

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS: SHARING THE SPOTLIGHT



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Some of the most important things we do as members of NCPH are acknowledging and sharing the incredible work that is happening across the country by our colleagues in public history. As President of NCPH, I feel privileged to have a platform to highlight this work. My approach to this column will be to conduct video oral



histories each quarter with NCPH members who will reflect upon their efforts to make history relevant and useful in the public sphere. We'll make these interviews available on our NCPH

YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCatgYw0ziUPu6Ti5KKkxHZQ/> featured) – we hope you'll find them fun, interesting, and perhaps even a useful tool as you mentor students and interns. This quarter

I interviewed Dr. Katherine Bynum Chavez, Assistant Professor at the School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. Katherine teaches US history, historical methods, and the history of policing and mass incarceration. Her research focuses on Black and Brown freedom struggles, the carceral state, civil rights, gender, race, and ethnicity.

Katherine was born and raised in Texas, and always knew she wanted to go to college; however, she didn't know what she wanted

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## WORK HARD, PLAY HARD AT NCPH 2023



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I'll never forget the day in early March of 2020 when, following an agonizing Board vote, I sat down at my computer and started sending cancellation emails to every person who had collaborated to plan NCPH 2020 in Atlanta. Negotiating with the hotel was financially fraught, but the hardest part was letting our planning committees, tour guides, caterers, and contractors know that we would not be coming, and that all that hard work—in the case of our Local Arrangements Committee, years of it—would not come to fruition. I vividly remember closing my office door to cry, once the adrenaline wore off, not just because of the anxiety of the COVID-19 crisis or the shared disappointment of our planning partners, but because I felt we had made a commitment to members of our community in Atlanta (and the Deep South in general) not to abandon them in troubled times. It was important to me that, as soon as possible, we pay the city's public historians back for their investment of time and energy and meet that commitment.

I'm sure this is why I'm feeling so emotional and excited as I watch the 2023 Program and Local Arrangements Committees build NCPH 2023 in Atlanta. We're renewing some of the plans we made for 2020, highlighting many of the tours and institutions we had originally planned to visit and feature. In particular, we can't wait to bring attendees to the Atlanta History Center, which will be opening its



Atlanta fiber artist Aisha Lumumba's quilt "I Am Not My Hair" was a featured image for NCPH 2020. We're looking forward to paying homage to Atlanta's craftspeople in 2023 as a nod to our 2020 program. Used courtesy of Aisha Lumumba.

doors to us for an evening event on Thursday, April 13. The original event was in celebration of our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the completion of our 2020 Vision Endowment fundraising campaign. Now, we're just celebrating being together again. We also want to pay homage to the original 2020 theme, "Threads of Change," which called attention to the city's thriving historical and contemporary tradition of crafting and handmaking. We hope to highlight some of those craftspeople and invite attendees to take part in some crafting opportunities of your own.

From the very beginning of the planning process for the 2023 conference, it was a relief to discover that everyone was on the same page: the NCPH staff and board, our Program Committee co-chairs Marla Miller, Tara White, and Lacey Wilson, and eventually the full Program Committee and Local Arrangements Committee teams. We all felt, after nearly three years of virtual conferences, that it wasn't viable to slip back into the old ways of doing in-person conferences. We've had a lot of time to think about what we miss the most about these events—and, on the flip side, what we don't miss and therefore don't need to keep. We value our time together face-to-face differently, we feel a renewed sense of urgency to tackle public history's biggest and most persistent challenges, and we want to follow our instincts toward more flexible, spontaneous content.



Muhammad Yungai's "We Shall Always March Ahead" mural. Image by Chris Watkins and used courtesy of ACVB.

From this, the theme "To Be Determined" was born. "To Be Determined," or "TBD," as we tend to call it, started as a joke. After all, in

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## NOTICE OF THE FALL BOARD MEETING

On October 29, the NCPH Board of Directors will be convening virtually in lieu of the typical in-person Fall Board Meeting. The board welcomes comments, questions, and suggestions from NCPH members throughout the year, and

especially for the fall agenda. Please contact the executive director ([rowes@iupui.edu](mailto:rowes@iupui.edu)) or the board at large ([board@ncph.org](mailto:board@ncph.org)). Individual board members are listed at <http://bit.ly/ncphcommittees>.

## WELCOME, ALLISON!



Allison Reardon is serving as the NCPH Graduate Assistant for the 2022-2023 academic year. She graduated from IUPUI in 2021 with a BA in History and a BS in Biology and is currently in her second year of the IUPUI Public History graduate program. Allison has previously worked as a graduate intern at the Indiana Medical History Museum, volunteered as a docent at the Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site, and interned in the collections department of the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta.

## Welcome New Members!

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to study. Initially, she considered English because she was such a talented writer and loved to read. But in high school, a history teacher shared stories, and she realized that there was so much more to the field of history than had ever been taught before. When she entered the University of North Texas (UNT), she eventually chose to focus on the Civil Rights movement because “my grandparents, who are from Southwest Texas, told me about the types of segregation that they faced when they were growing up. And this was something that I had never heard of or learned when I was a youngster in public education in Texas. And I just thought, why is it that we don’t learn about this history? And so, I decided to kind of look at both the Civil Rights movement and Texas [in] particular because of the ways that they intersected with one another.”

While working on her master’s degree at UNT, she studied and learned oral history methodology under Dr. Todd Moye, director of the UNT Oral History Program.

She describes the importance of oral history, “we have to be able to try to understand people’s perspectives that we’re not getting. And in traditional archival resources, if we’re looking at what’s located in the archives, what kind of newspapers are written, we’re getting only one side of history, one set of sources. And we’re not looking at some of the people who have been systematically ignored and neglected from that historical record. And so, oral history is one of those ways that we can capture that history. And that we can make it more personal for people like me, and for other people who are part of marginalized communities. But then also, just, we have a more accurate depiction of what actually happened, I think that that’s a pro and all sides of learning about histories, is not just learning it from what we can find in the archive, but learning it from people in our community, people in our families.”

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She entered the doctoral program for history at Texas Christian University and worked on the Civil Rights in Black and Brown Oral History project (<https://crbb.tcu.edu/>) for three years. While the chapter she wrote has helped lead to the development of her manuscript, the most rewarding factors of this project were the relationships she developed. “In that process, I was able to connect with so many people that I still hear from to this day. People will email me sometimes, they’ll call me, and they say, ‘I just wanted to check in and see how things are going for you.’ They have become friends of mine. And it makes, I think, doing history a lot more rewarding because you want to make sure, too, that you’re getting it right for them, because they know that their stories have been neglected from the history books. And they did some really important work, and they deserve to be recognized in the same ways that we recognize other prominent figures.”

Katherine mentioned the important role her mentors played in her academic career. “I’ve been fortunate that I’ve been able to forge relationships with some of the most brilliant and caring people. It’s having somebody that you can trust that you can bounce ideas off. And that you can have really deep and hard conversations with and can do so without judgment from that other person. And, of course, my grandparents are a huge influence in that as well. I always want to make sure that I’m making them proud. And they live in Dallas. And so of course, I write a lot about Dallas. And so they’re really excited to see kind of their own history be a part of my larger work.”

After earning her PhD, Katherine started her faculty position at Arizona State University (ASU) in August 2020. While navigating new terrain during a pandemic was a challenge, she is thankful that ASU has been an extremely welcoming institution. They are currently developing a new graduate student recruitment program that will provide “financial support to people who are coming from traditionally marginalized communities and make sure that they have a successful time at ASU. [These are] wonderful students who, for no fault of their own, are excluded in many ways from graduate education.”

This fall semester, Katherine will be the 2022-2023 Summerfield G. Roberts Fellow for the Study of Texas History at Southern Methodist University. Her book project examines how police violence prompted African American and Mexican American civil rights activists to form broad-scale coalitions in their shared struggle for police accountability. “I tried to center a lot of the activism that people are doing by focusing on how they’re using access to the ballot or ending segregation as a way to end police brutality.”

Katherine’s advice is this: “I found a really good community of people who were in the same stages as me, or maybe even slightly above me, and who were able to then give me advice. Just to connect helps you not feel so alone in the process. Because graduate school can be really difficult for a variety of reasons. Some of it is not related at all to the work and it’s more of just being isolated... And I think so much of even moving beyond graduate school is just needing that support as well. So finding that group of people who are able you’re able to connect with and relate to is absolutely imperative. I think it’s got to be number one. So keep going.”

I am grateful and honored that Katherine granted me time and space for the interview. I truly believe we can all learn from each other if we take the time to listen. Stay tuned for my next interview with Amber Mitchell, the Director of Education at the Whitney Plantation.

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

# 2023 NCPH AWARDS

Help us honor the best in public history!

Submission details at <http://ncph.org/about/awards>



## DUE DECEMBER 1



### **New Professional Travel Awards**

2 travel grants to attend NCPH2023



### **Outstanding Public History Project Award** A model of professional public history practice



### **Student Travel Awards**

5 travel grants for students to attend NCPH2023



### **Excellence in Consulting Awards** Outstanding work by consultants and contractors



### **Robinson Prize for Historical Analysis** Historical study that contributes to the formation of public policy



### **Grassroots Public History Award** An individual or organization doing public history in their community



### **Student Project Award** Travel grant to attend NCPH2023 recognizing student contributions to the field

## DUE NOVEMBER 1



### **Book Award** Best public history book of 2021 or 2022

## Lincoln Home National Historic Site Symposium

**October 21-22, 2022 | Springfield, IL**

Join us in Springfield, Illinois, on October 21-22, 2022 for the Lincoln Home National Historic Site (NHS) Symposium. This two-day symposium will gather National Park Service staff, scholars, and students who will use the Lincoln Home NHS as a learning lab to think more broadly about interpretation, preservation, and community engagement at a changing urban National Historic Site that seeks to be relevant to its community.

Registration is now open at a rate of \$22 (\$15 for students). Check out the program and register at <https://ncph.org/conference/2022-lincoln-home-nhs-symposium/>.

We're also excited to offer \$250 stipends for 20 students to help cover the cost of attending the symposium. Please be sure to register for the event first to reserve your spot; you will be reimbursed if you are a stipend recipient. The application is open until September 23 at <https://ncph.org/lincoln-home-nhs-symposium-student-stipend-application/>.

Sponsored by the National Park Service and University of Illinois Springfield

# MAKING HOME FRONT CONNECTIONS



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NCPH and the National Park Service (NPS) have been collaborating on a number of projects to research and share histories of the World War II Home Front. One unique project that we are leading as facilitators is a three-year Working Group dedicated to promoting discussion of home front interpretation among NPS sites and other organizations who tell or would like to tell home front stories.

From our first meeting in February 2022, the WWII Home Front Working Group has engaged in conversations that span the philosophical, theoretical, and practical dimensions of our historical practice. In addition to tackling exciting questions in and of themselves, these conversations have helped this working group establish the rapport and relationships that will be necessary to carry on our work in the next two years. Specifically, we are looking to develop a network of public and private sites, particularly connecting National Park Service sites with each other and with other institutions across the country, concerning WWII Home Front history, broadly defined, to serve as a clearinghouse for research, collaboration, and, potentially, content sharing.

Outside of identifying a goal for our work moving forward, one of the most fruitful outcomes of our conversations has been sharing across sites in an informal way. These moments of sharing have allowed us to surface what we have been calling generative tensions (listed at right). These issues were identified as tensions because there is not necessarily a clear way to compromise between the stories that exist in the archives already and the stories that may not have been collected in the archives at the time of an event but that have been passed down through family over the years. And yet, we found these tensions to be generative, as they allowed us to name some of the challenges we were facing across sites and to begin thinking creatively about how to work ourselves out of the binary these tensions represented.

Narrative Tensions	<i>Lore (with celebratory connotations) v. Complexity</i> <i>Removed stories (e.g. second or third generation stories) v. Original/first person accounting</i> <i>Memory v. Scholarship</i>
Expectation tensions	<i>What visitors expect v. What they encounter</i> <i>Expectation of positive, inspiring story v. More complex story</i>
Relational tensions	<i>The history of the event/home front v. How that history intersects with those in the present day</i> <i>Expanding the story v. The perception that expanded storytelling negates or distorts the received story</i>
Interpretive tensions	<i>The boundaries of home front stories (e.g. is the home front a military or an immigration story? Are there multiple home fronts?)</i> <i>The desire for the story to be hyper-focused v. The desire to make more connections</i>

As our conversations continued, we saw that the creation of a sustained network for the purposes of professional development and resource sharing could be a way for each of us at our sites to navigate the aforementioned tensions and find new ways to engage the public in this critical work. If our past conversations are any indication of where the next two years will bring us, we are looking forward to more thoughtful engagement from this group.

*Allena Berry, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. She teaches future history educators with a focus on the literacy practices necessary to engage young people in the discipline.*

*Suzanne Fischer is an independent interpretive planner and exhibit developer based in Lansing, MI.*

## Thank you to NCPH’s Sustaining-level members! You make the work of NCPH possible.

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the middle of so much uncertainty, how could we really plan for anything? And then, as the co-chairs talked it out, it was a joy to watch them come to the shared realization that these days there are very few rules. It's okay if the plan is "What does it mean that we can't plan?" What does it mean for our field that we don't know what the future holds, even in the short term? How can we hold space for conversations that will happen organically when we get in a room together and the frustrations, fears, and strategies for dealing with that uncertainty come pouring out? "To Be Determined" unites two ideas: that we don't know for sure what is coming, and that we will need the support of our colleagues and friends to meet the demands of an unknown future with determination to be equal to those challenges.

You can expect fewer traditional concurrent sessions at NCPH 2023 and more content in other formats more in line with this vision. There will be more working groups, which ask folks to come together for months before the meeting and often for months after, ensuring that the conference is a meeting point for sharing and feedback in the midst of sustained work. If you plan to come to NCPH 2023, I encourage you to strongly consider joining a

working group that speaks to your interests and expertise, so you can contribute to one of these conversations and find meaning from it that stretches beyond the four days of the in-person conference. Even more than usual, session formats may surprise you, with more participatory and workshop-style sessions. Thursday afternoon of the conference, we'll be halting even this business to convene an unconference that will be focused on putting our heads down as a group to come up with strategies for making public history stronger, nimbler, and more equitable.

In more ways than one, COVID-19 is still with us. At the conference, we'll be providing face masks for attendees, and we're strongly considering requiring masks indoors at the conference hotel. If you have strong feelings on this issue, I encourage you to email us at [ncph@iupui.edu](mailto:ncph@iupui.edu); not only does it help inform our decisions, but we pass that kind of feedback along to conference venues and city visitors bureaus, which in turn informs the resources they offer groups like ours. We also recognize that for many of you, travel in general or travel to Atlanta in particular may not be feasible. For those folks—and for the purposes of continuing the work we undertake



Atlanta History Center's Cyclorama exhibit will be open to attendees during NCPH's Evening at the Atlanta History Center on April 13. Image by Kevin Rose and used courtesy of ACVB & AtlantaPhotos.com.

in the spring—we'll be convening a virtual follow-up conference later in 2023. While we don't have the capacity to offer a simultaneous hybrid conference, we are determined to continue investing in virtual conferences and other programs that will speak with and build off in-person events. In this way, we hope everyone can participate at your comfort level.

I've missed you all very much, and I hope to see you in Atlanta next April. I can't wait to have an entire conversation where not one of us is accidentally muted.

*-Meghan Hillman is NCPH's Program Manager.*

## MAKE YOUR MARK ON NCPH 2023

We can't wait to see our NCPH family next April in Atlanta, Georgia, for our first in-person conference since 2019. We expect four days full of fun, hard work, great networking, and productive conversations that will re-energize us for the demands of living and doing public history in a time of precarity and anxiety. Now more than ever, we rely on connection and the *power* of many minds together to do this work.

We invite you to reserve a booth in our exhibit hall at the Hyatt Regency Downtown, advertise in the conference *Program*, or sponsor an event, feature, or product of the conference (like face masks). Reach potential customers, partners, or students; promote the latest scholarship, forthcoming titles, and journals from your press; and share the vital work of your organization. For more information, visit <https://ncph.org/conference/2023-annual-meeting/support/>.

### IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GET WITH THE PROGRAM

The Program Committee is in the process of evaluating session, workshop, and working group proposals for #NCPH2023, but other opportunities to get on the program are either

available now or will open soon. Our Call for Posters, Call for Working Group Discussants, and other open calls between now and next April will help you find the right venue to share your work and connect with your fellow public historians. The hub for all conference CFPs, where you'll find information about what we're looking for or a link to the relevant submission form, is <https://ncph.org/conference/2023-annual-meeting/calls-for-proposals/>.

### CALL FOR POSTERS

The poster session is a format for presenters eager to share their work through one-on-one discussion and is particularly appropriate where visual or material evidence represents a central component of the project. Poster proposals are due **October 7**. In addition to the in-person poster session in Atlanta, we'll be inviting poster presenters to share their posters in a virtual space later in the year as part of our online conference.

### CALL FOR WORKING GROUP DISCUSSANTS

Each working group will be led by facilitators, whose topic has already been proposed and selected by the Program Committee. They'll

be looking for 8-12 individuals to join them in preconference online discussion, to exchange brief case statements, and to meet in person during the conference. The Call for Working Group Discussants will open as soon as the working group selections are finalized (expected by mid-September) and will be open through the end of October.



The Atlanta skyline. Image by Gene Phillips and used courtesy of ACVB and AtlantaPhotos.com.

### MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO COME

Between the in-person conference and virtual follow-up conference, we're likely to have new opportunities for presenting your work come up in the next few months. Keep an eye on the conference website and our Twitter ([twitter.com/ncph](https://twitter.com/ncph)) for the latest calls for participation!

# PUBLIC HISTORY NEWS

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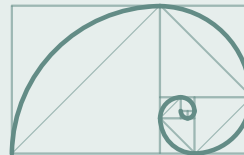
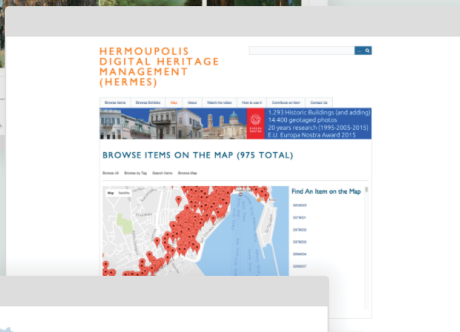
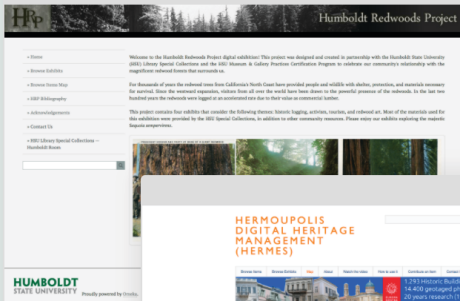
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