

## DETERMINED AND DELIGHTED – THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF NCPH 2023



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From April 12-15, 2023, 720 members of NCPH's community from the United States, Canada, and thirteen other countries representing six of the seven continents gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, to celebrate NCPH's first in-person annual meeting since 2019. (If anyone knows a climate scientist or a penguin with an emerging interest in public history, let us know—we'd love to cross Antarctica off the list.)

To say it was a joy to see so many public historians, friends, and colleagues together in person after four long years of Zooms and Teams meetings is a vast understatement. The pent-up energy was palpable, for attendees, for the NCPH staff and Board, and for our hard-working Program and Local Arrangements Committees. Seeing the fruition of a conference you've been planning in earnest for a year is already exciting and hugely rewarding; I can't even begin to describe the satisfaction of bringing our community together to experience content that a lot of brilliant and dedicated people have been planning for *five* years. "To Be Determined," indeed.



Four friends reunited. Together (left to right) Barb Howe, Rebecca Conard, Pat Mooney-Melvin, and Beth Boland represent a cumulative 160 years of NCPH membership. Image courtesy of Frank Boland.

To mark our time together, NCPH put together the most jam-packed conference we've ever had. In addition to Friday's usual public plenary—a lively and fascinating conversation between Drs. Regina Bradley and Maurice Hobson about the influence of hip hop on the formation of Atlanta's modern identity—we also featured an opening plenary from a roundtable of scholars and practitioners about more nuanced interpretations of Black life as we approach the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US. On Thursday evening, we enjoyed a trip to the Atlanta History Center, to eat Southern food, explore their exhibits, and screen their new documentary *Monument: The Untold Story of Stone Mountain*. Attendees took trips by bus, MARTA, streetcar, bike,

and on foot—to Oakland Cemetery for a day of service and learning; to the Cherokee sites of the Chief Vann House and New Echota; to Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park; and all around the city to learn about its foodways, its civil rights history, its role as a center for public health, and more. We don't know about you, but all this left us exhausted but exhilarated!



Attendees on Saturday's hip hop history tour visited the Outkast mural in Atlanta's Little Five Points neighborhood. Image courtesy of Kirsten Delegard.

Actually, we *do* know about you. On the day after the conference, we sent out an evaluation survey asking for attendees' accounting of their NCPH 2023 experience. By a huge margin, you told us your favorite thing about the conference was the renewed sense of camaraderie—not just the networking

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## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS – SHARING THE SPOTLIGHT



KRISTINE NAVARRO-MCELHANEY /  
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At our annual meeting in Atlanta, I had the honor of meeting amazing public historians from around the country and globe. We shared stories about our work and our lives, as well as the challenges and opportunities of working in the field. For my column this issue, I would like to introduce you to Vanessa Hines, the executive director of The Stagville Memorial Project. Her project encompasses everything that is public history: community, perseverance, outreach, scholarship, best practices. I encourage you to read her story and find a way to contribute.



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Wow! We are so grateful to have attended the NCPH 2023 conference, our first NCPH conference. We are so inspired by the interactions with so many of you listening and discussing your important work. The energy in the building was palpable, and we left the conference buzzing with renewed energy and enthusiasm to continue in our project. We look forward to connecting with those of you who could not attend in person at the virtual conference in October. In the meantime, we want to tap into the NCPH hivemind regarding a few best practices.

Before we delve into that request, I'd like to share a little bit about us: The Stagville Memorial Project is a community-driven 501(c)3 committed to establishing public art in downtown Durham, North Carolina, that uplifts the humanity of people who were enslaved at Stagville Plantation, one of the largest plantations in the state. We will share their stories and the ways descendants have impacted the Durham we know and love.

A large part of our project has been connecting with institutions that have been doing this work already. Historic Site Stagville, which is run by incredibly talented and knowledgeable historians who work hard to tell the story of the former plantation from the view of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 ►



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# STARTING OFF ON THE LEFT FOOT – A QUEER APPROACH TO PUBLIC HISTORY



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2023 has already been a whirlwind of a year. Winning the New Professional Award from NCPH validated the short, albeit chock-full, career I've had in public history thus far. In the fall of 2021, three months after graduating from my BA program in Literature, I began my graduate degree at Claremont Graduate University in Cultural Studies with an emphasis in Museum Studies. To be candid, this move was self-preservational. It was early in the pandemic, and I thought grad school would be easier than finding a job with a BA in Literature. I don't know about finding a job in 2021, but grad school certainly has not been easy. It has, however, been immensely fulfilling.

My first semester of my MA, I took Intro to Archives with Dr. Gabriele Carey. The part of my brain that is tidy and organized was singing, and the part of my brain that needs something to do with my hands was equally at peace. I knew that archives was a field I wanted to further explore, and I did so despite these courses not fulfilling degree requirements. The same semester, I took a course on Historic House Museums (HHMs) and investigated the ways HHMs obscure or uplift queerness. Looking to the Jane Addams-Hull House Museum, I explored how acknowledging assumed or presumed queerness can create sites of queer history and pilgrimage. Overarchingly, I began to look at how queerness, specifically lesbianism, can be made visible through public history and community archival projects.

The second semester of my MA, I took a course on public histories with Dr. Romeo Guzmán. The work in this course built upon *East of East: The Making of Greater El Monte* (ed. Romeo Guzmán, Carribean Fragoza, Alex Sayf Cummings, Ryan Reft), a collection of essays and an ongoing project by the South El Monte Arts Posse (SEMAP). This work by SEMAP highlights sites and stories from El Monte, California, that seek to challenge the dominant narrative of the town as an example of "pioneer successes" (read: colonial violence). For my contribution to this project, I conducted an oral history with Dr. Stacy Iene Macías, professor of Women and Gender Studies at California State University Long Beach. My work with Dr. Macías explored Chicana lesbian identity and how Latinx spaces become queer/queered.

Other projects I completed in working toward my MA degree include an exhibit proposal on queer futurity, a podcast episode on queer Latinx social sites in Los Angeles, and two essays that continued my undergraduate capstone work on public memorializations of those who were lost to the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the United States 1980s and 1990s. Most significantly, however, I completed my MA thesis on the queer-modified-body and queer-born archives. In this work, I posit that queer body modification is a site of resistance and rejection of cisheteropatriarchal archival repositories and institutions, and that this work is manifested in community archives born by and for queers.

Outside of class, as a new professional, I work in Archives and Special Collections at the Claremont Colleges Library. My mentors in this position—Ayat Agah, Lisa Crane, Sean Stanley, Ashley Larson, and Myles Mikulic—became key figures in understanding where I fit into the field of public history. In the summer of 2022, I pitched a large-scale project working to streamline the college archival files for researchers. Not only did these mentors support my project, they helped me to complete it with autonomy, trust, and guidance when it seemed too mountainous of a task. Beyond believing in me as a budding archivist, the Special Collections team also encouraged me to work with collections specific to my interests in queerness. I curated social media for Pride Month, inventoried our collection of *The Advocate*, and did a dig project locating queer material within our archives.

My time in public history is just beginning, but I have had the mentorship and support academically and professionally to establish my passions and path within the field. I hope to continue creating and curating interstices between queerness and community archives, and advocating for queer visibility. As a lesbian myself, I am just beginning to see my history. I truly feel that it is my life's work to make the process of self-discovery easier for future queers. I am grateful to NCPH for seeing my successes and rewarding them, and I am honored to be a part of this community.

Let us continue moving onward, forward, and upward together.

*-Hannah "Ani" Bennett-Fradkin works in Archives and Special Collections at the Claremont Colleges Library in Claremont, CA.*

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NCPH volunteers making connections and helping staff registration. Photo by Sharon Leon.

not be possible without a fantastic group of passionate and motivated volunteers.

## Special thanks to:

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NCPH would like to specifically acknowledge our student volunteers. The conference is planned and implemented by only three full-time and two part-time paid staff members, and it would



## 2023 ANNUAL MEETING CALL FOR PROPOSALS

From April 10-13, 2023, NCPH will gather in Salt Lake City, Utah, to finally hold the conference we began planning for 2021. We're excited to be meeting jointly with the Utah State Historical Society (formerly the Utah Division of State History), and Program Committee co-chairs Holly George (Utah State Historical Society) and Rebecca Wingo (University of Cincinnati) and Local Arrangements Committee co-chairs Jennifer Ortiz (Utah State Historical Society) and Greg Smoak (American West Center, University of Utah) are already at work planning a great conference.

The 2024 Annual Meeting explores the idea of **Historical Urgency**. What constitutes an urgent historical need? What is the difference between historical urgency and a historical emergency? How have people in the past responded to urgent matters, and what can we learn from them?

There is an urgent need to gather the stories of elders and bring the stories of all Americans into the larger narrative. There is an urgent need to ensure that public historians can continue to reach our audiences with full and complete histories that do not shy away from uncomfortable historical realities. There is an urgent need to make sure that the institutions where public historians work pay us fairly, protect us and the work we do, and treat us and the communities we serve with respect. There is an urgent need to protect our historical and cultural resources from encroaching threats related to climate change. There is an urgent need to rally history in the service of democracy.

Historical methodology can provide an antidote to the difficulties presented by social media, partisan news, and artificial intelligence, and yet urgency seems at odds with the often slow, deliberate work of public historians to build trust and lasting relationships with the communities we serve. Right now in particular, it is impossible not to feel a sense of urgency in the work we do, and yet it sounds like an oxymoron for the past to be urgent.

How do we reconcile these challenges? What do *you* consider urgent?

The 2024 Program Committee welcomes submissions for NCPH 2024 through July 15, 2023. There is an optional topic proposal deadline of June 12 for anyone seeking early feedback on a proposal in progress. Please visit <https://ncph.org/conference/2024-annual-meeting/> to read the full CFP and submit.



# 2022 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT



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Rounding out the 2022 fiscal year, NCPH was pleased to see continuing results from our budgeting approach in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, one that is highly attuned to the membership's financial situation and to the organization's ongoing health. As a result, we were able to close the books on the year with a nearly \$15,000 surplus, which will be vital to our ability to navigate the challenging landscape ahead.

A review of the income side of the ledger highlights a number of important elements that differed from our budget predictions. The income from memberships was down slightly from our initial prediction, but that decrease was a logical outcome of both the challenging financial climate for our community and the organization's effort to respond to it. In June 2022, NCPH implemented a new schedule of membership rates that offered subsidized fees for the members of the community who might

be in financial need or have been temporarily forced out of the field. Our interest lies in enabling as many public historians as possible to stay with us, and overall this strategy has been successful. Furthermore, we invested in a new membership database system that has improved our ability to efficiently serve members' administrative and programming needs. Additionally, the income from the annual meeting appears to be well behind the budgeted predictions. This, of course, is because a pandemic surge made it prudent to shift the 2022 NCPH Annual Meeting (previously scheduled to be held in Montreal, Quebec, Canada) to being a virtual program rather than in-person. The corresponding expenses for the meeting were also reduced accordingly.

Despite these minor shortfalls in revenue, the income side of the balance sheet includes four positive developments. The income from institutional subscriptions to *The Public Historian* continues to exceed our expectations year after year. That is a testament to the quality of the journal and its editorial and publishing teams in a climate of subscription contraction for libraries. And, through the excellent work of our staff, we have managed to garner an increasing amount of advertising revenue. More substantial, however, is the revenue recovery that has been made possible

through administering task agreements with the National Park Service (NPS). This growing source of income is attributable to the able managerial skills of our staff and the sought-after expertise of the contractors who come to NPS work through these calls. Finally, the Board of Directors and the Development Committee continue to cultivate a culture of philanthropy with our membership through their dedicated fundraising activities.

This trend toward a slow increase in revenue is essential to NCPH's ongoing sustainability. The expenses portion of the financial report includes a notable increase in administrative costs: nearly \$50,000 more than 2021. The surge in this budget line marks an important transition to independence for the organization; beginning in June 2022, NCPH took full responsibility for the salaries and benefits of all of the organization's hardworking staff. We had been anticipating this transition for a number of years, and preparing for it was a major pillar of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Endowment campaign. Though this is a significant new burden phased in more quickly than we had been able to anticipate, we are gratified that the Board and staff's careful stewardship and the membership's generosity has enabled us to take this step in a fiscally responsible way.

## NCPH 2022 Operating Budget

January-December

	2021 Budget	2021 Actual	2022 Budget	2022 Actual
<b>Income</b>				
Membership	\$94,400	\$137,747	\$132,000	\$129,932
TPH Institutional Subscriptions	\$19,500	\$22,105	\$19,500	\$26,458
Annual Meetings & Mini Cons	\$122,538	\$109,954	\$146,300	\$80,039
IUPUI Projects & O'Brien Lecture	\$4,750	\$9,500	\$4,750	\$4,750
Interfund Transfer from DIF & Endowment Earnings	\$46,070	\$19,940	\$51,000	\$41,600
Miscellaneous	\$1,850	\$1,827	\$1,850	\$6,300
Grant and Contract Projects	\$10,000	\$42,467	\$15,000	\$35,038
Contributions to Annual Fund	\$7,500	\$30,223	\$13,000	\$32,110
Encumbered 2016 Surplus	\$10,276	\$0	\$15,000	\$0
Total Operating Budget Income	\$316,884	\$373,763	\$398,400	\$356,227
<b>Expenses</b>				
Membership	\$22,400	\$18,449	\$23,000	\$27,994
Annual Meeting	\$60,150	\$40,647	\$119,450	\$34,471
Publications	\$30,250	\$31,188	\$30,250	\$28,669
Awards	\$7,500	\$6,767	\$9,200	\$8,806
Administration	\$186,148	\$185,248	\$213,725	\$232,299
Board & Committees	\$1,250	\$747	\$1,750	\$1,414
Biennial Audit/Review	\$5,000	\$5,200	\$0	\$0
Advocacy & Participation in Other Associations	\$8,185	\$7,070	\$8,185	\$7,641
Grant and Contract Projects	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Operating Budget Expenses	\$320,883	\$290,410	\$405,560	\$341,294
<b>Net Operating (Deficit)/Surplus</b>	<b>\$-3,999</b>	<b>\$78,447</b>	<b>\$-7,160</b>	<b>\$14,934</b>



# SUSTAINING A HIGH IMPACT ORGANIZATION

BILL BRYANS / BILL.BRYANS@OKSTATE.EDU

At the recent annual meeting in Atlanta, the Development Committee unveiled an infographic, “Sustaining a High Impact Organization.” Divided into five sections, it seeks to convey in abbreviated form the general composition of NCPH’s membership, the ways in which NCPH has served the public history community over the past five years, and the degree to which members have supported these efforts during that same period. It significantly illustrates how NCPH, in accordance with its mission, “inspires public engagement with the past and serves the need of practitioners in putting history to work in the world by building community among historians, expanding professional skills and tools, fostering critical reflection on historical practice, and publicly advocating for history and historians.”

Preparing the infographic involved consolidating and summarizing a great deal of detailed information. It is by no means intended to be comprehensive. It does, however, deliver a valuable overview of NCPH and includes much upon which to reflect. Each time I review it, for example, something new and different comes to light. In this and future newsletters, various members of the Development Committee will share their perspective on the meaning and importance of the information in each section.

As a longtime member and supporter of NCPH, I would like to offer my reflections on the “Who We Are” segment. Its pie graph divides membership into four main categories. Some of these combine existing membership classifications, but it does provide a useful picture of the major groupings within our membership.

One of the striking attributes this section illustrates concerns how the membership represents public historians wherever they may fall on the career spectrum. Students, new professionals, established practitioners, the under/unemployed, public history institutions, and the retired (like me!) all have a place at the table. In terms of professional status, and many other measures, NCPH truly does promote diversity by embracing the entire public history community.

“Who We Are” also reveals that 42% of members—those in the Students & New Professional and the Retired, Under/Unemployed &

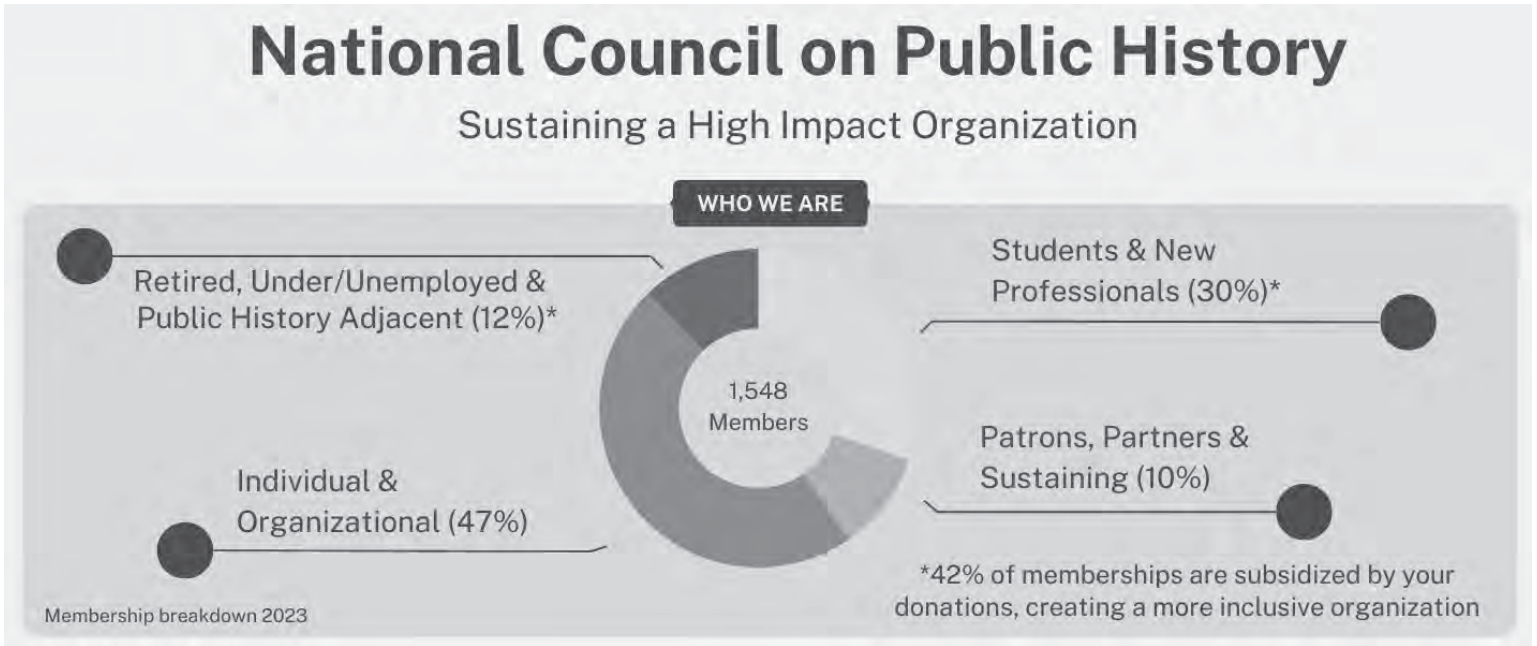
Public History Adjacent slices of the pie graph—are subsidized through donations to NCPH. This means these members pay less for their annual membership than those in the Individual classification. Underwriting such a large sector of the membership may seem fiscally precarious, but NCPH believes it is the right thing to do as yet another way to create inclusivity and diversity, values NCPH very much supports. It also is, I believe, a sound investment in our collective future, in our colleagues while establishing their careers, and in supporting our temporarily displaced colleagues. I must admit, too, it pleases me that NCPH is such a caring organization.

One other personal reflection I would like to share concerns the Patrons, Partners & Sustaining slice of the pie graph. The individuals and institutions that comprise this 10% of NCPH’s membership are among its most stalwart supporters, fiscally and otherwise. In my opinion, that percentage is too low. Historically, academic departments and public history institutions have been Partners and Patrons, and I certainly believe more should join us in the future. Only recently have individuals begun to join at the Partners and Patrons level. I myself have been a Patron for some time because I believe what I have received through my association with NCPH, both professionally and personally, warrants such a level of support. I am sure there are others like me who have yet to take that step. So please do if you feel the same.

In fact, I challenge every member to review the entire infographic and think about what it conveys and what NCPH means to you. And if so inclined and having the means, please lend support in a way that is meaningful to you. The donation portion of the webpage provides several ways to do this.

NCPH has truly been transformational in leading the entire public history community for over forty years, and I have no doubt it will continue to serve all public historians well into the future. It clearly deserves support from all of us.

*-Bill Bryans is co-chair of the NCPH Development Committee, past president of NCPH, and former director of public history at Oklahoma State University.*



# 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/>.*



The NCPH 2023 Opening Plenary, "The Rhetoric of Freedom," was part of a three-year collaboration with the National Park Service to prepare for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026. Photo by Sharon Leon.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARK SERVICE COLLABORATION

This Advisory Committee advises and assists with the cooperative agreement between NCPH and the National Park Service (NPS), by consulting on the selection of projects and project participants (but not selecting), advising the Board and NCPH staff on NPS issues, publicizing the program, and advocating for NPS within the organization. Our committee this year includes Anne Mitchell Whisnant from Duke University, Janet Ore from Montana State University, Jill Titus from the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College, Courtney Hobson from the Dresser Center for the Humanities at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, Lynn Kronzek from Lynn C. Kronzek and Associates, and Angela Sirna from the National Park Service.

Over this past year, our committee has reviewed and made comments on five new projects that NCPH began this year:

- Historic Resource Study Addendum on African American History for Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park (PAGR)
- Special History Study on the Historic Preservation Movement for Longfellow House Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site (LONG)
- Pecos NHP Oral History Project and Administrative History: Pecos
- Administrative History of the Civil War Defense of Washington (CWDW), administered by Rock Creek Park
- Petersburg National Battlefield Eastern Front Unit Historic Resource Study

Committee members have also helped review applicants for the projects, and we have

provided our comments to NCPH staff. We also note that NCPH turned down two or three inquiries because the organization is still working to build capacity.

Our committee met at the NCPH annual meeting in Atlanta to talk about our work and to assess how the process of administering these projects is evolving and how the committee can best help the NCPH office. Stephanie noted that the organization is still trying to assess its institutional capacity and what kind of projects best suit the organization. Some projects require more time from NCPH staff than others. We also talked about the relationship NCPH staff have developed with NPS partners.

We look forward to continuing to serve NCPH in the coming year.

*-Submitted by chair Ann McCleary*

## ADVOCACY COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD

In 2023 so far, the Advocacy Committee of the Board has been a forum for consultation regarding five statements endorsed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. Three of these statements address the multi-pronged effort, particularly visible in Florida, to use state power to restrict the teaching of history. As one of the NCPH-endorsed statements puts it: "This is not only about Florida. It is about the heart and soul of public higher education in the United States and about the role of history, historians, and historical thinking in the lives of the next generation of Americans." In the face of the sheer volume of efforts to censor historical material, the committee has discussed what methods of advocacy might be most effective. As the need for action continues, so does this discussion.

As the committee considers various avenues for advocacy, it is in the process of more broadly considering the meaning of advocacy in the NCPH space. The committee has continued to take up its charge to review the NCPH Advocacy Policy, last revised in 2017. Following discussion via email, the committee met on Zoom in October to chart a review process and to identify important areas for revision. Following that meeting, committee members contributed feedback to a shared document where the draft of an updated policy is taking shape. The committee met again via Zoom in early February to respond to the draft and to move the policy-revision process forward.

The committee set out to gather thoughts and feedback from the NCPH Annual Meeting before continuing the policy-revision process. To facilitate that process, the committee held a "listening session" on Friday afternoon in Atlanta. Several committee members also participated in Working Group Six, Toward a Statement of Principles for Activist Public History, which generated insights relevant to the Advocacy Policy. Following the Annual Meeting, the committee plans to hold a virtual listening session with NCPH members, and to meet again as a committee via Zoom to move toward a final draft of the policy for submission to the Board.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Michael Brown and Adrienne Burke*

## COMMITTEE FOR GOVERNMENT HISTORIANS

The Committee for Government Historians is fresh off a successful 2023 NCPH Annual Meeting in Atlanta. We sponsored a workshop, Writing for the Public: Taking Out the Jargon, on Wednesday, April 12, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. Richard Anderson, *History@Work* Editor, joined us along with Government Historians Committee member, Christine Ridarsky, to advise students on how to write for a more general audience.

The workshop was capped at 30 and participants learned about crafting a story, tips for writing in plain language, writing a press release, adapting stories for social media, and K-12 curriculum. The workshop concluded with a tutorial on NCPH's *History@Work* blog. The committee shared presentation materials with all participants and will follow up to solicit feedback.

The committee also hosted a happy hour on Thursday, April 13 at Gibney's Pub in Atlanta. About 20 government historians gathered for an informal meet-and-greet followed by an impromptu dine around.

Also, after the committee's successful open meeting in May 2022 with Raina Regan, author and creator of *Uplifting Preservation*, who discussed her research on burnout, the Committee held a second open meeting. On February 15, 2023, at 8PM (ET) we hosted an online discussion with Jason Steinhauer, public historian and author of the Amazon bestseller, *History Disrupted: How Social Media and the World Wide Web Have Changed the Past* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2022).

In his book, Jason argues that the Web and social media have dramatically shaped the

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general public's understanding of history as a result of the rise of "e-history," or forms of history communication specifically designed for distribution online. After a brief presentation, participants asked questions and had an engaging discussion. Thanks again to NCPH staff for their help organizing and advertising this event, and to Terrance Rucker from our committee for his work to make this great event happen.

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

## CONSULTANTS COMMITTEE

The Consultants Committee is energized by the great turnout and discussion at the conference in Atlanta in April. The Consultant's Workshop was well attended and there was a lot of helpful dialogue that occurred, including from seasoned audience members who helped facilitate the conversations. With the success of this, and previous, workshops, we hope to be able to continue these types of sessions at upcoming conferences. The Consultants' Speakeasy was also a great success, especially the fantastic Potato Bar. We enjoyed networking and invite everyone to join us at future events. Our plans for 2023-2024 include expanding our virtual networking offerings, with the hope of hosting more Grumpy Hour sessions, modeled after the extremely popular inaugural Grumpy Hour, which was organized by co-chair Kathleen Conti in 2021. We hope to foster some vibrant conversations among consultants about the state of the field, as well as helping consultants develop relationships with other consultants, for mentorship, teaming opportunities, or just connecting people with common interests. Also, we think it is more important than ever to develop a Best Practices Manual for Consultants, a project that the committee began in 2019-2020 but which has been on hold for the past three years as we navigated through global health challenges and new work environments. As the summer comes, so do committee appointments. Anyone who thinks they might like to be involved with the Consultants Committee, and help us shape our upcoming priorities, please consider submitting an application to join us.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Heather Carpini and Kathleen Conti*

## DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Since convening last fall, the Development Committee has been discussing approaches to continue to build and sustain a culture of philanthropy among NCPH membership,

particularly among new and younger members. This will become increasingly important as NCPH looks to take on new initiatives and programming for new professionals. To these ends, the committee decided a focus for our year would be on communications and engagement related to how donations and funds are used at NCPH. The first step in these efforts was an infographic (featured in the Annual Meeting program) to illustrate where NCPH's funding comes from and how support from membership and donations is used. The committee is also planning a series for forthcoming NCPH newsletters that will further examine how donations and philanthropy among NCPH's members support the organization. The committee will also be working with NCPH leadership to decide on areas for future fundraising.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Bill Bryans and Joseph Cialdella*



NCPH Board Members and Membership Committee members donned fun animal ears to welcome attendees at larger events during the conference. Photo by Sharon Leon.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The NCPH Membership Committee was thrilled to meet in person at the annual meeting in Atlanta. While some members joined virtually, it was great to gather together; for many on our committee, it was the first time we'd met each other in person! To help folks prepare for the conference, we hosted a #ncph2023 Instagram Takeover on Monday, March 27, where we answered followers' questions about all things annual meeting, from dress code to networking advice to tips for exploring Atlanta. Speaking of, our committee enjoyed supporting NCPH staff in hosting member-focused events like the First Time Attendee Meet-Up and the New Member Breakfast.

Co-chairs Julie Peterson and Kacie Lucchini Butcher reached out to recently-joined NCPH members to encourage their attendance at the first in-person conference in over three years. Committee members also regularly reach out to lapsed members to invite them back into

the organization. We also continue to support NCPH staff in promoting the organization on social media, including facilitating Instagram takeovers and managing the group's Twitter and Facebook accounts. Members of our committee also monitor and update the Digital Projects Directory.

Our committee just formed a subcommittee to focus on events beyond the annual conference. Ideas to explore include facilitating a series of regional (in-person or virtual) membership meet-ups, and creating a guide for members to host their own events. We are looking forward to convening our committee on a more regular basis to keep up the momentum the annual meeting always generates. We are especially excited about how our committee can support the organization's upcoming Long Range Plan and continue to make NCPH the most welcoming professional organization around!

*-Submitted by co-chairs Kacie Lucchini Butcher and Julie Peterson*

## NEW PROFESSIONAL AND STUDENT COMMITTEE

The New Professional and Student Committee successfully hosted its first in-person social event since the pandemic at the 2023 annual meeting in Atlanta, bringing together students and new professionals to socialize and network. Roughly 50 participants joined committee members in the conference exhibit hall over a dessert bar to play a public history bingo activity that got participants to introduce themselves to one another and seek out common interests, professional experiences, and educational backgrounds. The first four participants to fill their entire bingo card got to choose prizes such as NCPH swag generously provided by Stasia Tanzer or three new publications from the University of Chapel Hill Press contributed by the press's marketing team. The social event brought new interest in the committee that will carry over to our public all-committee meeting held on Monday, May 8!

In anticipation of the annual meeting in Atlanta, the committee continued to engage in lively cross-committee collaboration through its Public History Hangout (PHH) series, a valuable resource and entry point into NCPH for students and new professionals. PHHs are a series of informal virtual hangouts where students and new professionals come together to discuss common issues or topics; public history hangouts have sparked some generative conversations around contemporary issues in the field. In March, we held another Public

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# ACTIONS OF THE NCPH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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



The NCPH Board of Directors was thrilled to meet together in person for the first time since 2019. Even happier was being joined by Long Range Planning Committee co-chairs Will Stoutamire and Abby Gautreau to approve the pillars and goals of the developing 2023-2028 Long Range Plan. Photo by Sharon Leon.

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

- Conducted a self-evaluation of the board's work during 2022.
- Reviewed and discussed a draft member code of conduct policy.

*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).

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

- Endorsed a statement from the American Council of Learned Societies in Support of Academic Freedom and New College of Florida.
- Approved a new MOA with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities (MARCH) at Rutgers University-Camden and University of California, Santa Barbara for MARCH to host an editorial assistant for *The Public Historian*.

- Approved spending up to \$20,700 from the earmarked surplus funds to support hiring a temporary *History@Work* Managing Editor.

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

- Reviewed a draft of the 2023-2028 Long Range Plan and met with committee co-chairs to review and edit.

*Between the March virtual and April in-person meetings the board took the following actions:*

- Voted to improve modest price increases for institutional and non-member subscriptions to *The Public Historian* as proposed by the University of California Press.

*At the in-person Spring Board Meeting in Atlanta, GA, the board took the following actions:*

- Approved minutes of the December 2022, February 2023, and March 2023 Virtual Board meetings.
- Heard a report from the President on the state of the work of the Board.
- Held a short board training primer on the role of the Executive Committee.
- Heard reports from the Executive Director and Treasurer and reviewed the organization's finances.
- Voted to move the 2022 Fiscal Year surplus into the organizational reserve fund.
- Heard reports from the editors of *The Public Historian* and *History@Work*.
- Heard a presentation of the 2023-2028 NCPH Long Range Plan from committee co-chairs and voted to provisionally approve the plan pending the additions of committee assignments and task deadlines.

- Reviewed reports from the organization's committee chairs and discussed ways to keep committees supported in their work.

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

- A statement from the American Council of Learned Societies in support of Academic Freedom and New College of Florida.
- A statement from the American Historical Association on Florida HB 999.
- A statement from the American Council of Learned Societies on Florida HB 999.
- A letter from NCPH to the President of Albany State University in support of the public and African American History Major proposed by the History faculty at Albany State University (ASU).
- Federal Appropriations letters for Civics Funding prepared by CivXNow.



Current NCPH Board leadership took a moment during the 2023 Awards Ceremony to recognize Past Presidents Marla Miller and Gregory Smoak for their service and passed the NCPH gavel through time, thanking them for their work shepherding the organization through the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo courtesy Sharon Leon.

## NCPH COMMITTEE UPDATES // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 9

History Hangout in conjunction with the *History@Work* blog. Editors explained *History@Work*'s submission and review process, and how writing for this kind of publication can serve a range of professional development goals. Public History Hangouts are recorded and later posted to the NCPH YouTube channel to provide a resource for those unable to attend the event live. As we transition into summer programming, our committee will continue hosting new PHHs for all interested

students and new professionals to engage in virtually.

Furthermore, the New Professional and Student Committee is working on revising the *Public History Navigator* to reflect the current needs of public history students, refocus the document to be more specific, and address information only relevant to public history graduate programs while cutting back on general graduate school advice. In December, we sent out a survey to assess what current

students' needs are and help shape the creation of new content within the document to best reflect their concerns. These survey results have factored into our revisions and our committee is currently working towards an updated draft being spearheaded by two committee members as part of our member resources working group.

*-Submitted by co-chairs MaryKate Smolenski and Brian Whetstone*

enslaved people, has been a lighthouse for us, as they helped us connect to several descendants in Stagville's vast diaspora. We could not do this work without Dr. Charles Johnson, a public historian and Durham native who now sits on the NCPH Board, and leads North Carolina Central University's newly launched Public History Lab. His past work collecting oral histories from Black Durham and current work helps us uncover more histories about Stagville descendants in the downtown area.



A photo from our NCPH presentation. Left to right: Vanessa Hines, Founder and Executive Director; Ricky Hart, Stagville Descendant and Board President; Georje Bryant, Stagville Descendant and Board Secretary; Vanessa Mason Evans, Mason Farm/Plantation Descendant and Treasurer; Dr. Charles Johnson, Chair of Public History Department at North Carolina Central University. Image courtesy of author.

Other big pieces of our project include: fundraising, developing descendant outreach plans and best practices, participating in and understanding the way public art programs and processes work in local government

offices, and working with public artists.

The final piece of this project, which often goes without saying but should not, especially when working with historically marginalized populations, is establishing and continually working towards trust with the descendant population we are working with. None of this work would be possible if we did not work hard to establish that we are trustworthy and this is a worthwhile project.

Now that we've shared a bit about what we're doing, here is why we are writing this column today: We are interested in tapping into this resource of like-minded peers who understand the importance of our work and might have some experience navigating some of the challenges that this type of work brings. If you have experience working with descendant populations, or experience working on public history projects that are also public art projects, or experience fundraising for large sums of money for this type of work, we would love to connect with you. See our contact info below.

We want to send a special shoutout to Stephanie Rowe and the NCPH staff who made the NCPH 2023 conference happen! Our attendance allowed us to forge new connections and the beginnings of new relationships, and thank you to Kristine



Image from August 2022 listening session. Image courtesy of author.

Navarro-McElhaney for allowing us to appeal to the bright minds of NCPH members in this newsletter. To respond to this call, you can email us at [info@stagvillememorialproject.org](mailto:info@stagvillememorialproject.org). For more information on us, please check out [www.stagvillememorialproject.org](http://www.stagvillememorialproject.org), follow us on Instagram @stagvillememorialproject and on Facebook at [facebook.com/stagvillememorial](https://facebook.com/stagvillememorial).

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

*-Vanessa Hines is the executive director of the Stagville Memorial Project and a member of the Durham Racial Equity Task Force.*

# AASLH-NCPH CALL FOR POSTERS

#AASLH2023 - Boise, Idaho

INFO + SUBMIT BY JUNE 2:

<https://ncph.org/news/aaslh-ncph-call-for-posters/>



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2023 WORKING GROUPS

*Six of the working groups that met during the NCPH conference in Atlanta have provided summaries of their discussions. NCPH working groups are seminar-like conversations that take place before and during the conference. The groups, comprised of eight to ten people, explore in-depth a subject of shared concern and work toward a common purpose and outcome. If you are interested in creating a working group for the 2024 NCPH Annual Meeting, proposals are due July 15, 2023. (See the call for proposals at <http://ncph.org/conference/2024-annual-meeting/calls-for-proposals/>.)*

## WG3. WORLD WAR II HOME FRONT, PART TWO

During Year Two of the three-year World War II Home Front Working Group, we focused on learning from each other by exploring case studies in home front interpretation that spoke to some generative tensions we identified in the work. This group draws together National Park Service staff with other practitioners and scholars invested in homefront history. In three virtual meetings and one (finally!) in person, we discussed Rosie the Riveter, home front interpretation for K-12 visitors, how to complicate the Cherry Blossom Festival, and the paradoxes of public health interpretation at Hanford. We're looking forward to articulating and formalizing some of our learnings in the final year of the project.

*-Suzanne Fischer and Allena Berry*

## WG4. FIVE YEAR COMBINED BA/MA IN PUBLIC HISTORY

Attendees in our working group came from a wide range of programs and experiences. A few participants were working at universities/colleges that had already instituted a 4 + 1 program. Other participants were feeling pressure from their administrations to consider it.

Participants discussed how there isn't a "one size fits all" approach to 4 + 1, and there are some important questions to ask prior to implementation. For example:

-What is our intention in developing it? In other words, is this what works best for our students, or is this a response to larger system/university/college pressures (for example, enrollment problems)? For understandable reasons, financial benefits in particular may be a strong motivator for students to pursue the 4 + 1 model.

-How are we going to do the "math"? Working group participants all had different

models for how many hours would be required, and questions regarding the logistics of undergraduates taking both undergrad and grad classes, as well as completing internships (if required at the undergrad and grad level).

-We had one student who graduated from a 4 + 1 program participate, and her experience was very positive. She was exceptional in terms of motivation, skills, and academic excellence—which is often a characteristic of 4 + 1 students enrolled in other well-established programs. She raised one important question, though: how can we support students who may have fewer skills when it comes to navigating the complex structure of higher-ed, but who seem like they would benefit from enrolling in a 4 + 1?

-One question that went unresolved: what is gained (for the student/employer/professor), and what is lost, from the traditional 2 year Masters Program graduate experience if it is compressed into 4 + 1?

As more higher-ed institutions institute 4 + 1, we would like to start gathering data to come up with a list of general guidelines. Some working group members also plan to create a *History@Work* blog post that documents our discussion.

*-Andrea Burns*



Activist Public History Working Group during their in person meeting in Atlanta. Photo by Richard Anderson.

## WG5. TOWARD A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR ACTIVIST PUBLIC HISTORY

The "Toward a Statement of Principles for Activist Public History" working group engaged in a rich, wide-ranging conversation at the 2023 annual meeting. The conveners set out to explore public history's capacity to be a vehicle for political activism. Many of the facilitators participated in a conversation during the 2022 NCPH virtual meeting

titled "The Limits of Public History." The 2022 session asked whether the theories and methods of public history equip practitioners to respond with sufficient urgency to the large-scale political, economic, environmental, and public health crises of the present. The answer was "Sometimes, but many of us face steep challenges and constraints." On the heels of that conversation, our current working group decided to examine a set of interlocking questions to articulate more precisely the field's relationship to activism. The Atlanta session featured break-out discussions centered on four of those questions: What material conditions sustain activism? How do we delineate different types of activism? How do we define/assess impact? What are the public history skills/approaches that catalyze activism? Roughly three dozen audience members joined our thirteen facilitators. I lack space to summarize the substance of the breakout discussions; however, the group concluded that the inquiry should continue in the summer and fall of 2023. Because many of us have begun to feel that a statement of principles would not be the most useful outcome, we will distill our discussions through a zine, scholarly article, video series, and/or blog post. Want to learn more? Email Richard Anderson at [andersonr03@moravian.edu](mailto:andersonr03@moravian.edu).

*-Richard Anderson*

## WG9. LINCOLN REIMAGINED

The "Lincoln Reimagined" working group convened in Atlanta with co-facilitators Devin Hunter (University of Illinois Springfield), Timothy Townsend (National Park Service), and Adam McNeil (Rutgers University) joined by eight discussants. These members, along with others unable to be in Atlanta, also met via Zoom and traded case statements in the weeks leading up to the conference. This working group brings together public historians who work at sites or on projects related to Abraham Lincoln, his time, and his legacy. We focus on the need to re-evaluate and revise approaches to 'great man history' in light of contemporary issues of diversity, equity, and relevance. Our initial prompt for pre-conference discussion was "What do we need from Lincoln today?" We organized the Atlanta session along two tracks. First, we introduced four themes around which to draft statements of principles, on how Lincoln or Lincoln-related public history can relate to: 1) Civil rights history, 2) Development of historical literacy and historical thinking skills, 3) Place-based and local histories, and 4) Contemporary issues of diversity, equity, social justice and inclusion. After small group

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discussions organized around these themes, we collected and discussed the initial statements. The second part of the session consisted of open discussion about the prospects for the development of a platform or network for practitioners to share ideas, methods, and examples of Lincoln-related public history. Since the conference, the group has elected to continue developing these two distinct elements in a separate but coordinated manner, with plans to refine and distribute the statements of principle and draft a proposal for an information-sharing platform. Anyone interested in contributing to the work should email Devin Hunter at [dhunte2@uis.edu](mailto:dhunte2@uis.edu).

-Devin Hunter



The End-of-Life Care working group at NCPH 2023 in Atlanta.

## WG10. UNITING PUBLIC HISTORY AND END-OF-LIFE CARE

This group welcomed the chance to host in Atlanta a lively discussion in which public historians and practitioners in the health sciences discussed the theory and practicality of public historians working in hospice and palliative care in the United States.

Members presented research on various subjects, sharing insights from studies of oral history and narrative interventions in health care in the United States and the United Kingdom; work in related Humanities disciplines; and current practices at Auburn Crest Hospice in north Idaho. The wide-ranging conversation considered implications for archives and museums; ways that narrative memories are impacted by life stage; and particular needs associated with dementia care. Dr. Kimberly Curseen, MD, from Emory University School of Medicine and the Winship Cancer Center, provided especially valuable perspective into the medical environment in the US today.

Going forward, members are developing both short and long-term goals, including continuing to learn by reading widely across various literatures related to aging and dying (from anthropology and sociology to nursing and gerontology) and nurturing wider

networks of collaborators in communities like the Oral History Association, the Gerontological Society of America, and the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine. Topics for ongoing discussion include the need for ethical standards of practice for public historians working in this sector; potentials for interdisciplinary training, including in the Medical Humanities; advocacy among hospice and palliative care administrators; and the prospective design of a research study to measure the wellbeing of patients receiving public history services. We invite you to join the ongoing discussion at <https://unitingpublichistoryandendoflifecare.wordpress.com/>.

-Marla Miller and Sara Jane Ruggles

## WG11. FACILITATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS IN AN AGE OF POLITICAL POLARIZATION

Bringing together public history professionals, educators, and graduate students, this working group tackled the thorny question of how to facilitate inclusive conversations across political, racial, and cultural differences. In our preliminary meeting, several key questions emerged: How can public historians support members of marginalized groups without completely shutting down other participants? Is it possible to have meaningful conversations through brief interactions or in virtual settings? How can we, as educators and practitioners, maintain our physical and mental well-being and prevent burnout?

In preparation for the conference, we met in small groups to focus on areas of shared interest and expertise: teaching controversial topics through oral history and material culture, using art and storytelling to anchor discussions, training facilitators, facilitating virtual conversations, and inclusive discussion strategies. When we convened at the conference, each group shared insights on these topics through case studies derived from their own experiences.

A common theme that emerged in our discussion was that effective facilitation requires both careful preparation (including reflection on one's own positionality) and the willingness to be flexible and responsive in the moment. The student members of the group shared insights on what worked well in their training, such as tour outlines, rehearsing, opportunities to shadow mentors, and the ability to request help in the moment. We closed our discussion by sharing strategies for maintaining the well-being of practitioners, including building in time for breaks after events or tours, providing opportunities for debriefing, and anticipating discomfort as part of the work.

Each of these small groups presented their case studies at the conference and contributed to a bibliography and spreadsheet of digital resources that we will share in the near future.

-Erin Battat

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# DETERMINED AND DELIGHTED – THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF NCPH 2023

// CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

opportunities, which are difficult to replicate in virtual spaces, but the emotional and intellectual support of long-time friends and newfound connections bringing your heads together on shared problems. We love how much you love each other, and how welcoming our longtime members are to first-time attendees, new professionals, and students. While our virtual options will be sticking around, we left Atlanta more certain that there is no replacement for in-person gatherings.

The evaluation survey was very eye-opening on the topic of COVID-19. We decided this year to require masks in conference spaces, and to encourage (but not require proof of) vaccination. The reason we went in this direction is that the evidence remains strong that masking prevents transmission of a whole host of ick. While many of our attendees did mask up (I'd estimate about 50%), we ran into significant problems with enforcement of the mask requirement.



Attendees hang out in the Commons area of the exhibit hall to do a puzzle and catch up. Image courtesy of Meghan Hillman.



Local Arrangements Co-Chair Amy Wilson welcomes attendees to the 2023 opening reception. In 2016 Amy coordinated submission of the bid to bring NCPH to Atlanta, and worked for years to make it eventually happen in 2023. Image courtesy of Sharon Leon.

For starters, we could have been louder about it. It was in the *Program*, on our website, on Twitter, and in the pre-conference email, but there's a lot of information to take in at a conference and it's easy to miss things. Most people seem to have moved on from masking in their regular lives, and so wearing a mask at the conference seemed unnecessary to many and simply did not occur to others. NCPH's staff is small, so we can't be where attendees are most of the time, but more signage and a pre-con email dedicated just to COVID precautions would have helped.

Post-conference surveys revealed that our community is deeply divided on COVID, reflecting divisions in public discourse at large. Some people expressed that they felt safer with NCPH's mask requirement and wished more people had followed through to protect the health of our most vulnerable attendees. Others said they felt masks were unnecessary, said that they were "over COVID," or expressed dismay that our requirements went beyond CDC recommendations. (It's worth noting that, as I write this, the CDC has reported that at least 35 people have tested positive for COVID following their own annual conference. As far as we know, nobody caught COVID at NCPH 2023.)

Assuming that COVID conditions in the US continue to improve, and no new variants pop up to rival Delta or Omicron in transmissibility or severity, we will probably make masks optional for NCPH 2024 in Salt Lake City,

Utah. However, the Atlanta conference's results speak for themselves: in a gathering of 700+ people, nobody went home sick, and if we could go back and soften our 2023 policy, we wouldn't.

Like the public plenary, Saturday's keynote from Drs. Torren Gatson and Tiffany Momon about the Black Craftspeople Digital Archive ended with a call to action, challenging the audience of public historians to harness all our determination to continue the work of telling complete and accurate histories and fixing our own broken institutions. "I'm tired, y'all," Momon concluded. "Let's just tell the truth. Let's just push on through." None of us could say it any better.

*-Meghan Hillman is NCPH's Program Manager*



Two hotel employees pause to read the Kennesaw State University traveling exhibit *The Tuskegee Experiment: The Segregated Skies of World War II*. A reminder of why we do what we do. Image courtesy of Meghan Hillman.



An attendee chats with a presenter at the poster session at NCPH 2023. Photo by Sharon Leon.



# DETERMINED AND DELIGHTED – THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF NCPH 2023 // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 14



NCPH attendees, led by the incomparable Ranger Jenkins, toured the Martin Luther King, Jr. NHP. Image courtesy of Jennifer Dickey.



Nicole Moore, with Drs. Hobson and Bradley to her right, welcomes attendees and community members to Big Bethel AME for Friday evening's public plenary. Image courtesy of Sharon Leon.



At the opening reception, folks caught up on the latest news. (Caption contest: what are they looking at?) Image courtesy of Sharon Leon.



Friends gathered at the Atlanta History Center for an after-hours evening of food and fun. Image courtesy of Sharon Leon.



On a day trip to Oakland Cemetery, participants toured the cemetery, enjoyed an offsite session on local public history partnerships, and helped clean up the grounds. Image courtesy of Jennifer Dickey.



A group of NCPH attendees getting to know Atlanta by bike. They had so much fun our tour guide didn't want to send them back! Image courtesy of Robyn Elliot.



Drs. Tiffany Momon and Torren Gatson deliver their keynote at the 2023 Awards Breakfast. Image courtesy of Sharon Leon.



Exhibitors at the 2023 exhibit hall during a coffee break. Image courtesy of Sharon Leon.

# PUBLIC HISTORY NEWS

## National Council on Public History

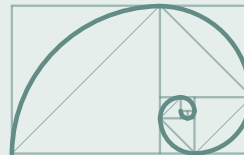
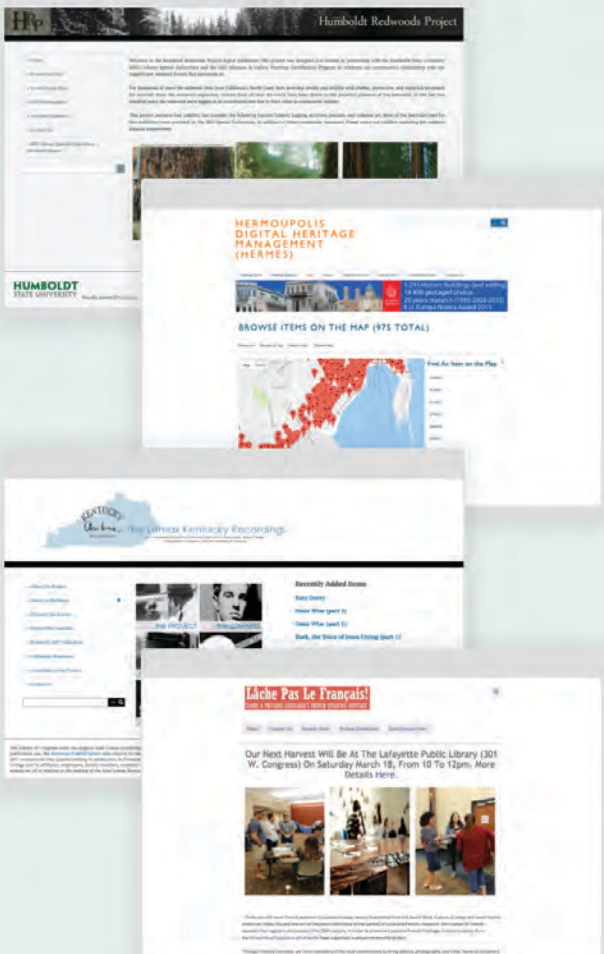
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