

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS: FUNDING A PROMISE



DENISE MERINGOLO /
DDM@UMBC.EDU

What does it mean to recognize, support, and sustain the labor behind public history?

NCPH values economic justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and we have made meaningful changes over the past several years to align our everyday practices with these organizational values. We created new membership and event registration categories to make it possible for students, new professionals, retired, unemployed and underemployed, and public history adjacent colleagues to join our myriad virtual and in-person events. We have [promoted pay transparency](#) by requiring all job and internship postings on our website include salary information and developed a [best practices for job postings guide](#). To this end, we have also advocated for an end to [unpaid internships](#), and have [spoken out on behalf of colleagues fighting unfair labor practices of various kinds](#) (check out the digital version of this newsletter for links to these statements). This year we surveyed NCPH committee members as part of an effort to identify areas that are inappropriate for volunteer labor. We have taken on the Herculean task of managing a partnership with the National Park Service, which has helped generate significant, paid work for our public history community (over \$350,000 paid out to our members in 2023).

As with all aspects of public history, this work is necessary and everlasting—I'm not sure we will ever declare this effort finished—but we all should be proud of the consistency and visibility of our efforts.

Ironically, one crucial piece of our work may be a bit less transparent. By now, you have probably received at least one request to donate to the NCPH Annual Fund. These requests come in many forms, as emails from members of the Board, as letters from the NCPH office, and as in-person requests at NCPH meetings and gatherings. I know firsthand that it can be difficult to decide how to create or stretch your charitable giving budget, particularly during an election year. I can also admit that I have often felt sheepish about donating a small amount of money to a cause or group that I care about.

You've likely considered many of the reasons for donating to the NCPH Annual Fund. You already know that Annual Fund dollars enable us to support mini-cons and to offer low- to no-cost programming for our community. You've considered the ways in which NCPH programs help you find work, establish a network, and advance in your career.

But I also want you to consider a donation to the NCPH Annual Fund as your crucial contribution to equitable labor practices and the well-being of our dedicated staff. When I first became active in NCPH, we were a relatively small organization. Our annual meetings served a few hundred people. Our programming was limited in scope and frequency. The Board of Directors met twice a year. There were a handful of core committees with a reasonable number of volunteers. Under those conditions, it was reasonable for a three-person staff to manage day-to-day operations.



NCPH has grown significantly over the last decade. We are a much larger organization with more robust and frequent programming on a variety of platforms. Our annual meetings regularly serve well over 750 people and offer a broad and complex program of panels, workshops, working groups, and events. In addition, we support in-person and virtual mini-cons and (since 2020) offer a robust calendar of online programs and meetings, significantly increasing the number and type of events we are organizing and managing over the course of a year. The Board of Directors meets monthly, and the number of committees, task forces, and volunteers has expanded significantly. Our staff, in sharp contrast, has not expanded. All the behind-the-scenes work that keeps NCPH vibrant and valuable is accomplished by three full-time employees: Executive Director Stephanie Rowe, Program Manager Meghan Hillman, and Membership Coordinator Stasia Tanzer, who have been with us for 12, 10, and 5 years respectively.

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UPCOMING CHANGES WITH PUBLIC HISTORY NEWS



Public History News is cooking up some colorful changes! In November 2024, the NCPH Board approved our transition from an entirely print publication to two print issues per year (December and June) and two exclusively

digital issues per year (March and September). Beginning with this issue and the new volume year, we will no longer produce four print copies of the newsletter. We will still publish four issues per year, but only the December and June issues will be printed and mailed to members. The March and September issues will now be digital only copies. This change reflects cost-saving efforts on the part of the organization, as well as moving towards greater environmental

sustainability as called for in our 2023-2028 Long Range Plan. You may have already noticed our second announcement: we will now publish every print issue in full-color! This change will impact our advertising prices and will give advertisers the opportunity to submit full-color half- and full-page ads. Read more about these upcoming changes on our website and reach out to the *Public History News* editor Sarah Singh at ssingh@ncph.org with any questions.



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THANK YOU!

HISTORY supports the **NCPH** for promoting the value and significance of history every day.



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 – IU Indianapolis, 425 University Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46202-5140. E-mail: ncp@iu.edu. Tel: 317-274-2716. Join online or renew at www.ncp.org. Headquartered on the campus of IU Indianapolis, NCPH is grateful for the generous support of the IU School of Liberal Arts and the Department of History.

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WELCOME ARIANA!



Please join us in welcoming Ariana Cieslak, who will be working part-time at NCPH through May 2025! Ariana is a recent graduate of IU Indianapolis, where she got a dual degree in public history and Library & Information Science. Previously, she completed a BA in history from the University of Arizona and worked for the FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. Ariana also works as an Adult Services Librarian at the Greenwood Public Library, focusing on history programming. Some of you may know her from the Membership Committee or met her at NCPH 2024, where she served as a student volunteer, and we're thrilled to have her join the team.

CANDIDATES FOR THE 2025 NCPH ELECTION

Full candidate info at <http://bit.ly/NCPH2024Slate>.

Current board and committee members are listed at <http://bit.ly/NCPHcommittees>.

Secretary
(one candidate for one position)

Will Stoutamire, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Board of Directors
(six candidates for three positions)

Abigail R. Gautreau, Grand Valley State University

Rebecca Patillo, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University

Jeff Shepherd, The University of Texas at El Paso

Tracy Neumann, Historic New England

William Walker, Cooperstown Graduate Program, SUNY Oneonta

Nominating Committee
(four candidates for two positions)

Kristin L. Ahlberg, Office of the Historian, US Department of State (retired)

Kacie Lucchini Butcher, Center for Campus History, UW-Madison

Sylvea Hollis, Montgomery College

Lacey Wilson, Underground Railroad Education Center

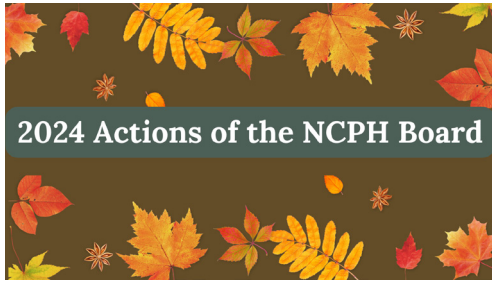
Ballots and candidate statements were distributed by email to members on December 3, 2024. Please contact ncp@iu.edu if you are a member and did not receive an electronic ballot. The election closes **January 15, 2025**. Your vote counts!

Welcome, New Members!

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| David Abrams-Hochman Bristol, CT | Anne Brixius Neuenkirchen, Germany | Kaitlin Findlay Ithaca, NY | Log Cabin Village <i>(Institutional)</i> Fort Worth, TX | Megan Nicholas Alexandria, VA | Marci Snow-Perry Saint Louis, MO | Thomas Durant Visser Burlington, VT |
| Carly Adams Lethbridge, AB, Canada | Nancy Brown Huntertown, IN | Fort Meigs Historic Site <i>(Institutional)</i> Perrysburg, OH | Yi Luo Washington, DC | Ilias Pantazis Athens, Greece | Rebecca Speas Raleigh, NC | Sabrina Waite Bryan, TX |
| Molly Adams Stillwater, OK | Kyle Butler Minneapolis, MN | Patrick Gabridge Florence, MA | Sara Mah Hanover, PA | Deborah Porter Sumter, SC | Katherine Spiers Los Angeles, CA | Casey Welby Chicago, IL |
| Alison Aldred Spokane, WA | Joshua Camper Martin, TN | Ivan Guzman Chicago, IL | Christella Maldonado Orangevale, CA | Jess Porter Little Rock, AR | Jill Sterrett Madison, WI | Josephine Wright Akron, OH |
| Mitchell Axness Fargo, ND | Erin Carosella Chicago, IL | Theresa Guzman Stokes Newport, RI | Nikki Manning Missoula, MT | Phil Pratzner South Riding, VA | Elizabeth Sulock Wakefield, RI | Dylan Yonce Missoula, MT |
| Racquel Banaszak Minneapolis, MN | Andrew Chesnut Greencastle, PA | Felecia Harris Charlotte, NC | Krista Marks Denver, CO | Sonya Ramsey Charlotte, NC | James Sun Berkeley, CA | Anne-Marie Zarrelli New Orleans, LA |
| Kallie Barron Eunice, LA | Matthew Chewning East Norriton, PA | Aline Keledjian East Lansing, MI | Kimiko Marr Aptos, CA | Steven Rice Madison, WI | Jillian Surdzial Riverside, CA | Rebecca Zeller Seven Valleys, PA |
| Brooke Bauer Knoxville, TN | Marta Cieslak Little Rock, AR | Kennesaw State University Department of Museums, Archives, and Rare Books <i>(Institutional)</i> Kennesaw, GA | Hana Maruyama Providence, RI | Brennan Rivas Fort Worth, TX | Riley Sutherland Cambridge, MA | Evy Zermeno Colton, CA |
| Jason Beck Overland Park, KS | Scott Coleman Ingleside, ON, Canada | David Kreidler Franklin, WI | Carla Mattix Santa Fe, NM | Caitlin Roberts Lubbock, TX | Abigail Swanberg Appomattox, VA | NCPH would like to extend a special to our new partner member, formerly sustaining level member: |
| Ann Bennett Hanover, MD | Ina Cox Lakewood, OH | Lauren Laframboise Montreal, QC, Canada | Amari McGee Douglasville, GA | Lauren Roberts Hadley, NY | Gavin Taylor Montreal, QC, Canada | Denise Meringolo <i>(Partner)</i> Baltimore, MD |
| Nancy Bercau Silver Spring, MD | Maria F. Curtis Houston, TX | Sarah Lee Thurmont, MD | Michele Minter Plainsboro, NJ | Michael Ruffalo Pittsburgh, PA | The Getting Word African American Oral History Project at Monticello <i>(Institutional)</i> Charlottesville, VA | For a complete list of NCPH Patrons and Partners, visit ncp.org/about/partnerspartners/ |
| Donna Bohanon Ashburn, VA | Marc Dadigan Sacramento, CA | Frank Leone Washington, DC | Caryn Neumann Columbus, OH | Indira Saha Lakewood, CO | Deana Thomas Frankfort, KY | |
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| Darien Brahms New Marlborough, MA | Maleeha Fatima Columbia, SC | | Niagara Falls National Heritage Area <i>(Institutional)</i> Niagara Falls, NY | Jeffrey Shepherd Las Cruces, NM | | |
| | | | | William Smith Tuscaloosa, AL | | |

ACTIONS OF THE NCPH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This summer and fall the board convened electronically and took the actions listed below.



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

- Approved the minutes of the Spring 2024 Board Meeting.
- Approved the proposed rate increase for institutional subscriptions to *The Public Historian* as proposed by journal publishers University of California Press.
- Approved pursuing hosting the 2027 NCPH Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.

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

- Approved the minutes of the June 2024 Virtual Board Meeting.
- Approved the draft Form 990.
- Discussed improvements to the application for the Diversity Travel Award.

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

- Approved the minutes of the August 2024 Virtual Board Meeting.
- Heard reports from Board action subcommittees on the 2024 annual fundraising appeal, committee care, and Board engagement.
- Discussed the organization's Memorandums of Agreement.

At the Fall 2024 Virtual NCPH Board meeting the board took the following actions:

- Heard a report from the President about the state of the organization.
- Approved the minutes of the September virtual meeting.
- Heard a presentation from NCPH Executive Director Stephanie Rowe on the organization's work.
- Discussed plans for 2024 fundraising and a focus on increasing staff capacity and DEAI work.
- Reviewed a set of draft policies from the Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Sub-Committee focused on restorative justice, including a proposal for a new Community Care Committee.
- Heard a report from *The Public Historian* Editor.

- Created a new Disaster Planning Board Action Committee.
- Reviewed reports from the organization's committee chairs and discussed ways to keep committees supported in their work.
- Discussed Board-assigned tasks in the 2023-2028 Long Range Plan and committed to taking on two tasks in the coming months.
- Reviewed the work of the Executive Director and the editor of *The Public Historian*.

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

- Approved the minutes of the Fall 2024 virtual meeting.
- Voted to amend NCPH's Endowment Drawdown Policy to allow for an up to 4.75% draw down from the Endowment Fund for the Operating Budget each year.
- Voted to adopt operating budgets for 2025 and 2026.

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

- American Historical Association Statement on Oklahoma Mandate for Religious Content in Public Schools.

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; committee chairs and members can be found at <https://ncph.org/about/governance-committees/board-of-directors-and-committees/>.

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 NCPH Board of Directors and NCPH staff on NPS issues, publicizing the program, and advocating for NPS within the organization. Our committee has three continuing members (Ann McCleary, Anne Mitchell Whisnant, and Janet Ore), two new members (Brittani Orona and Jessica Taylor), and a new NPS liaison (Turkiya Lowe).

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.

Last fall, committee members discussed our role in the [2023-2028 Long Range Plan](#) planning 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 NCPH 2024 Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City to talk with anyone interested in participating in the program. Second, we participated in a virtual workshop with Paul Zwiercki during the virtual Organization of American Historians (OAH)/NCPH conference called "Consulting on National Park Service Projects with the OAH and NCPH." Our session presented the "behind the scenes" development of NPS task agreements and RFPs, including how to read and effectively respond to them, and we encouraged participants to apply. Both of these activities supported the Long Range Plan.

Our committee is starting to review letters of interest for upcoming projects we discussed last spring and for which we have already reviewed

the Scope of Work drafts. So far, the committee has reviewed letters for the National Heritage Areas Legislative History and awarded the project to Mirandola Research LLC and HistoryWeaver LLC.

In the coming year, we plan to develop guidelines to share with potential applicants. We will draft these guidelines this year.

-Submitted by chair Ann McCleary

NPS IMR Black History Survey



Photo Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society Research Center, Research Center-Photo Archives H-4874.

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Overview

The National Park Service (NPS) is embarking on a project to identify and prioritize historical research needs related to Black History at its parks in the Intermountain West which includes Interior Regions 6, 7, and 8 (formerly called the [Intermountain Region](#)) which includes 86 NPS sites in the states of Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

The Impetus

The National Park Service has a Civil Rights Initiative fund source to support research projects related to the African American experience in national parks. The Intermountain Region has not taken advantage of this funding source, since scholarship is limited on the African American experience in the intermountain West—many parks don't know where to start. A more systemic survey of recent scholarship and potential future research can help the region direct these dollars more effectively: what themes and topics would park staff like to interpret but currently lack the information to do so?

The Survey



To make sure we are making the most informed recommendations possible, we created an optional [survey](#) that asks for feedback from historians, NPS cultural resource and

interpretive staff, State Historian Preservation Office staff, volunteers, and anyone else familiar with this history.

We greatly appreciate your participation if you are able to do so. Your responses will help us incorporate important perspectives around needs related to Black History in National Parks, and will guide the future of NPS-funded historical research in the Intermountain Region.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Since March 2024, the Advocacy Committee of the Board has served as a forum for consultation regarding four statements endorsed by the NCPH Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. Two of these statements originated with sibling organizations, and two were organizational letters of concern or support. These actions include endorsing the American Historical Association's statement on 2024 campus protests and their statement condemning the Oklahoma mandate for religious content in public schools. The committee also helped draft a letter of concern regarding Utah House Bill 257 leading up to the NCPH Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City and assisted in crafting a letter of support for the establishment of the National Park Service Black Panther Party Park Monument.¹

¹ See *Public History News*, Volume 44, Number 4, September 2024, Denise Meringolo, "President's Comments" <https://ncph.org/phn-back-issues/>.

At this time of significant need for advocacy on behalf of public history and public historians, the Advocacy Committee continues to evaluate the role of the committee in advancing advocacy opportunities for the organization and its members. This year marks the first year of having an updated committee policy in place. The Committee has had the opportunity to test the efficacy of the new policy in relation to advocacy letter requests, specifically utilizing newly adopted criteria for when to respond.



In addition to issuing statements, the Advocacy Committee is charged with advancing the Advocacy Pillar of the new NCPH 2023-2028 Long Range Plan (LRP). To that end, the committee is collaborating with the *History@Work* team to solicit blog post pitches (1-3 paragraphs) that define "advocacy" in public history work. We are currently seeking pitches from public historians at all career levels that focus on the incremental nature of advocacy, modeling successes in the field of public history, and offering a "how-to" for our peers in the field. Whether you're addressing labor in public history, community organizing, or navigating today's political challenges, we want to hear from you! Check out #advocacy on *History@Work* for examples of how others have tackled these topics, visit <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/guidelines/> for more information, and submit your pitch to historyatwork@ncph.org.

-Submitted by co-chairs Rachel Boyle and Adrienne Burke

BOARD-LED SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Board-Led Subcommittee on Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment is close to winding down our work. In the last few months, we've gathered more feedback from key NCPH constituencies on the proposed policies and we are approaching the final stages. After a few revisions based on that feedback, the policies will go for legal review, possibly more revisions, and then for a board vote. Assuming those things go well, our current goal is to create a new Community Care Team (which will be largely responsible for implementing the policies) early in the new year, and to have the policies in effect by the 2025 annual meeting. There are still many things to do in that transition, and we know this has been a long time in the works. We remain grateful for all of the input and support from NCPH members, board, and especially staff that have helped us reach this point.

-Submitted by co-chairs Kristen Baldwin Deathridge and lara kelland

COMMITTEE FOR GOVERNMENT HISTORIANS

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

The committee for government historians is composed of NCPH members who work for or with local, state, and federal government agencies, REGARDLESS if "historian" is in your job title or not! This can be everything from museum educators to contractors of federal agencies, and we are here to help those who are curious to learn more about the committee and the roles within government agencies.

We recognize that government workers' experiences and needs differ from those of other public historians. The committee provides a place to discuss shared challenges and experiences and serves as a forum to promote public history done by governments throughout the United States.

The main priority of the committee this next term is supporting NCPH's 2023-2028 Long Range Plan. Regarding the primary goal to "*Research and develop a way to support government employees who are often unable to speak openly about issues in their workplaces,*" we are looking for members to help tackle this important issue and build a new following on social media platforms supporting and explaining the breadth of work done by public historians in government agencies.

If you are interested in joining the committee and supporting NCPH's long range planning efforts, please contact Melissa Queen (mkqueen@uspis.gov) or Claire Jerry (JerryC@si.edu).

-Submitted by co-chairs Claire Jerry and Melissa Queen

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Committee on Environmental Sustainability (CoES) has been working on a few ongoing projects, conference preparation, and has started a new initiative. We are in the last stages of seeing *Branching Out: The Public History of Trees* through to publication. The essay volume to be published by the University of Massachusetts Press in its Public History in Historical Perspective series began with panels organized by the CoES and features new essays from several of its current and former members. Over the summer, authors responded to copy edits and are currently creating indexes. The book will be out in 2025.

Members of the CoES are also contributing to an emerging Routledge essay volume on climate change and public history. As with *Branching Out* many of the essays in the volume began at NCPH conferences. The full proposal for that volume will go to the press this fall—but there still is time

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for interested authors to reach out to the book's co-editors, Philip Levy or Alena Pirok.

The Green Meetings Initiative has continued. The draft report has been shared with members of other academic societies and interested organizers of mini-cons. The CoES has advanced ideas from the Green Meetings discussion by creating sustainability recommendations for the NCPH Board of Directors and staff, led by Carolyn Barske-Crawford and Wendy Soltz. Over the summer, CoES reviewed the materials used for the 2024 NCPH Annual Meeting and sent a list of sustainable recommendations to Meghan Hillman in September, receiving confirmation. While some items are already addressed by NCPH, we consider this document a living resource for future updates.

The CoES organized and sponsored panels for the NCPH 2025 Annual Meeting. We look forward to seeing those panels in the forthcoming NCPH 2025 program and encouraging their attendance. Members also worked at updating the Climate Change Teaching Resources White Paper to help public historians in and out of the classroom better integrate climate issues into their practice. The CoES is also moving towards organizing a focused mini-con. In Montréal, we will be meeting with organizers of Condition Report:

The State of Public History in the South, a mini-con at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) to learn about their conference and to get tips on organization. We are very interested to hear about people's experiences organizing mini-cons and welcome any input as we move ahead.

-Submitted by co-chairs Philip Levy and Wendy Soltz

CURRICULUM AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Curriculum and Training Committee is at work on several initiatives this year. We are now in year two of offering Public History Educator Meetups on Zoom, an informal series of monthly conversations around various topics of interest to public history educators. Our first session this year was a general discussion about starting a new academic year and the October edition focused on the "spooky" political culture which many public history educators are navigating. Another ongoing project is the revision of the Best Practices documents that can be found on the NCPH website. Last year, the Committee produced an updated document on Certificate programs; this year, the goal is to complete an updated document on internships. The Committee has a couple of related projects addressing promotion and tenure as well as evaluation of scholarship, including updates to the NCPH document offering guidance to chairs, deans, and others charged with the evaluation of

public history faculty. We have also developed a crowd-sourced manual for public history educators making their way from their first position through retirement. The goal is to offer advice 'from the field' from faculty at a variety of institution and program types. We encourage everyone to read and contribute to it (<https://bit.ly/PublicHistoryHandbook>). As usual, the Committee will be organizing the Educators Forum at the NCPH Annual Meeting in March 2025 and we look forward to discussion and fellowship with NCPH members at that event.

-Submitted by co-chairs Caroline Emmons and Anne Lindsay

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Following a summer hiatus, the Development Committee met in October with its new members to continue its work related to the five areas of the 2023-2028 NCPH Long Range Plan (LRP) assigned to our committee. We continued our LRP work with the four sub-committees created in 2023, and these groups met again in November 2024. From there, the committee's goal for 2025 is to coordinate with other NCPH committees on our five assignments and to create action plans for implementation.

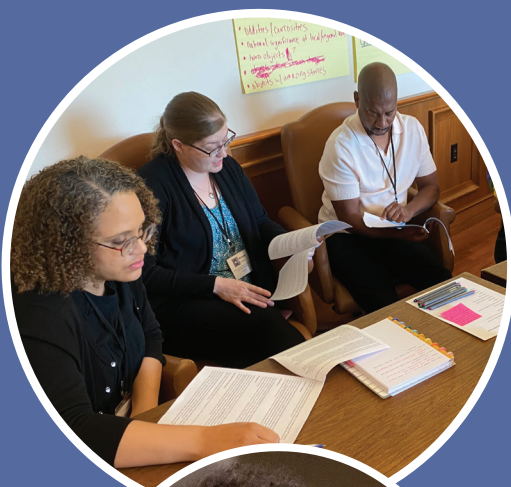
The committee continued its 2023 commitment to a public appeal by writing three newsletter

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AASLH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION for STATE and LOCAL HISTORY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continue your education and learn important skills needed in public history.

- Financial Structures and Strategy Online Course
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columns on the following topics: the Digital Integration Fund and a call for small donations; a financial report; and an encouragement for current donors to increase their support levels. For 2025, we plan to expand this work with each of our sub-committees writing a column to highlight our plans for the committee's assigned LRP goals.

In addition to our LRP work, the committee is developing plans to increase its presence, and thus encourage giving, at the NCPH 2025 Annual Meeting in Montréal. We will participate in tabling and update facts and figures on giving from 2023. Further, we are developing a social media campaign focused on "why I give" and "why NCPH matters" to be used throughout 2025. Finally, we are developing training for the 2026 conference to help NCPH members and conference attendees learn more about required minimum distributions from IRAs, planned giving, and retirement savings.

-Submitted by co-chairs Bill Bryans and Elyssa Ford

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee met on September 26 to review and discuss the draft budget for the 2025 and 2026 fiscal years. Because plans for a joint annual conference with AASLH in 2026 shift the timing of conference expenses and income, the committee considered a draft for a two-year budget cycle. The draft budgets included a proposal for the board to secure \$5,000 in donations in both years to cover the loss of income from the likely loss of a major supporting partner due to budget constraints. The committee approved the draft budget proposals for 2025 and 2026 and recommended them to the board. At its second meeting on October 17, the committee approved a recommendation to the board that revises the Endowment Fund drawdown for the Operating Budget from 4.5% to 4.75%. We reviewed our remaining responsibilities in the 2023-2028 NCPH Long Range Plan and prioritized our actions for this year.

-Submitted by co-chairs Rosalind Beiler and Eric Nystrom

INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY (IDEA) COMMITTEE

Throughout 2024, the IDEA Committee had regular monthly virtual meetings that covered issues such as affinity groups and topics attendees wanted to learn more about. The committee hosted its open meeting in April, a few weeks before the NCPH 2024 Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City (SLC), to raise interest about the committee's work and gauge interest from NCPH membership. Building on this, at NCPH 2024, we organized a well-attended Dine Around where we spoke about membership challenges around IDEA issues. We also shared information about what was working to tackle these issues. The committee tabled at the coffee break in SLC and

collected information about the concerns that people have around IDEA issues in the field.

In August 2024, the IDEA Committee co-sponsored an online workshop led by Nicole Belolan about the language of disability. About 25 attendees learned how to use accessible language in a variety of public history settings.

The IDEA Committee co-chairs have been involved in NCPH's successful application to the American Council for Learned Societies for an Intention Foundry Learned Society Extended Engagement microgrant. This microgrant will support a working group focused on Disability, Accessibility, and Public History. The working group will meet throughout 2025 and is charged with creating a framework for NCPH to become a more accessible organization for public historians with visible and invisible disabilities. Alima Bucciantini will serve on this working group along with other conveners and discussants.

-Submitted by co-chairs Alima Bucciantini and Modupe Labode

LABOR TASK FORCE

The Labor Task Force was created by the NCPH Board of Directors to address labor issues facing public historians, as employees and employers. Alena Pirok (Georgia Southern University) and Amber Mitchell (The Henry Ford) were named co-chairs and began crafting the committee, with an eye towards bringing together a diverse array of public historians who would offer insight into the workplace both as employees and employers. The committee came together with: Lacey Wilson (Underground Railroad Education Center), Bonnie McDonald (Illinois Landmarks), Sarah Marsom (an independent consultant), Adam Rizzo (Penn. Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology), Andy Urban (Rutgers), John Fulton (Minnesota Historical Society), Heather Bruegl (The Henry Ford),

Amanda Tobin Ripley (Ohio State), and Sierra Van Ryck DeGroot (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Together we represent independent public historians, contractors, directors, grant specialists, professors, and more!

For our first few meetings in the spring of 2023, the Labor Task Force got to know each other's career stories and experiences, our interests in labor advocacy, and what motivates our actions. We then began developing and addressing the NCPH 2023-2028 Long Range Plan. In our second set of meetings, we organized these tasks by considering the processes needed to complete them, the order in which we should complete them, how much labor each would involve, and finally deciding which we could do first. We decided to begin by collecting all the known labor resources for public history employees and employers.

We spent the summer working on conference proposals, and bringing together posts, organization weblinks, calculators, and readings. For employees we collected resources on labor rights, past-advocacy projects, and guides for collectivizing/unionizing the public history or museum workplace. For employers we collected best practice guides for those who manage public history employees, interns, and students, and resources for finding cost-of-living, payroll, hiring transparency, equitable recruiting, and workplace health and well-being. We intend for these resource lists to be living documents and look forward to making both sets easy to access, navigate, and contribute to. Towards that effort, we are hoping to create a series of blog posts providing links and introduction to the resources we've collected. Our next steps include drafting a statement on labor, and a social media campaign sharing the stories of successful public history worker advocacy.

-Submitted by chair Alena Pirok

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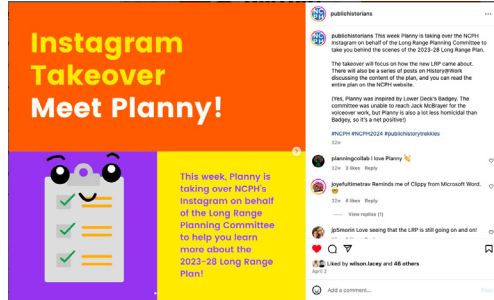
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LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee has continued its work tracking the implementation of the 2023-2028 LRP. At the NCPH 2024 Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, we worked in small teams to review the board reports of the other NCPH committees, which now include updates on their work towards their assigned action items from the LRP. LRP progress is being tracked using a shared Google Sheet, which enables us to incorporate biannual updates on each action item and an overview of progress towards achieving each goal.



This is the introduction slide to Planny's Instagram takeover of @publichistorians. Look out for Planny IRL over the next several months!

We are pleased to see significant progress already being made towards achieving many of the goals laid out in the LRP. Of the 67 action items in the plan, 43 (64%) have already moved into “ongoing” status, meaning that some progress has been made towards achieving that particular goal. Three additional action items have been forwarded to the board/staff for input and assistance. And two action items (Advocacy: “Create a formal process for requesting assistance/statements from NCPH related to advocacy” and Diversity: “Rethink awarding of annual meeting diversity discretionary funds with

an eye towards greater access and transparency”) have already been completed!

The LRP committee is also working on ways to promote the plan in order to ensure that more members are aware of its existence and importance. This past spring, we published [a series of short posts on History@Work](#) that discussed the overall goal of the plan and each of the five pillars – six posts in total. We also did an NCPH Instagram takeover in conjunction with this *History@Work* series. We are now working on several other ways to promote the plan, many featuring our committee mascot, Planny, who will be back by popular demand. This includes a “Flat Planny” who will travel to committee meetings and beyond to help showcase work on the LRP, as well as an updatable graphic for the NCPH website and/or *History@Work* to publicize LRP progress. Planny may also be joining us in Montréal - so stay tuned!

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

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Professional Development Committee is in the early stages of planning virtual events for next year and will be planning the Speed Networking event held at the NCPH 2025 Annual Meeting. We will be convening our first committee meeting in early November.

-Submitted by co-chairs *Vanessa Camacho and Jon Taylor*

NEW PROFESSIONAL AND STUDENT COMMITTEE

Newly appointed New Professional and Student Committee (NPSC) co-chairs Eleanor Shippen

and Kate Morgan submitted adjustments to their 2024-2025 charges to reflect the progress of ongoing initiatives and recommendations for the 2023-2028 Long Range Plan. Many of NPSC's charges focus on networking, mentorship, and community engagement.

NPSC members met in June 2024 with NCPH's social media team to determine future scheduling for Student Showcase postings. These Student Showcase posts go live monthly on the NCPH Instagram; if you would like to be featured, please contact NPSC co-chair and social media subcommittee member Eleanor Shippen at eleanor.shippen@gmail.com. NPSC plans to continue the Student Showcase project into 2025 with hopes to house the project's entrant form on NCPH's website.

In July 2024, NPSC's mentoring subcommittee met with the Membership Committee to discuss potential ideas on mentorship and network programs, a shared charge in the Long Range Plan. NPSC submitted their recommendations to the NCPH Board of Directors in November 2024 for further feedback.

Soon, NPSC will help finalize and publish the updated draft of *The Graduate Student Handbook: Choosing and Thriving in Public History Programs*, formerly known as the *Public History Navigator*.

NPSC welcomed four new members to the committee in October 2024: Jada Furtick, Alannah Graves, Ummul Muhseneen, and Elise Schrader.

-Submitted by co-chairs *Kathryn Morgan and Eleanor Shippen*

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS: FUNDING A PROMISE // CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

We have grown our organization without growing our staff. In 2023, we stretched our budget to add Sarah Singh as a part-time, contractual publications coordinator. We are also fortunate to have a paid intern to provide some support. But we need a more permanent solution. We need to make sure our effort to acknowledge and adequately reward public history as labor is taking place inside our house as well as outside in the field.

We have also grown our organization without significantly expanding our available budget beyond what was necessary to absorb the salary and benefits support we no longer receive from our host university. We run a tight ship with a very thin margin. Years with a large surplus like 2016 and 2019 were due to

staff turnover (which has been thankfully rare for us!), and those surplus funds were wrapped right back into the budget to support our staff and their immediate needs and/or transferred to the Endowment to grow our awards and inclusion funding. This is why your regular donation to the Annual Fund is so necessary—it goes directly to our annual budget. We are working to build up our financial base, so we can provide adequate pay to our existing, dedicated staff, and so we can successfully hire and retain additional staff in the very near future.

Your donation to the Annual Fund is a contribution to economic justice and a promise to Stephanie, Meghan, Stasia, and Sarah that we value their labor, recognize their

responsibilities have grown, and are taking steps to ensure their work life is both equitable and sustainable.

Denise D. Meringolo is the President of the National Council on Public History and the Chair of the Department of History at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Statement from NCPH President regarding the 2024 election results

I am not presuming that we are all having the same response to the 2024 election, but I know it raises many questions. We all need time to process our emotions. When we emerge, I want us to remember that we need public history now more than ever. We must foster critical thinking, facilitate difficult dialogue, and center human dignity. We must believe, support, and empower people whose lived experiences are marginalized and dismissed. We must preserve connection and community. And we will.



-Denise Meringolo

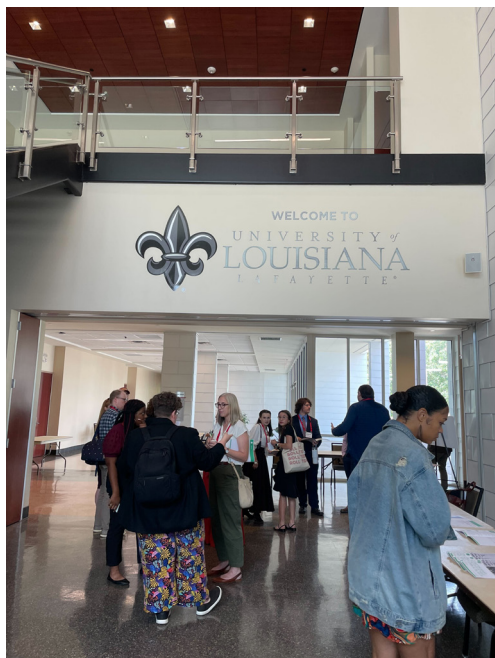
MINI-CON REPORT BACKS

“CONDITION REPORT: THE STATE OF PUBLIC HISTORY IN THE SOUTH”

IAN BEAMISH (IAN.BEAMISH@LOUISIANA.EDU)

JULIA BROCK (JBROCK2@UA.EDU)

LIZ SKILTON (LIZ.SKILTON@LOUISIANA.EDU)



Between sessions at Condition Report: The State of Public History in the South at UL Lafayette. Photo courtesy of Sarah Singh.

In early October of this year, public historians from across the Southern United States gathered on the campus of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette for a National Council on Public History Mini-Con—“Condition Report: The State of Public History in the South.” Though the title suggests a shared terrain, the many engaging panels, roundtables, discussion groups, and informal conversations among practitioners and academics from across the region made clear that the landscape of southern public history is both uneven and unpredictable in this historical moment.

Throughout the two days of sessions, several major themes emerged that presenters and participants continued to explore: resource-related barriers to creating public history work; obstacles tied to political, intellectual, and cultural climates; the importance of empowering communities to lead rather than public historians and their institutions; and the importance of southern public histories to national and international practice.

The first set of sessions explored cultural landscapes and the spaces of archives and libraries to identify and challenge hierarchies that pose obstacles for public historians. Panelists in the first session examined how public history practices—through student artistic creations, curating southern

agriculture, and memorializing forgotten burial sites—reveal the past and present of southern landscapes. In the “Access is Power” session, panelists discussed the myriad ways historical materials are restricted or limited due to policy, accessibility, or knowledge of existence and how archivists and librarians play a role in breaking down barriers for use.

The second set of sessions collectively made a strong case for the value of collaboration and a shared authority, not only between public historians and community partners, but also between the institutions of public historians. The roundtable from members of the Center for Public History at the University of Houston showed the impact that a group of public historians working in concert can have to document a wide range of local histories, even in a large space like Houston. Using another model, roundtables highlighting work in South Carolina and New Orleans showed how close collaboration between local public historians at different institutions and artists and activists helped create projects that were greater than the sum of their parts.

Discussion groups occupied the afternoon of the first day of the conference, with a particular focus on LGBTQIA Louisiana and public history and the role of policy and law in the practice of public history. Coming out of these discussions was the clear message that, while public historians of the South face many similar challenges, as suggested above, the particularities of individual spaces, municipalities, and states are significant. It is important to public historians to look to other states and spaces to see how laws that limit our practice are challenged and negotiated around. Just as importantly, it is key for public historians to push back against self-censorship and to avoid operating in fear of what might come. We can and must plan to fight for our discipline, but that should not take the form of undermining ourselves in the hopes that politicians won’t finish the job. At the conclusion of day one, Kathe Hambrick delivered an outstanding keynote lecture that emphasized the importance of resilience and commitment to principles in the face of lack of resources and support, a fitting conclusion to a day spent discussing the fluctuating resources and support for public history across the South.

The morning panels the next day picked up on these themes with discussions of the need for library and archival support for communities, the important work of digitizing southern public history initiatives, and a panel of eight

public historians from South Carolina who highlighted how they had each navigated the challenges of major public history work in a difficult political environment. The conference concluded with a set of optional tours in the afternoon to sites of contest and change in the region, ranging from the Whitney Plantation to the Iberia African American Historical Society.

Beyond the conversations and ideas exchanged at the conference, we hoped that being able to gather as a group of public historians working in and on the South would allow for the growth of a professional community over the coming years. Public historians in Houston are already discussing hosting a similar conference for this purpose. Bringing together practitioners with different experiences and strategies for dealing with the similar challenges that face public historians in the South will be one tool to use for meeting these challenges head on. As organizers, we look forward to contributing a piece to *History@Work* that will elaborate on the questions raised here that centered on law, policy, and strategies for resistance.



NCPH mini-con organizers Liz Skilton, Ian Beamish, and Julia Brock, and NCPH Publications and Marketing Coordinator Sarah Singh at Condition Report. Photo courtesy of Sarah Singh.

CAMPINGCON 2024: WILDERNESS AND THE HISTORIAN

"I love NCPH's CampingCons (I have been to all three!) because I get to be out in nature with colleagues, talking public history during a hike or over a campfire or while eating a simple meal in a rustic lodge. At this most recent CampingCon, I learned about the local history of the surrounding Gila National Forest but within the context of the public history: issues of preservation, presentation, and interpretation both during field trips and sessions. The informality of the setting prompts deep and sustained conversations that I do not often have at NCPH annual meetings. Join us next time!"

Joan ZenZen is an independent consultant who works under contract for the federal government — largely for the National Park Service — to research and write "administrative" histories of institutions.



Joan Zenzen, Larry Cebula, and Brian Forist attend their third (of three!) CampingCon. Image courtesy of Joan Zenzen.



CampingCon 2024 organizer Dylan McDonald leads attendees on a morning hike on part of the Continental Divide Trail. Photo courtesy of Mike Wurtz.

"I made more personal and professional connections than any other conference I've ever attended. The combination of hikes in campfire presentations and field trips was exhilarating. And I got to know a whole new part of the country to me. Such a great conference."

Larry Cebula is Professor of History at Eastern Washington University and Assistant Digital Archivist of the Washington State Archives.

"This was my third CampingCon. Being outside is where everything makes better sense for me. When going to an "ordinary" conference I often feel lost and lucky if I have a valuable connection with one or two people. At CampingCon I come away with a whole new set of colleagues. It is EXTRAordinary!"

Brian Forist (he/him) is a senior lecturer in the Parks, Recreation & the Outdoors program at Indiana University-Bloomington. He brings about 4 decades of experience as a national park ranger and environmental educator to that position.



Park ranger Dana Rick leads attendees on a post-conference hike at the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. Photo courtesy of Stasia Tanzer.

PITCH TO HISTORY@WORK!

History@Work (H@W) is NCPH's multi-authored, multi-interest blog for all those with an interest in the practice and study of history in public. *H@W* is actively accepting pitches from practitioners at all stages of their public history career. In order to propose a blog post, send a 1-3 paragraph pitch (we do not accept full-length drafts at this stage) to historyatwork@ncph.org. Read more about what we look for and current special calls at <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/guidelines/>.

In this issue of *PHN* we are cross-posting a co-authored post by students and new professionals, on the role of community partners and public history at the high school level. "[The Impact of Public History Projects on High School Communities](#)" was this quarter's Featured Post on *H@W*.

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC HISTORY PROJECTS ON HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

11 SEPTEMBER 2024 – BRI MATSON, SOPHIA IMPERIOLI, JUSTIN PORCELO AND LAUREN PERRY

In the Fall of 2023, the Museum Club at East High School in Denver, Colorado began working with students at the University of Colorado Denver to expand the high school's museum to better represent their current community. This collaboration highlights the value of incorporating public history in high school curricula. The co-authors of this article presented the project through a poster at the 2024 NCPH Annual Meeting. In reflecting on our project and poster session feedback, co-presenters realized that many educators repeatedly expressed that

they have trouble engaging their students in traditional academic history lessons and further, incorrectly assuming that our project was plagued by a similar lack of engagement. On the contrary, the exhibit creation process was overwhelmingly successful because public history projects offer high school students a more engaging model for history education than traditional lecture-based courses. We hope that our experiences encourage educators to explore new options for their classes.

Denver's East High School has stood as a cornerstone of the community along Colfax Avenue for nearly a century. The East High Museum Club was formed during the 2021-2022 school year, when students in Matt Fulford's "History of Now" class, a concurrent enrollment course offered through CU

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One of the many days when CU Denver graduate students collaborated with the East community in ongoing efforts to support the shared history of the high school. Photo courtesy of Peter Kopp, November 2023

Denver, demonstrated an intense interest in learning more about their school's history. These students are not interested in careers as public historians and did not engage with the museum before the History of Now course. Many students struggled to relate to historical figures and events in previous history courses because they never felt personally connected to the past. However, centering history around their own community and identities provided a perspective that felt relevant to their daily lives. As they engaged with history through these lenses, each of them became public historians, connecting with the past without the pressures of memorizing historical facts and dates. Mr. Fulford reached out to the CU Denver Public History Department to request assistance in expanding the museum during the 2022-2023 school year; however, the project was delayed for a year following a series of shootings on East's campus.

The co-authors' experiences with students at East High School closely resemble the experiences of public historians in the 20th century. Writing for *History@Work* in 2017, Denise Meringolo argued that public history's origin as a distinct field can be traced back to the American Civilization Institute of Morristown, New Jersey. The 1964 project engaged both high school and college students from surrounding schools in "a multi-faced, multi-disciplinary, broadly collaborative, community-focused experiential learning program," in an area where historic inequality and political polarization created significant conflict in educational settings.

Similarly, the Students at East High School are coming of age in an incredibly polarized political atmosphere. Their political consciousnesses have been shaped by this polarization. During our first meetings with the students, they showed strong interest in topics that closely aligned with their own personal interests and identities. For instance, the club's student-athletes wanted to explore

the history of the first female sports teams in East High. Others were musicians and wanted to examine music's impact on their school's history. The museum project gave the students license to investigate these interests, in sharp contrast with the survey-style lectures that dominate high school history education.



The exhibit, "Beyond the Skirt" highlights women's sport teams throughout East High School's long history. The team photo below shows the 1914 basketball team that won the championship. Photo courtesy of Justin Porcelo, February 2024

This ongoing project reveals that American high school students are interested in and more trusting of models of history which allow them to engage actively and seek connections with history as a model to understand their communities. In 2021, an American Association of Museums survey concluded that most young adults aged 19 to 29 are less likely to trust their teachers, professors, and schoolbooks with historical information than public history institutions like museums. This phenomenon stems from a curriculum that disconnects students from their history at an early age. In traditional K-12 education, social studies classes are not designed to engage students or encourage direct participation with historical fact. According to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the disconnect often makes history seem boring, predetermined, and even incorrect. When life experiences, family stories, community tradition or genealogy contradict what students learn in school, distrust begins to build. We can remedy this disconnect in the classroom.

Allowing students to be historians and public historians, instead of just memorizing facts, can allow them to scrutinize nuanced historical facts with a healthy level of skepticism and engage with their peers in a more informed manner. Switching history classes to a project-based curriculum will not only engage students but also help them understand both the *how* and the *why*, not just the *what*. Any distrust students have regarding traditional curricula can be addressed through discovery projects. By finding evidence, tracing patterns, and drawing conclusions, students can continue to explore connections between the past and the present for themselves.



East Museum Club's president and vice president review one of the school's historical yearbooks during one of the club's lunchtime meetings. Photo courtesy of Justin Porcelo, February 2024

Despite the abundance of evidence suggesting that public history projects enable students to engage with their own history at a higher level—dating back to the discipline's earliest history—we rarely present high school students with opportunities to engage with project-based public history in the classroom. The absence of these opportunities seems to explain conference attendees' assumption that students might not want to work on museum exhibits. Students are less engaged with their survey courses. However, it's time for public historians to reestablish the value of our field in secondary education, especially as high schools continue to embrace project-based learning as the most effective teaching method in other disciplines. Public historians can reconnect with high school students in a way that honors their identities, empowers them to investigate their interests, and connects their present realities to the past.

~ Bri Matson was the recipient of the Graduate Student Travel Award at NCPH's 2024 Annual Meeting and presented the East High School Community History Project with co-authors *Sophia Imperoli, Justin Porcelo, and Lauren Perry* during the NCPH 2024 Poster Session. All contributors are Public History MA candidates at the University of Colorado Denver: clas.ucdenver.edu/history/graduate-students-2024.



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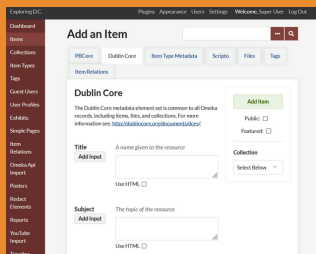
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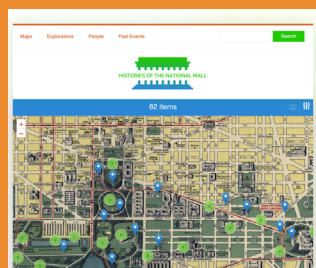
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