

“History on the Edge”

CALL FOR PAPERS – 2015 Annual Meeting
National Council on Public History
Nashville, Tennessee, April 15-18

Edges are where exciting things happen. Some are stark boundaries, marking clear beginnings and ends, while others are blurred contact zones. Edges can be places of creativity where diverse people, ideas, and cultures meet and flourish. They can be sites of uncertainty, risk, and opportunity. Edgy topics and practices call our longstanding assumptions into question. In Nashville, we invite public historians to consider the edges of what



Nashville newsboys in 1910. National Archives and Records Administration

we do and who we are. What is on the horizon for public history? What happens on the porous boundaries of public history when we collaborate with other disciplines and new audiences? What can public historians contribute to addressing the cutting edge questions of our societies? Join us to discuss, debate, and question “history on the edge.”

Questions to consider:

- What happens when historians work on the edges of public and proprietary knowledges such as in the work of government agencies, in business, and in the legal arena?
- What innovative work is occurring at the intersection of public history and public art?
- How can challenging the geographic, spatial, and linguistic borders of public history change how and what we do?
- What are the historical issues and themes that are under-represented? What are we not talking about and why?
- What can community historians and “amateurs” teach public historians about history on the edge?
- Where are the ethical edges of public history and what issues do we encounter at these boundaries?
- How can public historians engage with, and learn from, people who live on society’s margins—people who have disabilities, defy gender norms, are homeless, or who are incarcerated?
- What edges does digital practice bring to public history? How does this technological border zone change ideas about what public history is and who public historians are?
- How does our training as public historians affect how we engage with people living the history in our neighborhoods and communities?

The NCPH urges participants to dispense with the reading of papers, and encourages a wide variety of forms of conversation and session format options. Please avoid panels of talking heads and overreliance on PowerPoint presentations. Sessions should not simply be a “show and tell” but should demonstrate advice and methodology, and include exchanges between presenters and audience beyond a ten-minute Q&A at the end. Session format options can include, but are not limited to:

- **Experiential:** Participants simulate, role-play, or play games to convey key principles and learning objectives.
- **PechaKucha:** Facilitators quickly move the session through a variety of short tips/images/ideas designed to leave participants with inspiration and ideas. Typically, a PechaKucha is a multiple-presenter activity where each presenter shows 20 slides in 20-second increments. Allow time for debriefing.
- **Point/Counterpoint:** A moderated discussion that offers opposing points of view in a debate format.
- **Roundtable:** Presentations in roundtables are typically limited to 30 minutes of presentation, followed by 60 minutes of discussion and feedback. Roundtable presenters should bring targeted questions to pose to others at the table in order to learn from and with those attending. Roundtables are an ideal format for networking and in-depth discussion on a particular topic.

- **Structured Conversation:** Sparked by a shared interest or need, these facilitated participant-driven discussions are designed to encourage audience dialogue. Start with a provocative or problem statement and see where the conversation goes.
- **Traditional:** Three-person, chair, and commentator panels.



General Jackson Showboat. Nashville Convention & Visitors Corporation.

Other non-session format options can include:

- **Working Groups (2 hours):** Involving facilitators and up to twelve discussants, working groups allow conferees to explore in depth a subject of shared concern before and during the annual meeting. In these seminar-like conversations, participants have a chance to discuss questions raised by specific programs, problems, or initiatives in their own public history practice with peers grappling with similar issues. Working groups articulate a purpose they are working toward, a problem they are actively trying to solve, and aim to create an end product(s), such as a

report, article, website, or exhibition. Proposals should include only facilitators. An open call for discussants will be issued fall 2014.

- **Workshops (half or full day):** Workshops provide hands-on and participatory experiences that impart practical information or skills, and typically require participants to pay a fee.

Participants may be members of only one panel, but may also engage in working groups, introducing sessions and leading discussions. See the NCPH website at www.ncph.org for details about submitting your proposal and be sure to peruse past NCPH programs for ideas about new session/event formats.

How to submit your proposal:

New this year, NCPH is instituting an **optional**, Early Topic Proposal deadline. This is for people who are interested in presenting on a certain topic, but are looking for ideas to more fully develop their proposal or are looking for collaborators/co-panelists. Fill out the topic-only proposal form online by **June 1, 2014**. Topics received by that date will be distributed to NCPH members via email, and posted to the Public History Commons for feedback and offers of collaboration. Respondents will contact the original submitter directly with their ideas or offers, and the submitter may choose to select additional participants, refine the proposal, and complete a full proposal form online by the July deadline.

Final Proposal Deadline: Submit your fully formed session, working group, individual paper, or workshop proposal online by **July 15, 2014**.

Upcoming NCPH Meetings

2014 NCPH Annual Meeting
Monterey, CA — March 19-22
Monterey Conference Center

2014 NCPH Mini-Con
Chicago, IL — April 8-9
Chicago History Museum

2015 NCPH Annual Meeting
Nashville, TN — April 15-18

2016 NCPH Annual Meeting with the
Society for History in the Federal Government
Baltimore, MD — March 16-19



Upcoming IFPH Meetings

The IFPH is a close affiliate of NCPH's.

International Federation for Public History
Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium, May 2014

International Federation for Public History
Amsterdam, Oct 23-25, 2014

International Federation for Public History
Jinan, China, August 23-29, 2015

International Federation for Public History
Bogotá, Colombia in 2016.

