

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS: PUBLIC HISTORY IS NOT A LUXURY



DENISE MERINGOLO /  
DDM@UMBC.EDU

Public history is not a luxury. Public historians have a critical role to play in society at large, particularly during periods of unrest.

As I write this, college students across the country are engaged in anti-war protests. While some campus leaders have tolerated student encampments, and a few have agreed to engage in critical conversations with students, others have punished protesters by canceling graduations and other events. Still others have called in law enforcement, resulting in police violence against students and faculty. Observers have described student actions in a variety of ways, and they often fail to distinguish peaceful protest from Anti-Muslim or Anti-Semitic actions. In this atmosphere, the possibility for productive dialogue seems impossible.

While this environment may feel extreme, public historians are often on the frontlines of events with profound historical implications. In the last decade alone we have put history to work for communities fighting against gun violence, defending the rights of immigrants, and demanding an end to police violence. As public historians in these and other politically charged situations, we must occupy a position of service, lending our toolkits to marginalized and minoritized people. We must aspire to remain responsive and responsible. We must be rooted in an ethic of care and practice trauma-informed, collaborative strategies of collection and interpretation.

While most of us operate within these beliefs and practices, it seems timely that the NCPH

Board of Directors has adopted a new [Statement of Shared Values and Ethical Commitments](#), crafted by the Governance Committee (copied in this edition on page 8). The Statement dovetails with the goals of our 2023-2028 Long Range Plan. It acknowledges that collaborative practices are the foundation for public history and requires we address issues of equity in public history labor. It calls on us to recognize our community partners as knowledge creators and to find mutually beneficial ways to share the credit, resources, and benefits that come with our work. It affirms our ongoing effort to advance diversity and inclusiveness within our organization and profession, facilitating the advancement of people from underrepresented groups into positions of leadership and welcoming the improvements that broader diversity will bring to our field. It also expands our unwavering opposition to discrimination and harassment in all its forms, ensuring that the NCPH Events Code of Conduct is recognized as a central component of our professional identity.

As the new NCPH President, I recognize the Statement of Shared Values and Ethical Commitments as a guide that can help us identify a clear role for NCPH leadership to help shepherd our profession through these incredibly challenging times. Contemporary battles regarding international policy and investment, as well as domestic policies that impact access to healthcare, citizenship, and education, require us not only to reaffirm our commitment to truth and academic rigor, but also to fight for a more expansive notion of what it means to be a rigorous historian. We owe it to ourselves, our students, our partners, and our stakeholders to promote dialogic interpretation, storytelling, and emotional

intelligence as essential skills that can be both taught and learned. The current unrest on college campuses has exposed deeper, more systemic problems in higher education that will have an impact on our effort to educate both the public and future public historians. Pressures created by budgetary instability and a repressive political atmosphere have endangered the sustainability of both history and public history programs. Our commitment to education must include proactive advocacy on behalf of free speech, equitable funding, and responsible program development. As the motivations, values, and beliefs of those pushing for change in the political arena continue to come under attack, our commitments to community-centered practice, respect, inclusiveness, and the advancement of diversity are more critical than ever. As an organization, we have begun to implement programs that foster diversity and inclusion, and engage in meaningful self-reflection about systemic barriers within our field. It is essential to remain vigilant against inequality and discrimination, and to provide mentorship, collegiality, and support for one another as we stand on the side of historically disadvantaged communities.

Far from a luxury, then, public history work is difficult and maybe even dangerous. Fortunately, NCPH is here to provide solace and support. More importantly, our Statement of Shared Values and Ethical Commitments provides us with a valuable touchstone, one that can help us remain grounded while we work to create brave spaces for critical dialogue about the past, present, and future.

*-Denise Meringolo is NCPH President and Professor of History at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.*

## AN ACCESSIBILITY RESET AFTER NCPH-UHS 2024



MEGHAN HILLMAN /  
MEGHILLM@IU.EDU

The survey evaluations are in and, for most attendees, NCPH-UHS (Utah Historical Society) 2024 in Salt Lake City in April was

a success. Attendees praised the program and special events and reiterated their joy at seeing colleagues and friends in person in a time when

so much of our professional development is still relegated to Zoom rooms.

Overall, attendees ranked the conference on par with 2023's in Atlanta—but behind the scenes, the NCPH staff and board had a more complicated experience.

As the conference week progressed, NCPH staff and attendees experienced multiple failures of planning, communication, and especially



Poster Session, NCPH-UHS 2024. Image courtesy of Ariana Cieslak.



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NCPH inspires public engagement with the past and serves the needs 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. *Public History News* is published in March, June, September, and December. NCPH reserves the right to reject material that is not consistent with the goals and purposes of the organization. Individual membership orders, changes of address, and business and editorial correspondence should be addressed to NCPH, 127 Cavanaugh Hall – IUPUI, 425 University Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46202-5140. E-mail: [ncph@iu.edu](mailto:ncph@iu.edu). Tel: 317-274-2716. Join online or renew at [www.ncph.org](http://www.ncph.org). Headquartered on the campus of IUPUI, NCPH is grateful for the generous support of the IU School of Liberal Arts and the Department of History.

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# 2024 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 the 2024 award committee members Taylor Voltz (chair), Morgen Young, and Susan Asbury for their work selecting this year's winners: Augusta "Gus" Rudnick and Roman Cain, with an honorable mention to Karina Gomez. NCPH asked our winners to share their work and report on their conference experience, if they attended in person.



AUGUSTA "GUS" RUDNICK /  
GUS.RUDNICK@GREELEYGOV.COM

I was very honored to be awarded the New Professional Travel Award to attend the NCPH Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City this year. Since this was the first professional conference of my public history career, I was nervous to apply and attend but I am pleased that I did. I am lucky to have support from my institution and my colleagues at the City of Greeley Museums as it has helped me to reach

past my comfort zone and grow as a historian. While my career is just starting, I am excited about the projects I am involved with and the work we are doing to open our museum to be a safe place for more people of color in Northern Colorado.

I joined the City of Greeley Museums as the Lead Historic Site Interpreter in April 2023. The City of Greeley Museums has four sites around Greeley, Colorado. I primarily work at the Centennial Village Museum. This location has 8 acres of greenery, trees, gardens, and farm animals and boasts around 35 historic buildings. It was constructed in 1976 for the country's bicentennial, where it got its name. The buildings that we have onsite are largely historical and were moved for preservation with additional reconstructed buildings to show locations or spaces that have been lost to the past. With all these pieces and parts, I had quite the learning curve over the last year to grasp the details of regular operations and events.

One event I helped to pioneer in September of 2023 is called "Fiesta en la Plaza." Our museum partnered with a local organization that focuses on Mexican American history in the area. This partnership was vital to our event's success, and working on the planning process opened my eyes to ways in which our site needs more

offerings for Hispanic and Latino populations in our community. While I had learned about the decolonization of museums at Colorado State University in my museum studies classes, "Fiesta en la Plaza" was the first time I had encountered the application of inclusion and decolonization. I take inclusion seriously when it comes to connecting with the community.

Before the Fiesta in 2023, I created English and Spanish bilingual signage for all new signs posted at Centennial Village. Bilingual signage is one way that our site is approaching decolonization of the space and a task that I am committed to continuing moving forward. I also curated the interpretive stations that discussed the influence that Spanish colonization had on Colorado as a whole. Additionally, Centennial Village connected with Spanish language interpreters to allow our historical interpretive stations to be shared in both English and Spanish. These additions to our site allowed us to welcome over 400 community members who joined us for a successful event. We are looking forward to hosting this event in 2024 with even more improvements.

My work as a public historian has always centered on human connections and making museum institutions safe for all community

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## NCPH Diversity Travel Award

The Diversity Travel Award, launched in 2024, supports attendance at the NCPH Annual Meeting for up to four representatives of minority-supporting institutions. You can read more about the award at <https://ncph.org/about/awards/ncph-diversity-travel-award/>.



Read about what this award meant to the inaugural recipients:

**Melody Hunter-Pillion**, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - *"Receiving this award is just knowing how much my presence here is valued. And that means a lot to me when I think about diversity and voices that are not heard. And to know that NCPH actively makes sure that they are having a diverse attendance and participation means the world to me."*

**Chelsea Kiefer**, Fort Hays State University and North Carolina Museum of History - *"The Annual Fund is important because history is for everyone by everyone. And with everyone in mind, the last thing we want to do is gate keep someone from having this type of incredible career changing experience because they can't afford to travel."*

**Ummul Muhseneen**, University of South Florida - *"For me to have this award means my work is credible. I am respected enough on this platform to be taken seriously and my work is valuable. And at the same time, I matter to this platform. It's not just the financial value rather it's the respect that NCPH has given me."*

**Ashleigh N. Williams**, George Mason University - *"Anytime that you can get money to help you get somewhere or go towards any type of project is useful. But I think the other part is that by having this award, by being able to extend that to diverse populations, to people who are doing the work that automatically shows those people that, we are welcome, and we are valued in this field, with NCPH."*

# 2024 NEW PROFESSIONAL AWARD WINNER HIGHLIGHTS // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 4

members, whether it's between the past and the present or different cultures in the Northern Colorado community. I was glad to find comradery and similarly minded public historians at the NCPH Annual Meeting. Knowing that I am not alone in the effort to decolonize museums has given me a renewed energy to continue this work back home. I can't wait to see what this community can do to shape what museums will look like for the next generation.

*-Augusta "Gus" Rudnick is the Lead Historic Site Interpreter at the City of Greeley Museums' Centennial Village. She is a recent graduate of Colorado State University with a BA in History and a Certificate in Museum and Cultural Heritage Studies.*



ROMAN CAIN /  
CAINLEC17@GMAIL.COM

In 2023, I graduated from the Ohio State University with a BA in military history and an MA in public history. With the opportunity to complete both degrees at once, I focused on military, airpower, and exploration. With mentorship from Dr. David Staley, I developed my thesis on familial history and the contextualization of my paternal great-grandfather's World War II prisoner of war journal, kept in my grandmother's personal archive. My goal was to create an accessible guide to the journal and corresponding archival materials, as well as place my great-grandfather's experience as a B-17 copilot into its appropriate historical context.

As I completed this research, I published a post on NCPH's blog, *History@Work*, on the process, ethics, and potential pitfalls of undertaking familial historical research as a professional historian. Personal proximity and bias were two potential concerns I navigated as I reviewed the journal, as well as respecting the wishes of my great-grandfather's adult children as I unearthed the historical perspective of their father as a young man in 1940s Europe. Three months after this article was published, I received a comment from Megan Harris of the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress asking if my family was interested in donating the journal to their collection. I was able to facilitate a trip and acted as a resource liaison to ensure the safe delivery of the journal and its accompanying documents. Harris also requested a copy of my MA thesis to be housed alongside the journal at the Library, where it is currently being processed.

I am currently researching my maternal great-grandfather's journal—a collection of Japanese postcards he never intended to send—which shows his perspective as a Pacific Theater combatant. I intend to provide similar contextualization to this work, as well as write a comparative book between my two grandfathers' wartime experiences. Given the sharp differences in personality in both historical characters, the Pacific Theater journal will require a much more nuanced approach and cultural sensitivity based on my experiences. The book will also address the same potential issues of researching familial history I touched on in the *H@W* post.

Outside of wartime history, I also engage in legal history research with Dr. Randolph Roth. Both during my academic career and into being a new professional, I review police-involved homicides from 2016-2019 and underage homicide cases from 2000-2010. My written reports are then cataloged into a database of victims, suspects, and outcomes of each case to study the historical trends of crime in specific regions. I'll be using my review and web-archiving skills from this research to assist Dr. Carol Gray in thematically mapping Canada's first Black newspaper, *Voice of the Fugitive*, published between 1851 and 1854. My role will be to summarize newspaper articles through themed keywords and upload them into an Omeka database for public availability.

This fall, I will be concentrating on my other research focus: nineteenth and twentieth-century circumpolar history. I will begin my MA in Arctic and Northern Studies at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks with a focus on Western exploration and its cultural, environmental, and social impact on the modern Arctic under Dr. Brandon Boylan. As I move forward in my career as a public historian, I will approach my many historical interests with the goal of making them accessible to a broad audience and engaging with people outside the field in a meaningful way.

*-Roman Cain is an incoming MA student at the University of Alaska's Arctic and Northern Studies program.*

## THANK YOU #NCPHUHS2024 VOLUNTEERS!

NCPH would like to specifically acknowledge our student volunteers. The conference is planned and implemented by only three full-time and three part-time paid staff members. It would simply not be possible without a fantastic group of passionate and motivated volunteers.



A few of the many fantastic volunteers we had the pleasure of working with during NCPH-UHS 2024! Volunteers sport an annual meeting Program and limited edition NCPH beanie. Image courtesy of Sarah Singh.

### Special thanks to:

Zoie Anderson-Horecny - University of South Carolina  
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# 2023 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT



SHARON LEON, TREASURER  
SHARONMLEON@GMAIL.COM

STEPHANIE ROWE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
ROWES@IUPUI.EDU

The 2023 year was one of lots of change yet again, but we're pleased to report NCPH remains in excellent financial standing. Early in the year Nicole Belolan, former co-editor for *The Public Historian* and NCPH Digital Media Editor resigned her position at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities (MARCH) at Rutgers University-Camden (which funded her position through a Memorandum of Agreement with NCPH). Our 2016 encumbered surplus allowed us to hire Nicole as a contractor for the year to help as we planned for a transition in that position and work as the agreement with MARCH was terminated without going over budget on administrative expenses. This ability to respond to outside change thoughtfully

and thoroughly allowed our Board to meet and commit to raising funds to allow us to hire a part-time, contract Publications and Marketing Coordinator. Mid-year, the NCPH Board challenged themselves to increase their annual fund goal from the budgeted \$15,000 to \$18,000 but ultimately brought in over \$30,000. The ability to bring much of Nicole's former work in-house allows for more stability and also allows us to incrementally grow our team as fundraising efforts come to fruition.

Last year also saw our return to in-person annual meetings, in addition to virtual. Our staff experimented in 2023 with hosting both a virtual and an in-person meeting. While programmatically successful, ensuring accessibility to top-notch content to our entire community regardless of health concerns or travel budgets, it was not successful financially—as evidenced by the under-budget income and over budget expenses. While unfortunate, this experiment was possible because of our fiscal responsibility and is allowing us time to thoughtfully consider what sustainable, fundable, accessible programming looks like for us in a world with COVID-19 and declining travel budgets and professional

development dollars. We're building on this experiment this year with a joint virtual offering with the Organization of American Historians as well as several in-person mini-cons.

Membership revenue was under budget, but still ahead of 2022 membership income suggesting that rebounds from the pandemic are slow to come.

Our grants and contract projects revenue came in over budget—a result of a continued reputation for doing excellent work on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS). With increased capacity, we hope to grow this even farther in the coming years. Not reflected in the operating budget report above is the outgoing money for NPS work. Those restricted funds represent another approximately \$350,000 of income passing through our organization and directly back out to members selected for paid scholarship, programming, and planning work with NPS. This adds an incredible amount of work for our small staff to manage, but is an essential service we provide to the NPS and to our consulting members.

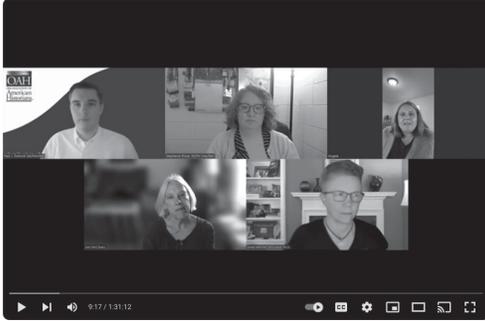
## NCPH 2023 Operating Budget

January-December

	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2023 Actual
<b>Income</b>				
Membership	\$132,000	\$129,932	\$144,000	\$137,256
TPH Institutional Subscriptions	\$19,500	\$26,458	\$21,000	\$26,785
Annual Meetings & Mini Cons	\$146,300	\$80,039	\$212,800	\$170,609
IUPUI Projects & O'Brien Lecture	\$4,750	\$4,750	\$4,750	\$9,500
Interfund Transfer from DIF & Endowment Earnings	\$51,000	\$41,600	\$56,000	\$53,855
Miscellaneous	\$1,850	\$6,300	\$1,775	\$3,592
Grant and Contract Projects	\$15,000	\$35,038	\$40,000	\$65,473
Contributions to Annual Fund	\$13,000	\$32,110	\$15,000	\$39,371
Encumbered 2016 Surplus	\$15,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$23,000
<b>Total Operating Budget Income</b>	<b>\$398,400</b>	<b>\$356,227</b>	<b>\$505,325</b>	<b>\$529,441</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Membership	\$23,000	\$27,994	\$21,250	\$24,873
Annual Meeting	\$119,450	\$34,471	\$168,200	\$182,118
Publications	\$30,250	\$28,669	\$31,000	\$40,560
Awards	\$9,200	\$8,806	\$9,250	\$8,600
Administration	\$213,725	\$232,299	\$254,191	\$254,673
Board & Committees	\$1,750	\$747	\$4,750	\$3,048
Biennial Audit/Review	\$0	\$0	\$6,800	\$6,800
Advocacy & Participation in Other Associations	\$8,185	\$7,641	\$8,205	\$8,638
Grant and Contract Projects	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Operating Budget Expenses</b>	<b>\$405,560</b>	<b>\$341,294</b>	<b>\$503,646</b>	<b>\$529,310</b>
<b>Net Operating (Deficit)/Surplus</b>	<b>\$-7,160</b>	<b>\$14,934</b>	<b>\$1,679</b>	<b>\$130</b>

# NCPH COMMITTEE UPDATES

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARK SERVICE COLLABORATION



Consulting on National Park Service Projects with the OAH and NCPH

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 NCPH-NPS partnership, and advocating for NPS within the organization. This program has been incredibly successful over the past year. In 2023, NCPH paid out over \$350,000 for this public history work. We thank Stephanie Rowe and Meghan Hillman for their hard work in building this program.

In February 2024, the NCPH staff prepared an application to join the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Economics Studies Unit (CESU), and we have been accepted! We're now in the CESU network, which should facilitate more opportunities for NCPH.

Much of our committee business focuses on reviewing letters of interest for new projects as well as draft Scope of Work statements for potential projects. Over this past year, our committee has reviewed letters of interest for new projects that NCPH began in 2023, including the Petersburg National Battlefield Historic Resource Study (HRS), the Paterson/Great Falls HRS, the Civil War Defenses of Washington Administrative History, and Pecos Administrative History.

We have also reviewed the Scope of Work drafts shared with NCPH for potential new projects for FY24, including a legislative history for the National Heritage Areas program and a Special History Study on the African American Experience during the War of 1812 for Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine.

Our committee met last fall to discuss our role in the NCPH 2023-2028 Long Range Plan activities. One of our goals was to promote the program and engage more applicants. To that end, we held a drop-in session at the Salt Lake City conference for anyone interested in participating in the program. Second, we held a

virtual workshop with Paul Zwiercki during the virtual OAH/NCPH conference, "Consulting on National Park Service Projects with the OAH and NCPH." Our session shared "behind the scenes" development of NPS task agreements and RFPs, including how to read and effectively respond to them. This webinar is now shared on the NCPH website.

*-Submitted by chair Ann McCleary*

## ADVOCACY COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD

At the close of 2023, the Advocacy Committee of the Board completed one of its multi-year projects: revising the organization's Advocacy policy, first adopted in 2015 and last revised in 2017. Following an iterative drafting, listening, and revising process, the committee presented a draft at the November NCPH Board meeting, where there was good discussion and Board members made helpful suggestions for further revisions. The committee completed an updated draft of the policy by the December NCPH Board meeting, at which the document was adopted as the "NCPH Advocacy Committee of the Board Policy."

The committee was also a hub for drafting a statement of concern regarding Utah House Bill 0257. As the statement indicates, the provisions of this legislation negatively affect "the safety of our transgender and non-binary members, especially those living and working in Utah." The process of initiating and drafting this statement reflected the role of the Advocacy Committee within NCPH as envisioned in the new policy. A member brought concerns about the Utah bill to the committee, which then worked with that member to draft the statement. One aim of the new policy is for the committee to be visible as a vehicle through which members can address their own advocacy priorities, partnering with the committee to move them forward.

Most recently, the committee discussed and recommended that NCPH endorse federal legislation that would create a mechanism for funding "grants to partner institutions of higher learning and non-profit educational organizations to launch educational programs focused on researching and sharing the stories of veterans interred in national cemeteries."

The committee will gather again via Zoom in July 2024. Stay tuned!

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

## COMMITTEE FOR GOVERNMENT HISTORIANS

The Committee for Government Historians is looking for new members to help support our mission!

This committee is comprised of NCPH members who work for or with local, state, and federal government agencies, REGARDLESS if "historian" is part of your job title or description. Recognizing that government public history workers' experiences and needs can be different from those of other public historians, the committee provides a place to discuss shared challenges, and serves as a forum to promote public history done by governments throughout the United States.

The main priority for the committee this next term is supporting NCPH's 2023-2028 Long Range Plan. Primarily the goal to "Research and develop a way to support government employees who are often unable to speak openly about issues in their workplaces" (NCPH LRP, Pillar III, "Advocacy"), we are looking for members to help tackle this important issue. If you are interested in joining the committee and supporting NCPH's long-range planning efforts, please complete the committee interest form here:

<https://ncph.org/committee-service/>.

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

## DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Development Committee has been working as a group and in sub-committees to take steps toward shaping our contributions to the NCPH 2023-2028 Long Range Plan (LRP). To these ends, we met with our LRP liaison for a Q&A session to help us better understand how we can work toward ideas and efforts that support NCPH's long term goals. Subcommittees are in the early stages of developing ideas around: How to research and pursue local partnerships and sponsorships for small stipends for event organizers and presenters as well as publication contributors; developing a fundraising plan focused on DEIA work and community support; and identifying options for new revenue stream models to support self-sufficiency. This last goal might involve bringing in external advisors/experts.

We've made more progress on the LRP goals connected directly to our regular committee, such as our goal of growing consistent contributions to the Annual Fund. As initial steps in this area, we've created process documents to better guide the Annual Fund, and created a year-end "ask" message for individuals who participated in free NCPH programming to consider a donation, which yielded additional donations for the 2023 appeal.

We have also continued our regular ways of creating a culture of philanthropy among NCPH membership, such as writing short, regular updates about fundraising and funds for the

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# GET 'WILD' WITH US OCT. 10-12, 2024



**BE BOLD.** Shape the Future.  
New Mexico State University  
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<https://ncph.org/conference/campingcon-2024/>

## NCPH VALUES AND ETHICS STATEMENT

This statement articulates a set of values we share as members of the National Council on Public History. These values are the foundation of public historians' approach to their work both as representatives of our organization and as individuals in the field. These values are also aspirational, guiding our organization's mission and vision for the future.

### SHARED VALUES AND ETHICAL COMMITMENTS OF PUBLIC HISTORIANS

#### Practicing Respect and Inclusiveness

We seek to develop and maintain respectful, fair, inclusive, and considerate professional relationships with colleagues and members of the public. We strive to increase the diversity and inclusiveness of the profession and its publics. We also practice public history that is culturally, socially, and economically diverse and inclusive.

#### Working With Communities

We embrace the equality-based principle of co-creation and seek to facilitate community control of intellectual and material resources. Communities participating in public history must receive appropriate credit and benefits

for sharing their stories. We continually evaluate the implications of our work and are committed to just and equitable forms of public history practice.

#### Stewarding Resources Responsibly and Equitably

We advocate for historically disadvantaged communities to receive the necessary resources to do historical work. We advocate for equitable and respectful inclusion and representation of historically disadvantaged people in content, programming, scholarship, and employment.

#### Opposing Discrimination and Harassment in All Forms

We oppose discrimination or harassment in any form. Discrimination is defined in the NCPH Events Code of Conduct.

#### Advancing Diversity

We are committed to increasing the inclusiveness of the public history profession and seek to advance diversity in all forms of programming and collaboration. We bring people from underrepresented groups into the profession and leadership roles in professional organizations.

## NCPH VALUES AND ETHICS STATEMENT

### Educating the Public and Future Public Historians

We disseminate historical knowledge through a variety of mediums and take seriously our responsibility to educate the public and future public historians.

### Commitment to Truth and Academic Rigor

We support the free, open, and respectful exchange of ideas and are committed to upholding the truth in all aspects of our work. We also seek to maintain a high level of academic rigor in all aspects of public history practice.

*Adopted by the Board of Directors of the National Council on Public History, April 10, 2024*

# NCPH COMMITTEE UPDATES // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 7

NCPH newsletter, acknowledging donors to the NCPH Legacy Circle, and creating content to support the Board in their Annual Fund request.

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

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

At the request of the Governance Committee, who are working on steps to address an unexpected absence of the Executive Director, the Finance Committee approved the use of online bill pay, which will allow for dual control of the NCPH checking account. This will allow one person to set up a payment and a second person to approve the payment. The committee also approved the adjustment of the NCPH investment accounts to fall in line with our asset allocation parameters. We continue to research costs that would be associated with establishing executive offices independent from IU Indianapolis as part of achieving our goals set by the Long Range Plan.

*-Submitted by co-chairs Amy Wilson and Rosalind Beiler*

## NEW PROFESSIONAL AND STUDENT COMMITTEE

Over the past months, the New Professional and Student Committee (NPSC) has worked on several new and ongoing initiatives. Revisions to our graduate student resource guide, *The Public History Navigator: The Graduate Student Handbook: Choosing and Thriving in Public History Programs*, are underway.

The Public History Hangout (PHH) series (available on Youtube, search for “NCPH Public History Hangouts”) offers virtual, free benefits for all. They include the “Early Career Panel PHH” where four professionals representing a range of careers shared their professional journeys, lessons learned, and took audience questions; and the “Pre-Conference Hangout”, a casual networking event for those attending the annual meeting in Salt Lake City to start making connections. Several rotating Zoom breakout rooms helped attendees get to know each other. During the Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City this April our in-person social reception was a hit! More than 50 attendees networked, played “Human Bingo,” enjoyed a fun tater tot and dessert bar, and utilized plenty of unstructured time to connect.

NPSC and staff launched an e-survey that gauged: social media use, interest level in NPSC current and future activities, and whether members thought NCPH valued them. Of 46 total respondents, we found the following: 50-75% used the e-newsletter, website, and/or social media to learn about NCPH activities; the top three social media platforms used were Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn; networking and mentorship were the two most highly-

valued future activities; and the great majority of respondents felt NCPH valued them, with a smaller number who had not yet participated so they did not have an opinion.

We’ve launched a “Student Showcase” through NCPH’s Instagram (@publichistorians). This new social media program highlights student work/projects on NCPH social media and provides an easier entry point for students. Look for the showcase postings on the first day of each month! And lastly, NPSC organized a mentorship working group to make scalable recommendations for how NCPH might expand program offerings related to mentorship and networking. We had fruitful discussions with the NCPH Executive Director and peers on the Membership and Professional Development committees.

*-Submitted by co-chairs MaryKate Smolenski and Michael Yee*

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is pleased with the results of the election for the 2024-2027 term, and welcomes the first ever student board member to the NCPH Board! In 2024, the Nominating Committee will be doing the following:

- Reviewing process to develop the election slate, specifically to do the following:
  - Aligning the review process with the Long Range Plan adopted June 2023
  - Ensure an equitable process to cultivate greater diversity and representation amongst who is considered for these leadership roles
  - Improve timeline of delivery of election slate to NCPH leadership
- Develop a marketing strategy to do the following:
  - Empower NCPH members to self nominate
  - Increase understanding of expectations for elected positions
  - Encourage voting
- Creating an election slate to fill upcoming vacancies on the Nominating Committee and the board.

As the Nominating Committee works to cultivate a transparent and empowering process, we look forward to continuing to engage with NCPH members to help them confidently pursue volunteer service through elected positions with NCPH, and to encourage voting for representatives who reflect their public historian needs.

*-Submitted by chair Sarah Marsom*

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The NCPH Membership Committee was excited about the annual meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. To help folks prepare for the conference, multiple Membership Committee members attended the pre-conference Public History Hangout on Wednesday, March 27, hosted by the New Professional and Student Committee (NPSC). Committee members answered questions about all things annual meeting, from dress code to networking advice to tips for exploring Salt Lake City. Our committee enjoyed supporting NCPH staff in hosting member-focused events like the New Member Breakfast at the conference. We hope that collaborating with the Utah Historical Society for a joint conference brought new members into the organization.

Co-chairs Julie Peterson and Kacie Lucchini Butcher alongside committee members 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 Facebook page. The social media sub-group has enjoyed collaborating with Sarah Singh to assess how to strengthen NCPH’s digital presence. Members of our committee also monitor and update the Digital Projects Directory. As of March 2024, there are 183 projects listed. We encourage all NCPH members working in this arena to submit their work for inclusion in the directory via the NCPH website.

Since the launch of the 2023-2028 Long-Range Plan (LRP), we grouped our committee’s responsibilities into four categories: Reaching Beyond the Field, Engagement, Mentorship, and Member Retention. We meet on a monthly basis to dig into these topics and develop clear LRP-related action items that will guide our committee’s work over the next few years. We’re grateful to our LRP committee liaison, Andy Mach, for his support on this. Recently, we’ve begun collaborating with the NPSC on our joint LRP goals, and look forward to opportunities to work with other committees as we define our objectives. The committee feels invigorated by this work and are excited to move forward with some ideas that have emerged during our brainstorming, like testing new strategies for member retention, envisioning an affinity/practice-based mentorship experience, and facilitating events (both in-person and virtual) outside of the annual conference.

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

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# ACTIONS OF THE NCPH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*This Fall and Spring the board convened electronically and took the actions listed below.*



Incoming and Outgoing NCPH Board Members celebrating after concluding the 2024 Spring Board Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Mesa.

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

- Heard a presentation from NCPH Program Manager, Meghan Hillman, on the behind the scenes work of planning the annual meeting.
- Reviewed and discussed proposed changes to the NCPH's Advocacy Policy to send back to the Advocacy Committee.

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

- Heard a presentation from NCPH Membership Coordinator, Stasia Tanzer, on how we reach our members.
- Approved the minutes of the November virtual meeting.
- Reviewed and adopted the update Advocacy Committee of the Board Policy.
- Discussed progress on the 2023 annual appeal and saw a preliminary proposal for adjustments in how to use and promote the Annual Meeting Discretionary Fund for Diversity.

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

- Approved the minutes of the Fall 2023 and December virtual meetings.
- Heard a presentation from NCPH Executive Director Stephanie Rowe and Treasurer Sharon Leon on the organization's work with the National Park Service.
- Discussed plans for 2024 fundraising and a focus on increasing staff capacity and DEAI work.
- Reviewed a plan to launch a new set of Diversity Travel Awards.

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

- Approved the minutes of the February 2024 virtual meeting.
- Approved changes to the financial policies and procedures to allow for online bill pay.
- Approved a "Best Practices for Certificates" document prepared by the Curriculum and Training Committee.
- Reviewed the work of the board over the last year.

*At the Spring Board Meeting in Salt Lake City the Board met and took the following actions:*

- Expressed thanks for incoming and outgoing board members and elected Laura Miller as the Executive Committee member-at-large for the 2024-2025 year.
- Approved the minutes from the March 2024 Virtual Board Meeting.

- Heard reports from the President, Executive Director, and Treasurer.
- Learned about the work of the Nominating Committee.
- Voted to roll the 2023 budget surplus into the earmarked surpluses from 2016 and 2021 to support staffing costs.
- Voted to update signatories for NCPH Bank and Vanguard Accounts, removing outgoing President Kristine Navarro-McElhaney and adding incoming President Denise Meringolo.
- Heard a report from *The Public Historian* Editor.
- Voted to adopt a new Values Statement for the organization.
- 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 of concern regarding UT HB0257
- Senators Moran and Hirono's *Honoring Veterans' Legacies and Burial Benefits Enhancements Act* and the work of the National Cemetery Administration's "Veterans Legacy Program."
- A letter of support, with one abstention, for the "Establishment of the National Park Service Black Panther Party Park Monument"
- American Historical Association's Statement on 2024 Campus Protests.

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

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The 2023-2024 year has focused on the need for mid-career support and slow-networking/socializing events. While we shift our focus to emerging professionals, we remain committed to speed networking and have partnered with the New Professional and Student Committee to explore the feasibility of a mentorship program. The majority of our committee was unable to attend the annual meeting in Salt Lake City and busy schedules have limited our abilities this spring.

Updates on LRP Progress

1. Review and update website resources to better reflect the interests of various practitioners: NOT YET BEGUN

2. Establish yearly goals for number of, and topics for, future mini-cons and identify potential partner organizations and groups to help reach these goals: EXPLORING OPTIONS
3. Expand subsidized/sponsored online programs and conference sessions that don't require membership status to lead or attend, such as roundtables, dialogues, workshops, and talks: ONGOING
4. Develop documents that help public historians to meet this goal, including but not limited to updated pricing recommendations for consulting work, guidance for various kinds of letter-writing, salary negotiation, transferability of skills if different job applications, etc.: ONGOING

5. Continue to ask members what skills workshops are needed, with particular attention to changes in the field since the adoption of this plan: PLAN IN WORKS

*-Submitted by co-chairs Sarah Soleim and Megan Smeznik*

*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/>.*

accessibility at our conference hotel, the Hilton Salt Lake City Center (SLCC). Faulty air walls led to significant noise bleed in several session rooms; rooms were not set according to basic standards for accessibility, as we asked (with room for wheelchair users or others with mobility needs); and the facilities themselves did not meet our expectations for accessibility. Most seriously, the hotel's procedures regarding allergens were insufficient, and for multiple meal events, allergens we requested to be labeled were not labeled. This resulted in attendees being exposed to unmarked allergens and ingesting food they either could not eat due to allergies or otherwise avoided for religious, health, or personal reasons.

While the conference was still happening, members of the NCPH staff and board met with the hotel's upper management to discuss the issues we were experiencing, the seriousness with which we take accessibility failures, and the disorganization on the part of hotel planning staff. We made it clear that the front-line workers were not to blame and under no circumstances should be held responsible for what we observed to be top-down issues with communication and training. Following the conference, NCPH staff made a full accounting of the issues we experienced and asked for a credit to compensate for the additional hours our staff had to work to deal with the many issues. We also asked them to eliminate charges for food that did not meet allergen-identifying requirements.

In response, the Hilton Salt Lake City Center took full responsibility for these issues, compensated us with the discount we requested,

and provided us with an early draft of a remediation plan to ensure that future groups do not experience the issues we did. The hotel is in the process of repairing air walls, implementing an accessibility walkthrough with future meeting planners, arranging trainings on allergens for their culinary team, and working with the on-site AV company, Encore, to order power strips that sit flat with the floor (as their current stock was a tripping hazard), among other remediations.

The contract we signed with the Hilton SLCC in 2017 was the last one we executed before implementing our Accessibility Guidelines in 2018. Among other things, that plan outlines our process for selecting a venue that meets our standards for accessibility; while the Hilton SLCC meets the baseline expectations for the Americans with Disabilities Act, it does not meet the higher expectations set by our accessibility plan. Next year's conference at Le Centre Sheraton in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, will mark the first contract we signed with that accessibility plan in place, and with that in mind we are ramping up our own accessibility efforts and expectations accordingly.

First, we will continue to increase our own financial stake in our accessibility measures. With the success of our 2020 Vision Endowment Campaign (thank you to all who donated!), we can now afford to have more microphones in session rooms, and we'll be adding microphones for tour guides on all tours. We'll also be implementing more rigorous and clearly communicated accessibility expectations with presenters, requiring them to agree to certain accessibility requirements when they submit



Our fearless leaders, Stasia Tanzer, Meghan Hillman, and Stephanie Rowe (L to R) of the full-time NCPH staff team. Taken at the NCPH-UHS 2024 Consultants' Speakeasy. Photo Credit: Elizabeth Mesa

their proposals by July 15. We will make it clear that presenters who decline to use provided microphones will not be invited back to present at future conferences.

Look for a more detailed article about revisions to our Accessibility Guidelines later this year. For now we just wanted to let you know that accessibility failures at NCPH-UHS 2024 were very much noticed, both by attendees and by the organization. The hotel has been held accountable for its mistakes, made it right for us, and is working to do better by future groups. We at NCPH hold *ourselves* accountable for our own blind spots and will now set to work revising our accessibility plan to close some of the gaps and pain points we've uncovered. It would have been time to do this even if NCPH-UHS 2024 had run perfectly, because COVID-19 has been a mass-disabling event which calls for evaluation of our previous accessibility measures to ensure they meet the needs of a "post"-COVID conference environment. So—watch this space.

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



## omeka

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Size	Omeka Classic	Omeka S
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# HIGHLIGHTS FROM SALT LAKE CITY WORKING GROUPS

## **AAPI PUBLIC HISTORY: OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS TO GROW THE FIELD**



AAPI public history working group Working Group 4 (WG4), all attendees sharing in small discussion groups. Image courtesy of Michael Yee.

The Asian Americans Pacific Islander (AAPI) Working Group (WG4) met at the Annual Meeting and explored ways to collaborate. A planned goal was for all attendees to contribute and share. Participants met from a broad range of fields including museums and historic sites, public history academia and centers, archaeology, collections, archives, historic preservation, and independent historians, and everyone shared common topics and critical issues in small discussion groups. Fellow facilitators were Andre Deckrow, Eric Hung, Kristen Hayashi, Lily Tamai, Na Li, Renae Campbell, and Selena Moon. Some action items developed included an AAPI public history directory with a prototype developed by Eric Hung. A virtual AAPI public history symposium, possibly in cooperation with APIAHIP (historic preservation), is being considered. A number of facilitators and attendees are interested in continuing the conversation.

If you are interested in the AAPI Public History Working Group, visit <https://ncph.org/phc/aapi-public-history-opportunities-and-partnerships-to-grow-the-field/> and/or contact Michael Yee at [michaelyee@csusm.edu](mailto:michaelyee@csusm.edu).

*-Submitted by Michael Yee, facilitator*

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC HISTORY CLASS PROJECTS**

Our working group discussed best practices for how to plan and direct public history class projects. Prior to NCPH we met to discuss our successes and challenges as public history educators directing and facilitating these kinds of learning experiences for our students' class projects. Common themes that emerged from these initial conversations included: faculty workload considerations, funding options, project selection (including client relationships), and classroom management techniques.

During our NCPH working group session, we settled on a final format for our best

practices document. This document will guide instructors through the steps from project selection, forming relationships with clients, funding strategies, classroom management techniques, and project completion. The document will also contain several additional sections: a section designed to help university administrators and potential community partners understand the nature of public history class projects; short case studies from working group members; and other material working group members have found helpful in evaluating and managing student work.

The complete document will be submitted to the NCPH Curriculum and Training Committee and posted on the NCPH website.

*-Submitted by Rebecca Andersen, facilitator*

## **BEYOND TUNNEL VISION: RECOVERING THE HIDDEN STORIES OF THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD**



Members of the Transcontinental Railroad Working Group at NCPH-UHS 2024 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Image Courtesy of Angie Sima.

Hosted by the National Park Service (NPS) Intermountain Region and Golden Spike National Historical Park, the Transcontinental Railroad (TCRR) Working Group brought together descendants, scholars, educators, interpreters, and cultural resources experts to discuss how the agency might reimagine how it tells the complex story of the TCRR at historic places across the American West.

During our first virtual meeting, participants met in breakout rooms organized around key themes from the case statements: 1) Historical and Archaeological Perspectives: Reframing the Story of the TCRR; 2) Descendant Communities: Building Relationships and Expanding Knowledge; and 3) Education and Engagement: Connecting the Public to the TCRR. Our conversation emphasized the importance of breaking down the silos between “professionals and descendants” and centering traditional knowledge in our decision-making. Participants also conveyed the need for more research on the global lives of TCRR workers.

We continued this discussion in our second virtual meeting, which featured more open-ended conversation around the gaps in our knowledge and the pain points in communicating a more nuanced story of the railroad to the public. The Working Group underscored the power of braiding together important topics and themes as a way of making the TCRR relevant to contemporary audiences, including: environmental change, immigrant labor, and the relationship between technology and society.

We held our final meeting at the NCPH conference and kicked off our session with a welcome from Utah State Senator Karen Kwan, who also serves as president of the Chinese Railroad Workers Descendants Association. We worked to synthesize our earlier conversations and crowdsource definitions of the TCRR, a list of themes and subthemes, and best practices for data collection, documentation, and interpretation. From our discussion, we agreed that the project needs a specific and pointed definition of the TCRR that can be paired with expansive ways of exploring its significance, storytelling, and engagement. We affirmed the idea that descendant and Indigenous knowledge should lead our efforts, contextualized with the latest scholarship, and that the stories that live in people are the “hook” for audience relevance. Lastly, we recognized that TCRR scholarship is moving faster than “hard” interpretive displays and media, making the digital humanities key in connecting with the public.

The Working Group brought fresh ideas and energy to the NPS's strategic planning around the TCRR project. Their contributions will be folded into forthcoming planning and thematic documents, and we are honored that each of the members has asked to remain engaged in our process. Thank you!

*-Submitted by Laura Dominguez and Jonathan Fairchild, facilitators*

## **THE WORLD WAR II HOME FRONT, PART III**

After two years of conversations focused on creating connections among National Park Service (NPS) staffers and other practitioners working on Home Front interpretation, for the third and final year of the NCPH World War II Home Front Working Group, the group shifted its focus to a more tangible project, looking specifically at questions of impact, connection, and strategy related to NPS's National World War II Heritage Cities project. Since the program's establishment in

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM SALT LAKE CITY WORKING GROUPS // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 12

2019, thirty cities or jurisdictions have now been named to the Heritage Cities roster and a wealth of resources, themes, and topics have been assembled. While further discussions about how to amplify the potential reach and impact of this emerging network have begun both within the Park Service and among some of the representatives of the communities themselves, these efforts are just getting started, spearheaded by new National Park Service personnel and the second round of approved cities just announced in January 2024.

Exploring ways to activate this heritage and seek better connections among so many different groups and voices, the NCPH Working Group invited a set of stakeholders representing Parks and Heritage Areas, National Park Service staff, relevant Heritage City community representatives, and other interested public history professionals to participate in a virtual conversation this March to identify areas of common ground and challenges and identify conversation points for a longer Working Group session at the Salt Lake City conference in April. The resulting session on April 13, 2024, produced a robust discussion and problem-solving conversation about ways to begin building more awareness for the program and existing resources, seek new channels for collaboration among sites, and bring new cities and jurisdictions into the program with a clear sense of purpose and expectation. Following up from that session, new conversations and virtual convenings of representatives from the various Heritage Cities nationwide with National Park Service personnel have already been scheduled for May 2024.

*-Submitted by Suzanne Fischer and Leslie Przybylek, facilitators*



## Call for Papers!

*The Public Historian*  
Special Issue: Labor  
and Public History



Read the entire CFP at:  
<https://ncph.org/news/tph-special-issue-call-for-papers/>

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION *for* STATE *and* LOCAL HISTORY

NCPH 2025  
MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC, CANADA  
MARCH 26-29, 2025

# SOLIDARITY | SOLIDARITÉ

**Solidarity** (from the French *solidarité*) is a word for shared responsibilities and mutual obligations. It conveys a sense of interconnectedness with our world and interdependence upon each other. To be *in solidarity* is to assume shared debts and claim shared successes, so that when we rise, we rise together.

The 2025 NCPH Annual Meeting centers around the theme **Solidarity**. In 2025 we will gather in Montréal to consider our collective responsibilities, debts, and values so we may progress together as public history workers. Amplifying voices, building connections, finding common ground with our audiences, advocating for and revealing authentic histories, fostering and promoting safe spaces, and mirroring these values internally within our organizations are a few examples of how we realize **Solidarité** across the field. We can't wait to hear your ideas too.

The NCPH 2025 Call for Proposals is open via <https://ncph.org/conference/2025-annual-meeting/cfps/> through July 15, 2024.

## ANNUAL MEETING PHOTOS



Outgoing NCPH President Kristine Navarro-McElhaneey, incoming Vice-President Nicole Moore, and incoming President Denise Meringolo at NCPH-UHS 2024. Image courtesy of Sharon Leon.



The poster session at NCPH-UHS 2024 was a blast! Fruitful conversations and connections abounded. Image courtesy of Ariana Cieslak.



A behind the scenes look into the NCPH board meeting at NCPH-UHS 2024. Image courtesy of Elizabeth Mesa.



UHumanities exhibit booth at NCPH-UHS 2024. Image courtesy of Elizabeth Mesa.



An exchange between a poster presenters on, "Civil Rights in Phoenix" and Sarah Case, editor of *The Public Historian*. NCPH's scholarly public history journal. Image courtesy of Ariana Cieslak.



The Roberson Project in the Exhibit Hall of NCPH-UHS 2024. Image courtesy of Elizabeth Mesa.



An attentive audience listens on as Facilitator: Greg Smoak (University of Utah), and Panelists: Kristen Hayashi (Japanese American National Museum), Katherine Kitterman (Utah Historical Society), Nicole Moore (National Center for Human and Civil Rights), and Yvette Towersap (Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and Montana State University) guide NCPH-UHS 2024 through the Opening Plenary, "Considering the Revolution: Citizenship and Sovereignty." Image courtesy of Sharon Leon.



A casual moment between sessions at NCPH-UHS 2024. Image courtesy of Elizabeth Mesa.



NCPH-UHS 2024 attendee reads about the Walking Box Ranch collection, displayed by public historians at the University of Las Vegas. Image courtesy of Ariana Cieslak.



NCPH-UHS 2024: incoming and outgoing board leadership. Image courtesy of Stephanie Rowe.



Pop-Up Booth: "Challenging George Washington's "Indian Expedition:" A Vast Public History Complex and New Counternarratives" at NCPH-UHS 2024. Image courtesy of Ariana Cieslak.



NCPH-UHS 2024 hosted the inaugural annual meeting Creative Showcase: a space for public historians to display their crafts - whether it be related to their public history work, or not! Display booths hosted baked goods, pottery, stickers, and much more. Image courtesy of Ariana Cieslak.



Lively discussion and mingling at the NCPH-UHS 2024 Poster Session. Image courtesy of Elizabeth Mesa.



Two people talking during the poster session at NCPH-UHS 2024. Image courtesy of Ariana Cieslak.



(Seated L to R) Fayge Horesh and Joan Zenzen at the NCPH-UHS 2024 Creative Showcase. Joan Zenzen displays handmade metal works and jewelry, flanked by Leah Glaser's pottery and the public history podcast work of Fayge Horesh. Image courtesy of Ariana Cieslak.



Poster session at NCPH-UHS 2024. Image courtesy of Elizabeth Mesa.

# PUBLIC HISTORY NEWS

## National Council on Public History

127 Cavanaugh Hall-IUI  
425 University Blvd.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-5148

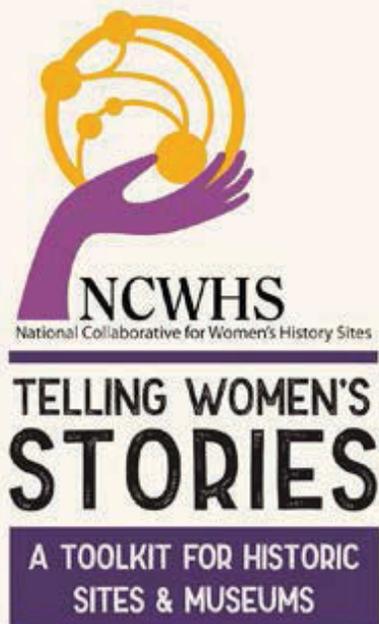
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