Kristin Ahlberg and Emily Keyes*



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Professional Development Committee contributed to this year's virtual conference by reviewing and helping select workshops. The Committee has begun planning events for spring, summer, and fall 2022, with the goal of offering professional development opportunities year-round, rather than only at the annual conference (particularly important when the conference must be held in virtual spaces). This summer, Vanessa Camacho will facilitate Season 2 of the NCPH Book Club (watch your emails and social media for more information). Committee members are also developing a resume review service, arranging a min-con on organizing history workplaces, and creating a mid-career professional development series. As always, suggestions from members for additional professional development events and activities are welcome—please email co-chairs Patrice Green (pzg5253@psu.edu) and Tracy Neumann (tracyneumann@wayne.edu) with ideas, questions, or comments.

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

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

// CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

- the Board-Led Subcommittee on Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment and the Long Range Planning Committee. They have spurred us to think about the challenges facing the field of public history and addressing the difficult questions about how we can be better. We are grateful for their dedication to finding answers and next steps.

As the 33<sup>rd</sup> NCPH President and the first Latina to hold this position, it's not lost on me that we have lots of work ahead to diversify our field, address student debt, advocate for pay equity, improve on self-care initiatives, and make public history a more integral part of our social fabric. I am ready to listen and get to work. We have an incredible board, stellar committee members, and staff that are deeply committed to these

endeavors. In this regard, please know that when you commit to joining a committee or have ideas or projects that you know will contribute to our efforts, we will support you and work to keep NCPH as the preeminent public history organization that so many have worked to build. Over the next two years we will push the limits, but we will do it together.

*-Kristine Navarro-McElhaney is the President of NCPH and assistant director for the Voces Oral History Center at the University of Texas at Austin*



# 2022 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 Bob Carriker (chair), Patrick Moore, and Morgen Young for their work selecting this year's winners: Laurel Overstreet and Joel Zapata. NCPH asked our winners to share their experiences at Virtual NCPH 2022.

LAUREL OVERSTREET / OVERSTREETHL@GMAIL.COM

The era of transition created by the pandemic has also been a time of significant personal transition for me. In the past two years, I finished a master's degree in public history, started a new job as an exhibit developer, and attended my first NCPH conference, virtual or otherwise. Amid all this upheaval, I've had opportunities to work with a variety of organizations, from state history museums to community colleges, on a wide array of projects. NCPH 2022 provided a timely reminder that my first love is public history and confirmation that, yes, history continues to be useful.

Fortunately, this year's conference was packed full of useful history. Since finishing my degree, I have become increasingly interested in how the environment can inform public history—imagine my surprise to see the title of the Presidential Address, “Every History

Has a Nature: Thoughts on Doing Public Environmental History”. In my work as an exhibit developer, I spend a lot of time thinking about how to communicate history as a method as well as a subject matter, a theme that emerged in several places throughout the week. Panelists across multiple sessions described ways to connect new people to the past, prompting me to consider how often these groups—teenagers, community activists, rural dwellers—are left out of the institutions I frequently work with.

One very tangible way of making history useful, public history as activism, appeared as a running thread. While Martin Melosi's statement that “[t]he last thing that a public historian wants to be called is an ‘advocate’” may once have been true, I saw dozens of public historians not only willing to accept that label but actively seeking it out. History is not neutral, and it was incredibly encouraging to see so many historians recognizing and practicing that. I finished the week newly energized and connected to the best the field has to offer.

As this conference's theme suggests, I don't know exactly what the next year holds. There are several different paths at this crossroads: maybe I'll continue developing exhibits, advocating for good history and solid ethics wherever I can. Maybe I'll return to academia to pursue environmental history further or turn to independent consulting. Maybe I'll see you next year in Atlanta, next year on Zoom, or a combination of both. What I do know is that I'll stay in touch (hello, Public History

Book Club!) and keep being inspired by the many ways we put history to work in the world. With deep appreciation for NCPH and HRA, I'm excited to see what the future looks like.

*-Laurel Overstreet is an exhibit developer at Luci Creative. Ze graduated with an MA in Public History from Loyola University Chicago in 2020.*

JOEL ZAPATA / JOEL.ZAPATA@OREGONSTATE.EDU

The 2022 NCPH annual meeting marked both my second time attending the conference and my second year as an NCPH member, which means all my time as part of the NCPH community has been during the era of virtual conferences and a global pandemic. As wonderful as it would have been to see friends and colleagues and meet new ones in Atlanta and Montréal, during the past two years, both virtual meetings and NCPH have been integral to my teaching and community-focused research.

The 2021 conference took place as I was developing Oregon State University's first graduate-level public history course and was brainstorming how I could help prepare students for a history profession where remote work was the current reality and likely a future option. The conference included sessions on searching for history jobs, internships, networking within and beyond NCPH, project building, writing for a variety of publications, telling marginalized histories, digital mapping, best practices in public history, conducting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ►

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

Anna Adamek Ottawa, ON, Canada	Andrea Blackman Nashville, TN	Jennifer Dickey Kennesaw, GA	Tamsen Hert Laramie, WY	Alexandra Lord Washington, DC	Kristine Navarro- McElhaney Santa Fe, NM	Philip Scarpino Indianapolis, IN	Beth van Duzer Concord, MA
Chuck Arning Lunenburg, MA	Melissa Blair Baltimore, MD	Michael Duchemin San Antonio, TX	Al Hester Columbia, SC	Vanessa Macias Camacho El Paso, TX	Monica Orozco Santa Barbara, CA	Tom Scheinfeldt Storrs, CT	William Walker Cooperstown, NY
Renee Ater Washington, DC	Martin Blatt Cambridge, MA	Kevin Fayles Salt Lake City, UT	Joshua Jenkins Orlando, FL	Nashieli Marciano Greenville, SC	Katherine Ott Washington, DC	Constance Schulz Mitchellville, MD	Anne Whisnant Chapel Hill, NC
Marianne Babal Mill Valley, CA	Shelley Bookspan Santa Barbara, CA	Susan Ferentinos Port Townsend, WA	Claire Jerry Washington, DC	CM Marilhugh Austin, TX	Gale Peterson Cincinnati, OH	Rebecca Shrum Indianapolis, IN	Mieux Williamsen Northfield, MN
Kristen Baldwin Deathridge Boone, NC	Jane E. Boyd Philadelphia, PA	Suzanne Fischer Lansing, MI	Trevor Jones Lincoln, NE	Denise Meringolo Alexandria, VA	Melissa Prycer Dallas, TX	Angela Smith Fargo, ND	William Willingham Portland, OR
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Rosalind Beiler Orlando, FL	James Brooks Athens, GA	Laura Galke Richmond, VA	Lara Kelland St. Louis, MO	Karen Miller Bellevue, NE	Joel Ralph Winnipeg, MB, Canada	Mark Speltz Lafayette, CA	Robert Wolff New Britain, CT
Nicole Belolan Riverton, NJ	Leisl Carr Childers Fort Collins, CO	Michael Glickman Great Neck, NY	Lynn Kronzek Burbank, CA	Laura Miller Hadley, MA	Mary Rizzo Newark, NJ	Jennifer Stevens Boise, ID	Joan Zenzen Rockville, MD
Padraic Benson Golden, CO	Priya Chhaya Alexandria, VA	Emily Greenwald Missoula, MT	Louis Kyriakoudes Murfreesboro, TN	Nicole Moore Canton, GA	Edward Roach Dayton, OH	Jon Taylor Lees Summit, MO	
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# LOOKING BACK AT A YEAR OF ROBUST HUMANITIES ADVOCACY

ALEXANDRA KLEIN / AKLEIN@NHALLIANCE.ORG



## National Humanities Alliance

In early March, five months after Fiscal Year 2022 began, Congress finally passed a funding package for the year. The package included significant increases for federal humanities programs—most significantly, the largest increase we’ve seen in a decade for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

This success followed a full year of robust humanities advocacy, much of which was supported by scholarly societies such as NCPH. For example, thanks to their ability to mobilize their members, we were able to recruit advocates from all 50 states to participate in our 2021 Humanities Advocacy Day, which kicked off our advocacy for these FY 22 wins.

In addition to many other engagements with members of Congress and their staff throughout the year, we followed Humanities Advocacy Day with two congressional briefings to highlight the impact of NEH funding.

The first briefing, held in September 2021, discussed NEH funding for diverse histories and civics in K–12 education. Since 2018, the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) has worked with over 20 NEH-funded professional development programs for K-12 educators to survey their impacts, and this briefing was an opportunity for congressional staff to hear about the data we’ve collected. At the briefing, we shared that 100 percent of respondents to a post-program survey reported experiencing professional growth as a result of the program they attended and 98 percent of respondents said they would recommend participating in an NEH workshop to a colleague. Staffers also heard directly from project directors about how these programs—which covered a range of topics including Native American histories, the Mississippi Delta, the Transcontinental Railroad, and Japanese American internment—offer crucial professional development to our nation’s educators, illuminate diverse histories, and support civic education in our nation’s classrooms.

The second briefing, held in November 2021, showcased how NEH funding for public humanities discussions enriches our communities by highlighting the example of the NEH-funded “Freedom Stories:

Unearthing the Black Heritage of Appalachia” at the International Storytelling Center (ISC) in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Those involved in the project spoke about how it built space for dialogue and learning, and about how the discussions offered participants the chance to explore our rich histories and come together across differences. Thanks to a partnership with NHA to document the impact of the program, we were able to highlight that 82 percent of participants in the “Freedom Stories” program agreed that they “feel more confident taking part in thoughtful discussions about race” as a result of the program, and 93 percent felt motivated to “listen to the stories of people whose backgrounds are different from [their] own.”

After a long year of advocacy and several continuing resolutions that kept government funding at FY 21 levels past the beginning of FY 22, we were particularly pleased to see Congress approve a \$12.5 million funding increase for the NEH in March, bringing its FY 22 budget to \$180 million.

Our other priorities also saw increases. These included an increase of \$2.5 million for Title VI, which brought its funding to \$71.9 million, and an increase of \$1 million for Fulbright-Hays, which brought its funding to \$9.8 million. The Institute of Museum and Library Services received \$268 million, an \$11 million increase for the agency overall. While there was an increase for both the Office of Museum Services and the administration budget, the funding to carry out the Library Services and Technology Act remained level. The National Archives and Records Administration received \$388 million, an \$11 million increase. And the National Historical Publications and Records Commission received \$7 million, a half a million dollar increase.

There was one disappointment that came with these numbers. Nearly across the board, these final numbers were significantly lower than the numbers that the House and Senate originally proposed for our priorities. This was, however, the case for nearly all domestic spending.

As we turn our attention to FY 2023, we are hopeful we can build on the level of support we saw in the initial FY 2022 bills to secure additional increases in the coming year. The FY 23 process is off to a good start with the administration proposing another round of robust increases for several humanities priorities, which we will be working to make a reality as Congress drafts its yearly appropriations bills.

*—Alexandra Klein is NHA’s Communications and Government Relations Manager*

## 2022 NEW PROFESSIONAL AWARD WINNER HIGHLIGHTS // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 9

oral histories during a global pandemic, and more. From what I learned during the annual meeting, I wrote notes, considered what my students needed to learn, brainstormed teaching tools, and really began preparing myself to teach public history to future history professionals. Moreover, various sessions aided me in thinking through the process of launching *Latina/o/x Social Justice en Oregon*, a publicly-facing oral history project in which Oregon State University students conduct interviews of Latinx social justice leaders and their allies. Initiated through remote

interviews, the project now has dozens of interviews that will go online over the next year.

After a great experience at my first NCPH meeting, I began looking forward to the next one as soon as my first meeting was over. During NCPH 2022, I utilized my time to attend various sessions focused on community and social justice projects in order to further my knowledge of best practices and to obtain inspiration for future work conducted by my students and me alongside Oregon’s diverse

public. Learning about all the groundbreaking and socially significant work that public historians are conducting across the country and even internationally, inspires me to continue my own work. I will be thinking about what I learned until the next NCPH annual meeting.

*—Joel Zapata is an assistant professor of history at Oregon State University, where he teaches Latinx and public history*



# And the award goes to...

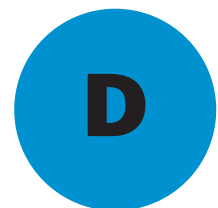
Aly Ndiaye, alias Webster

We're pleased to announce the inaugural recipient of the NCPH Grassroots Public History Award, which recognizes an individual or organization doing important public history work in their community. Webster is a hip-hop artist and speaker from Limoilou, a suburb of Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. His work focuses on the history of Black people and their enslavement in Quebec and Canada. Not only does he rap about history, providing an alternative learning method, but he created Quebec History X, a guided tour of Quebec City about this history, wrote a children's book about the first African slave in Canada, and presents writing workshops internationally.



In choosing Webster, the award committee wrote he "has made the history of slavery and the people of African descent in Canada accessible to grade school students, youth, the elderly, and anyone interested in histories too often forgotten, ignored, or erased by mainstream narratives. His work, in short, is a fitting way to inaugurate NCPH's new Grassroots Public History Award." Learn more about Webster at <http://www.websterls.com/>.

**NCPH**  
**2023**



to be determined.

Hyatt Regency Downtown | Atlanta, Georgia | April 12-15, 2023

The abbreviation **TBD**—meaning “to be determined”—is a device that holds space for unknown futures. It indicates that the process of knowing and planning is still actively unfolding. But “**to be determined**” has other meanings, too, signaling resolve, commitment, and intention. The 2023 National Council on Public History Annual Meeting, as NCPH reconvenes in person for the first time in four years, will explore and embrace these dual ways we can interpret and apply **TBD**.

We invite proposals on any topic you want, in any format you think is best. Think outside the box (or balloon, or basket): we are eager to learn the priorities and creative forms of engagement that the public history community wants to see in Atlanta. We'll accept 50–60 sessions in the usual way, via the proposal process. We'll also be holding space for an unconference-style, highly participatory afternoon of work on a few themes **TBD** which are especially urgent, relevant, or in need of sustained community attention and, yes, *determination*.

Read the full CFP at <https://ncph.org/conference/2023-annual-meeting/calls-for-proposals/>  
Submit your final proposal by July 15, 2022 (optional topic proposal by June 15)



# PUBLIC HISTORY NEWS

## National Council on Public History

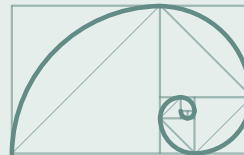
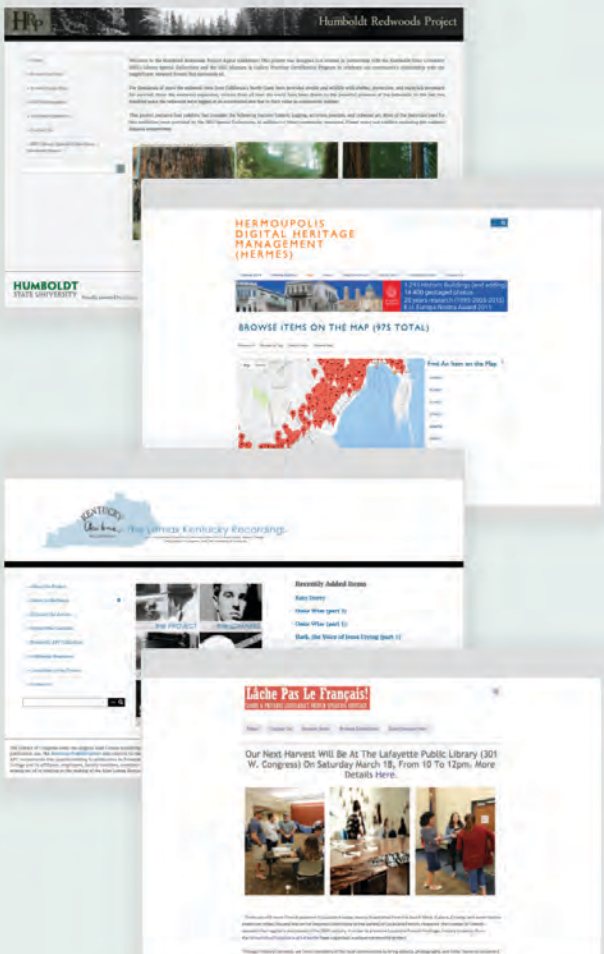
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