

ABSTRACT

SOLEIM, SARAH ANN MATTER. “‘To Make History the Living Force’: The Professionalization of Public History, 1880-2000.” (Under the direction of Dr. Craig Thompson Friend.)

“‘To Make History the Living Force’: The Professionalization of Public History, 1880-2000” challenges how we often distinguish public history education from “traditional” history education and shows how debates about public history teaching reveal a larger and more dynamic story about *all* historians’ professional identity, craft, and education. Historians have tinkered with historical training since the current model of graduate education emerged in the 1880s, and “‘To Make History the Living Force” situates the experiential and practice-based curriculum of public history training programs within this larger narrative of disciplinary formation and professionalization. The historians at the heart of this study sought to reform historical training to prepare students to navigate what National Park Service historian Dwight T. Pitcahley once described as “the spaces between,” spaces where academic scholarship confronts public memories, both individual and collective, and where historians face the uncertain legacy of professionalization, unhampered by the minutiae of historiographical debates and unrestricted by the artificial yet elusive borders that divide academic and public spheres. By approaching the development of public history training as part of a broader story of historical professionalism, we come to understand how the Public History Movement of the 1970s offered new models of historical training that emphasized the interdisciplinary and dialogical nature of historical practice. We also acknowledge how historians carved out new spaces of authority in the contested and foggy terrain of historical work in the United States.

The local and national stories told in “‘To Make History the Living Force” evidence the symbiotic relationships among teaching, scholarship, and service that formed historians’

professional identities throughout the twentieth century and shaped the Public History Movement that emerged in universities in the 1970s. Historians have limited studies of public history's origins and evolution to certain time periods, rooting the field's methods and academic programs to specific episodes in American history, including the Progressive era, New Deal, Civil Rights Movement, and the 1970s academic employment crisis. By focusing on the ways in which the methods and goals of public historians are distinct from "traditional" historians, scholars have overlooked the ways in which the Public History Movement is part of an evolution of historical training and practice. Ultimately, I argue that the emergence of the Public History Movement in the late 1970s was the culmination of a persistent, century-long debate about the methods and purpose of historical training and practice.

Public history programs are rooted in the establishment of the American historical profession in the late nineteenth century. As historians formed an academic discipline, they also took control of private and state-managed historical agencies and established new standards for historical work in public life. As they took on roles as archivists, curators, and administrators, historians began to reform collegiate history education training through supplementary workshops, internships, and comprehensive courses of study. The historians I follow throughout this study never sought to develop a new field of historical study. Instead, they offered an entirely new vision of historical training that better reflected the diverse ways history shapes public life. Their vision entered the mainstream at a moment when social activism and national economic woes demanded reform within collegiate history departments, challenging exceedingly narrow notions of historical professionalism and offering a new model of historical training that centered the dialogical nature of history.

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“To Make History the Living Force”: The Professionalization of Public History, 1880-2000.

by
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BIOGRAPHY

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In 2014, Sarah entered the Public History Program at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. At NC State, Sarah studied public history, museum studies, twentieth-century American history, and digital humanities. As part of the department's first doctoral cohort, she became interested in the practical and intellectual development of public history education. This ultimately motivated her to pursue the professionalization of public history as a dissertation topic under the advisement of Dr. Craig Thompson Friend.

While at NC State, Sarah worked as a research assistant at the Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies, curatorial intern at the City of Raleigh Museum and Pope House Museum, and docent at the Joel Lane Museum House. She also taught courses on modern American history and the history of philanthropy, nonprofits, and social change. Between 2016 and 2019, she partnered with several of her peers and professors to organize a series of teach-ins on Confederate monuments and white supremacy and an exhibit on gerrymandering in North Carolina. The former of these projects was documented in *Teachable Monuments: Using Public Art to Spark Dialogue and Confront Controversies* (2021), an anthology edited by Sierra Rooney, Jennifer Wingate, and Harriet F. Senie.

In 2019, Sarah accepted a position as the Manager of Community at Academic Learning at the Wake Forest Historical Museum. In this role, Sarah works closely with community members in Wake Forest, North Carolina as well as students and faculty on Wake Forest University's campus in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Much of her work advances Wake Forest University's efforts to recover, understand, and reckon with the university's relationship to slavery and its legacies.

Sarah lives in Raleigh with her husband, Eric, and their canine companion, Pippa.

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INTRODUCTION

The Public History Movement emerged in the late 1970s—a flourishing of academic programs, journals, and organizations calling for a cohesive identity and refreshed historical curriculum. It was a movement a century in the making, building on a multidisciplinary and diverse field of historians. However, with few exceptions, studies of the history and development of public history have failed to connect the field’s many disciplinary, social, cultural, and economic influences—from early twentieth-century Progressivism, the evolution of state and local histories as fields of study, and economic depression in the 1930s to the civil rights movement, Black Power, feminism, labor activism, the rise of the new social and cultural histories, and the economic recession in the 1970s.¹

Included in their struggle to trace the field’s coalescence has been historians’ failure to agree on how to define and assess public history’s fit into the larger project of the historical profession. In 2004, the American Historical Association’s Task Force on Public History identified ways that the association could “institutionalize substantive, sustained attention to public history within the structure of the AHA.” The task force set forth an admittedly confusing explanation of public history. In defining *who* is a public historian, the document explained, “public historians are simply those who ‘do history’ outside the academy, whatever their primary locus of employment, whatever the specific nature of their historical work. What they do, as historians, constitutes public history.” The task force stated that “on the one hand we embrace the notion that ‘we are all public historians,’ on the other, we recognize that public history

¹ Exceptions to this include Rebecca Conard, “The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States,” *Public Historian* 37, (February 2015): 105-120; Conard, “Complicating Origin Stories: The Making of Public History into an Academic Field in the United States,” in *A Companion to Public History*, ed. David Dean (John Wiley & Sons Ltd.: 2018), 21-25.

defines a specific kind of historical practice and that public historians have common interests.”² To be fair, on its website, even the National Council on Public History punted in defining public history, suggesting that conceptualizing the field is a bit like United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s 1964 infamous definition of pornography, “I know it when I see it.”³

Despite their diverse attitudes and analyses of the field, historians know, or at least have some sense, of the far-reaching value of public history theory and practice. There are over 130 graduate and 100 undergraduate programs specializing in public history in North America. In 2004, the Committee on Graduate Education of the American Historical Association published *Education of Historians for the 21st Century*, a study of graduate-level history training that argued that history graduate education writ large would improve by adding public history theory and practice into curriculums. The report concluded that history education should “seek practical expression of such cosmopolitanism in doctoral programs, where students should be comfortable with the complex identities inherent in the profession. They must be open to and prepared for a variety of scholarly methods, agendas, and careers.”⁴ Historians continue to tout the value of

² “Report of the Task Force on Public History,” 2004, Public History, Public Historians, and the American Historical Association, accessed September 7, 2021, [https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/public-history-public-historians-and-the-american-historical-association-\(2004\)](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/public-history-public-historians-and-the-american-historical-association-(2004)).

³ “How Do We Define Public History?” About the Field, National Council on Public History, accessed September 7, 2021, <https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/>. A best practices guide published by the National Council on Public History also wrested with how to distinguish public history from “traditional” historical study accurately. The document encouraged departments to take “into account the differing needs of public history and ‘traditional students’” but also cautioned that “dividing students into ‘traditional’ and ‘public history’ categories, even rhetorically, invites unnecessary tension and conflict.” See, NCPH Curriculum and Training Committee, “Best Practices in Public History: Establishing and Developing Public History Program,” October 2015, Resources for Public History Educators at the Graduate and Undergraduate Level, National Council on Public History, accessed September 7, 2021, <https://ncph.org/publications-resources/educators/graduate-and-undergraduate/>.

⁴ Thomas Bender, et. al., *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-first Century* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 8.

public history education, even if they fall short in defining public history practice. Historians lack a cohesive and thorough narrative of the evolution of public historical training and the legacies of the Public History Movement for graduate history education. This dissertation—“‘To Make History the Living Force’: The Professionalization of Public History, 1880-2000”—considers what the development of public history training reveals about the evolution of collegiate history education and historians’ professional identities and disciplinary purpose since the late nineteenth century and asks why public history training programs and the Public History Movement of the 1970s manifested as they did?

Histories of the historical discipline in the United States have been far more comfortable examining historiographical trends than the practicalities of pursuing history as a profession or career. For example, Peter Novick’s work, *That Noble Dream*, the most comprehensive study of the American historical discipline to date, adopts a far too narrow view of historical professionalism, primarily looking at academic elites.⁵ As a result, Novick overlooked the diversity of the historical profession and fell short in showing how the Public History Movement reflected a more expansive transformation within the discipline. However, the study of public history is fundamental to understanding and innovating the pedagogical approaches of all collegiate-level history education.

“To Make History the Living Force” pushes against narrow views of historical professionalism that center on academic research and teaching trends, following instead historians who found work in historical museums, state agencies, and historic sites in the mid-

⁵ Novick dedicates a mere eleven pages to public history, see *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 510-521. For an example of a study that effectively locates public history within a broader story of disciplinary development, see Ian Tyrrell, *Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

twentieth century and who laid a foundation for the development of public history programs in the 1970s and 1980s. I accepted the challenge set by *Education of Historians for the 21st Century* to view “history as a *discipline*, as a *profession*, and as a *career*.”⁶ By presenting the evolution of history in this way, this study provides context and perspective for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of graduate history programs today, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the instability and insecurity of so many historians’ careers.⁷

“To Make History the Living Force” examines the emergence of public history training programs, beginning with the creation of university history departments in the 1880s. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, academically-trained historians built an infrastructure of state and local histories to preserve local, state, and national records that supported university-based scholarship. As historian Rebecca Conard demonstrated in her biography of Benjamin Shambaugh, the superintendent of the State Historical Society of Iowa from 1907 to 1940, a Progressive commitment to practical uses for history contributed to developing an applied historical tradition that informed future public history programs.⁸ When Progressive historians

⁶ Bender, *The Education of Historians for the Twenty-first Century* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), xv.

⁷ Rachel Boyle, “Still grinding? How the pandemic is accelerating job precarity in public history,” March 11, 2021, History@Work, National Council on Public History, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/how-the-pandemic-is-accelerating-job-precarity-in-public-history/>; Philip Scarpino and Daniel Vivian, “What do Public History Employers Want? Report of the Joint AASLH-AHA-NCPH-OAH Task Force on Public History Education and Employment,” February 2017, National Council on Public History, 8-9, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/What-do-Public-History-Employers-Want-A-Report-of-the-Joint-Task-Force-on-Public-History-Education-and-Employment.pdf>; “Public History, Public Historians, and the American Historical Association: Report of the Task Force on Public History,” January 2004, American Historical Association, accessed September 6, 2021, [https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/public-history-public-historians-and-the-american-historical-association-\(2004\)](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/public-history-public-historians-and-the-american-historical-association-(2004)).

⁸ Rebecca Conard, *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002), 83; Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 92-108. Works on

assumed control of private and state-controlled historical agencies in the early twentieth century, they set new standards for historical work in public life that raised the status of state and local history within the broader American historical profession. These historians also created new professional organizations like the American Association for Local History (1940) and the Society of American Archivists (1936). In other essays, Conard has explained these new organizations encouraged the development of historical training programs in archival administration, museum studies, and preservation, laying a foundation for public history programs.⁹

Between 1930 and 1960, as federal support for historic preservation projects reached an all-time high, historians employed mainly by federal and state governments crafted a service-oriented approach to historical work that laid the foundation for interpretive training programs. In *Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890-1970*, Ian Tyrrell identified a network of academic and public historians who built upon that infrastructure of state and local histories before World War II, professionalizing those fields through the creation of professional organizations, educational bulletins, and archival and museum studies training programs. Scholar Denise Meringolo traced the origins of public history to the National Park Service in the 1920s and 1930s, developing a narrative of federal expansion and the multidisciplinary work of National Park Service administrators and interpreters. Importantly, she showed how National Park Service historians crafted an interpretive practice grounded in social and cultural histories

Progressive history include James Harvey Robinson, *The New History* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1912) and Alan M. Schroder, "Applied History: An Early Form of Public History," *Public Works Historical Society Newsletter* 17 (March 1980): 3-4.

⁹ Conard, "Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection" *Public Historian* 25 (Fall 2003): 9-24; Conard, "The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States," 105-120; Conard, "Complicating Origin Stories: The Making of Public History into an Academic Field in the United States," 21-25.

that shaped the development of early public history training programs in the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁰ Unlike Conard and Tyrrell, who examined public history as a development within the broader academic discipline, Meringolo studied public history “as a multidisciplinary government job.” She cautioned historians against approaching public history as an attempt by academic historians to engage the public and, consequently, minimize public history “as an academic specialty.”¹¹ Still, both Tyrrell and Meringolo concluded their studies short of the emergence of the Public History Movement in the late 1970s, leaving unresolved how the professionalization of state and local histories and the embrace of a multidisciplinary pursuit shaped the development of public history programs in the 1970s and 1980s.¹²

From turn-of-the-twentieth-century state historical agencies to Depression-era federal programs, the subjects studied by historians seeking the origins of public history have forced an obvious if unstated conclusion—it was a White man’s pursuit. In *Preserving the Old Dominion: Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism*, historian James M. Lindgren showed how nineteenth-century preservation movements, mainly women’s activism, set a precedent for managing and executing historic preservation by predominantly male state government officials. Lindgren did not explore how the professionalization of state and local histories delegitimized the efforts of female—and non-White—voluntary associations, independent scholars, and educators.¹³

As White men built local and national historical agencies, they set new standards for historical work outside the academy and created career roles for White men who often dismissed

¹⁰ Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks*, xv, xxvi, 128.

¹¹ Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), xv. See also Meringolo, “Capturing the Public Imagination: The Social and Professional Place of Public History” *American Studies International* 42 (October 2004): 86-117.

¹² Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 63-64.

¹³ Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion*, 247-248.

women's voluntary associations and Black scholars with contempt. Scholar Barbara Howe demonstrated the unaccounted-for consequence of federal agencies assuming the work of many private associations—White women's prominence in historic preservation faded.¹⁴ In *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America: Gender, Race and the Politics of Memory, 1880-1945*, Julie Des Jardins expanded on Howe's work, examining how, from Mercy Otis Warren to Emma Willard and from the Daughters of the American Revolution to the United Daughters of the Confederacy, White middle-class women dominated history-making throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁵ With the rise of a more scientific approach to historical research and analysis in the late nineteenth century, however, white men became the captains of the profession. Although women continued to populate preservation and heritage societies, men increasingly dictated their work. Des Jardins viewed this as a loss to the historical discipline, arguing that women historians had shared a common ability and desire to tell history from multiple perspectives. Importantly, she reinserted women into the history of the discipline's professionalization *before* the social history movement of the 1960s. One of the contrasts drawn by Des Jardins was that although the male-dominated historical profession relied on documents, women used public history methods to engage people in historical research. For example, the World Center for Women's Archives in 1935 revealed how female historians used oral history and material culture to attract wider audiences.

Although White men dominated local and national historical agencies before World War II, Black scholars and grassroots educators built an expansive network of public historians. The expanding historiography on the Black Museum Movement has shown its contributions to a

¹⁴ Howe, "Women in Historic Preservation," 37-38.

¹⁵ Julie Des Jardins, *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America: Gender, Race, and the Politics of Memory, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

more participatory and democratic public history practice. However, few studies link the Black Museum Movement and civil rights activism to the professionalization of collegiate history education. While White historians asserted visions of white supremacy through the creation of state-sanctioned historical programs, monument building, and traditional scholarship, Black historians used history to evidence Black progress through founding the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Negro History Week, the *Journal of Negro History*, and a network of community-organized lecture series and history museums. Scholar Fath Davis Ruffins argued that these efforts informed the multidisciplinary and participatory methodologies of historians trained at historically Black colleges and universities, and, as Ashley Bouknight-Claybrooks demonstrated in her work on academically trained Black historians and intellectuals at historically Black colleges and universities, these interdisciplinary museum and archival practices continue to inform public history practice today.¹⁶

In the past two decades, more and more scholars have demonstrated how practicing historians without graduate history education—often referred to at best as “nonacademics” and sometimes derogatorily as “antiquarians”—with practical experiences in civil rights, labor, and feminist activism as well as the historical activities of Bicentennial celebrations influenced the interpretive and commemorative practices of contemporary public history.¹⁷ In *History Comes*

¹⁶ Fath Davis Ruffins, “Building Homes for Black History: Museum Founders, Founding Directors, and Pioneers, 1915-95,” *Public Historian* 40 (August 2018): 18-24; Ashley Bouknight-Claybrooks, “The Power of Preservation: Black Museology in the Early Twentieth Century” *Public Historian* 43 (May 2021): 20-27. See also Andrea A. Burns, *From Storefront to Monument Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013); Tara White, “History as Uplift: African American Clubwoman and Applied History” 43 (May 2021): 11-19.

¹⁷ Burns, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement*; Tammy S. Gordon, *The Spirit of 1976: Commerce, Community, and the Politics of Commemoration* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013); Daniel R. Kerr, “Allan Nevins is Not My Grandfather: The Roots of Radical Oral History Practice in the United States”

Alive: Public History and Popular Culture in the 1970s, M. J. Rymza-Pawlowska explored the complex relationships between “popular historymaking” and transformations in higher education in the 1960s and 1970s, such as the rise of social and cultural history. Rymza-Pawlowska provided important contexts for the debates among public historians in the 1980s as they developed a theoretical foundation for collegiate public history programs.¹⁸ Similarly, in *Clio’s Foot Soldiers: Twentieth-Century U. S. Social Movements and Collective Memory*, Lara Kelland examined grassroots organizers who cultivated memory practices that preserved community histories and supported the political goals of social activists. As they searched for a “useable past,” “proto-public historians” challenged traditional notions of historical authority and influenced the development of late twentieth-century public history programs.¹⁹ However, when collegiate history departments began establishing public history programs, most did so without any genuine partnership with local community organizations even though they often adopted the methods of local civil rights and labor activists who, by then, had clearly demonstrated the political and cultural power of local and community histories.

Based upon state and local historians’ vision of historical practice as emphasizing local contexts and stressing interdisciplinarity, participatory methodologies, and technical training, by the mid-1960s, a smattering of historical training courses for historians specializing in

Oral History Review 43 (Summer/Fall 2016): 367-391; Tara Y. White, “History as Uplift: African American Clubwoman and Applied History,” *Public Historian* 43 (May 2021): 11-19; Mabel O. Wilson, *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021).

¹⁸ M. J. Rymza-Pawlowska, *History Comes Alive: Public History and Popular Culture in the 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 7. See also Rymza-Pawlowska, “Hippies Living History: Form and Context in Tracing Public History’s Past,” *Public Historian* 41 (November 2019): 36-55.

¹⁹ Lara Leigh Kelland, *Clio’s Foot Soldiers: Twentieth-Century U.S. Social Movement and Collective Memory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018), 2.

interpretation, archives, museums, and historic preservation dotted the landscape of history education. As these public history training programs gained legitimacy in the 1970s, a Public History Movement emerged. The proliferation of new training programs coincided with several transformations in higher education. David Thelen's study of American higher education provides essential contexts for understanding the political and economic pressures university professors and administrators faced in the 1970s.²⁰ Declining enrollments, an academic job shortage, and a general distrust of institutional authority forced university history departments to reevaluate and experiment with historical training in the 1970s. As a result, a smattering of new courses in "public" and "applied" history arose around the country, the most notable of which were the Public Historical Studies Program at the University of California Santa Barbara and the Applied History program at Carnegie Mellon. Both programs sought to prepare doctoral history students for careers in public policy. Program faculty revived Progressive notions of "applied history" and argued that historical scholarship should address social, economic, and political problems in the United States. During the 1970s' academic employment shortage, many universities adopted courses in archival administration, museum studies, and historic preservations, hoping to expand vocational training and boost enrollment. At the same time, public history programs became a way to reinvigorate history departments amidst student demands for more relevant, more interdisciplinary, and less hierarchical models of historical study. Yet many programs struggled to restructure historical training, and the adoption of public history courses fell far short of revolutionary.

²⁰ John R. Thelen, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004). For context on the specific challenges history departments faced after World War II, see Dexter Perkins and John L. Snell, *The Education of Historians in the United States* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962). The report primarily focused on how best to prepare teachers but recognized that graduate training should also train students for non-teaching careers.

A complete understanding of public history's evolution and legacy requires understanding the relationship and fluidity between a professional movement fostered by academically-trained historians and the persistent determination of communities on the margins of the academy to reclaim and interpret their pasts.²¹ Lara Kelland suggested that the study of power might be the best way to understand the legacies of the Public History Movement, especially as most of the programs developed in the 1970s emerged within the traditional hierarchy of academia or within historical institutions such as the North Carolina Division of Archives and History or the National Archives, the founders of which held both the desire to make history more accessible and to assert the discipline's authority in American society.²²

As the Public History Movement gained legitimacy in the 1980s, it reinvigorated early-twentieth-century debates about the social value of history, the consequences of historical professionalism, and the goals of graduate history education. As historian Theodore Karamanski concluded, "Public historians have a dual heritage, one that challenges the existing order but in doing so builds or sustains institutions that preserve a usable past and make it available in the public sphere."²³ Yet, even in the 2020s, the influence of such discussions on public history programs remains unclear, evidenced by practitioners' inability to offer a unified and consistent framework for public history education, let alone define the field. Karamanski's notion of "dual heritage" helps us see how public historians of the 1980s tried to carve out a place for themselves

²¹ This tension is explored in GVGK Tang, "We need to talk about public history's columbusing problem." June 25, 2020, History@Work, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/we-need-to-talk-about-public-historys-columbusing-problem/#2>.

²² Lara Leigh Kelland, "Puerto Rican Heritage in the Twentieth Century: Empire, Statecraft, and Resistance," *Public Historian* 43 (May 2021): 37.

²³ Theodore Karamanski, "Institutionalism and Activism in the Evolution of the Public History Movement," *Public Historian* 43 (May 2021): 40.

somewhere between expertise and true community partnership as they secured legitimacy as a field of historical study.

In her 2003 presidential address to the National Council on Public History, Rebecca Conard, one of the first graduates from the Public Historical Studies Program at the University of California Santa Barbara, urged historians to redefine public history not as a matter of where we practice history—in the academy or outside the academy—but “*how we practice history.*”²⁴ Laying out an intellectual foundation for public history education, Conard argued that a defining feature of public history is “the art of *mediation.*”²⁵ It is here that Conard distinguished public history from other fields of history. Drawing from the work of Donald A. Schön, a social scientist and author of *The Reflective Practitioner*, as well as a rich body of scholarship on memory studies that undergirded conversations about public history in the 1980s, Conard identified public historians by the ways they “work in situations that are complex, prone to change, and laden with value conflict.”²⁶ Public historians, she argued, engage in a “reflective practice,” in which they fully appreciate the collaborative process of history-making, or how we work with others, and the political, social, and cultural contexts in which a problem and its possible solutions exist.²⁷ Importantly, Conard noted that public history is far more about the

²⁴ Conard, “Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection,” 22.

²⁵ Rebecca Conard, “Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection,” 16; Conard, “Public History as Reflective Practice: An Introduction” *Public Historian* 29 (Winter 2006), 10-12.

²⁶ Conard, “Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection,” 17. See also Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (Aldershot, EN: Arena, 1995); Michael H. Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Katharine T. Corbett and Howard S. Miller, “A Shared Inquiry into Shared Inquiry,” *Public Historian* 28 (Winter 2006): 15-38; Noel J. Stowe, “Public History Curriculum: Illustrating Reflective Practice” 28 (Winter 2006): 40-43; Benjamin Filene, “Training Public Historians: Academy and Reality,” *History News* 61 (Winter 2006): 12-15.

²⁷ Conard, “Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection,” 22–23.

degree to which a practitioner occupies themselves with these contexts, as all historical questions are shaped by the social, cultural, and political contexts in which they emerge. In the wake of the 2008 recession and the precarious employment situation it created for many historians, the National Council on Public History published a “best practices” guide for public history curricula and programs that reflected Conard’s conceptualization of public history education. The document distinguished quality public history programs for the ways they “prepare students to practice history in environments that require shared authority, reflexive educational practices, civic engagement, and political sensitivity.”²⁸

My goal in the chapters that follow is not to define the ways in which public history is distinct from other fields of history, quite the opposite. Building on Conard’s work, I challenge how we often distinguish public history education from “traditional” history education and show how debates about public history teaching reveal a larger and more dynamic story about *all* historians’ professional identity, craft, and education.²⁹ Historians have tinkered with historical training since the current model of graduate education emerged in the 1880s. “To Make History

²⁸ NCPH Curriculum and Training Committee, “Best Practices in Public History: The M.A. Program in Public History,” April 2008, Resources for Public History Educators at the Graduate and Undergraduate Level, National Council on Public History, accessed September 7, 2021, <https://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Grad-Best-Practice.pdf>.

²⁹ A revised best practice guide for academic public history programs published by the National Council on Public History’s Curriculum and Training Committee in 2015, encouraged departments to take “into account the differing needs of public history and ‘traditional students’” but also cautioned that “dividing students into ‘traditional’ and ‘public history’ categories, even rhetorically, invites unnecessary tension and conflict.” NCPH Curriculum and Training Committee, “Best Practices in Public History: Establishing and Developing Public History Program,” October 2015, Resources for Public History Educators at the Graduate and Undergraduate Level, National Council on Public History, accessed September 7, 2021, <https://ncph.org/publications-resources/educators/graduate-and-undergraduate/>; Robert R. Weyeneth and Daniel J. Vivian, “Charting the Course: Challenges in Public History Education Guidance for Developing Strong Public History Programs,” *The Public Historian* 38 (August 2016): 25.

the Living Force” focuses on the emergence of public history theory and practice as part of this broader story of professionalization and educational reform. Historians at the heart of this study navigated what National Park Service historian Dwight T. Pitcathley once described as “the spaces between,” spaces where academic scholarship confronts public memories, both individual and collective. It is a space where historians face the uncertain legacy of professionalization, unhampered by the minutiae of historiographical debates and unrestricted by the artificial yet elusive borders that divide academic and public spheres. By approaching the development of public history training as part of a broader story of historical professionalism, we can better understand how the Public History Movement offered new models of historical training that emphasized the interdisciplinary and dialogical nature of historical practice and strove to cultivate more authentic relationships between academic and lay communities. At the same time, the history of public history practice is a story about how historians have thought about their expertise, social responsibility, and professional identities.

The development of public history training programs is a story of experimentation and transformation within the American historical discipline, marked by evolving debates about expertise, authority, and social responsibility. Complete understanding of the evolution of public historical pedagogy demands we acknowledge how historians set new standards and carved out new spaces of authority in the contested and foggy terrain of historical work in the United States. The literature on public history education contextualizes our understanding of the authority we, as historians, wield outside of academia.³⁰ In an anthology on public history education, published

³⁰ Benjamin Filene explores many of the contemporary debates regarding public history training, like the balance between theoretical and practical education, in a brief article developed from a roundtable session at the 2005 American Association for State and Local History annual meeting in Pittsburg. The international public history community is also developing a body of literature on public history education, see Cord Arendes, “Learning, and Understanding of Public History

in 2018, Cord Arendes argued that public history involves “the elimination of existing barriers between scientific experts and politically conscious and historically interested citizens.”³¹ For far too long, historians from Novick to Tyrell conceptualized the evolution of the history discipline as driven internally by historians shaping their field distinct from the world around them. To effectively navigate the spaces between expert and amateur, public and private, professional and antiquarian, however, we must “reflect on the different and changing roles they perform” and recognize that historians’ public purpose has always been shaped by external communities as well as the discipline itself. In her essay on the public purpose of historians, scholar Alix Green developed this idea further, arguing that historians “claim a kind of ‘mandate’ over it [history], whether we see ourselves as gatekeepers, custodians, guides, or perhaps experts of another kind.” This mandate shapes historians’ relationship with communities and constituencies, constantly redefined and reinforced through the academic programs and standards set for professional practice.³²

Between 1978 and 2000, public history programs developed unevenly in the United States, a period historian Noel Stowe described as the “The Ad Hoc Era” of public history. Lack of uniform standards, expectations, and indeed definitions in public history partly explains the difficulties in evaluating and understanding the evolution of the Public History Movement.³³

Public history programs have traditionally focused on where historians worked, so program

as Part of the Professional Historical Education at German Universities;” Charlotte Bühl-Gramer, “The Future of Public History—What Shall we Teach Prospectively? Remarks and Considerations;” Alix Green, “Professional Identity and the Public Purpose of History,” 175-185, all in *Public History and School: International Perspectives*, Marko Demantowsky, ed., (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018).

³¹ Arendes, “Learning, and Understanding of Public History as Part of the Professional Historical Education at German Universities,” 65-66.

³² Green, “Professional Identity and the Public Purposes of History,” 176.

³³ Stowe, “Public History Curriculum: Illustrating Reflective Practice,” 40-43.

specialties varied widely, depending on the skills and experiences of faculty and partner institutions. The field never adopted a cohesive intellectual foundation.³⁴ From the beginning, the Public History Movement was not homogenous, with training programs often a cobbled curriculum of internships, technical training, and lectures. The unique human and material resources available at local, state, and regional levels shaped the development of public history programs. Therefore, this dissertation is both a national and local story, with particular attention to North Carolina, which provides an ideal case study to explore the network of historians, institutions, and resources that drove the professionalization of public historical work.³⁵ What becomes apparent fairly quickly is the thin veil that existed between academic and nonacademic historians from much of the twentieth century. In 1934, R. D. W. Connor, a professor of history at the University of North Carolina and a founding member of the North Carolina Historical Commission, became the first archivist of the United States. From 1935 to 1968, Christopher Crittenden, also a professor of history at the University of North Carolina and Director of the North Carolina Department of State Archives and History, played a leading role in the American Association for State and Local History. In 1948, Crittenden established one of the first applied historical training programs when he partnered with Meredith College in Raleigh, which served as a model for programs at Cooperstown, New York, and Radcliffe College in Massachusetts. From 1975 to 1981, Larry Tise, director of North Carolina's Division of Archives and History, served as a state representative to the National Coordinating for the Promotion of History and conceived of a statewide Institute of Applied History that led to the development of a graduate-

³⁴ Stowe, "Public History Curriculum," 39-40; Conard, "Complicating Origin Stories," 32.

³⁵ Ian Tyrrell approached the Mississippi Valley Historical Association in much the same way in his essay "Public at the Creation: Place, Memory, and Historical Practices in the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1907-1950," *Journal of American History* 94 (June 2007): 19-46.

level public history program at North Carolina State University. As both a national and local story, this dissertation telescopes from local efforts in North Carolina, found in Chapters One, Two, and Four, and the national contexts for those efforts found in Chapters Three and Five.

By examining the development of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Chapter One, ““To Make History the Living Force””: Crafting a Public Historical Practice, 1880-1945,” explores how North Carolina historians crafted new professional identities that emphasized the unique technical and administrative skills of their work. Much in the tradition of Tyrell’s *Historians in Public*, I find that by the end of World War II, these historians set new standards for historical training in museums and archives that reflected the administrative and technical challenges emergent with expanding state archives, museums, and historic preservation programs. My attention to North Carolina offers an opportunity to examine public history’s emergence in the South and examine how racial politics shaped the region’s historical practice in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁶ There is a rich body of scholarship on how voluntary work shaped Southern collective memory. However, few studies examine how predominately White and male academically-trained historians professionalized public historical interpretation and undermined the historical work of grassroots organizations led by White women and Black Southerners.³⁷

³⁶ Conard and Tyrrell examine the professionalization of public history in the Midwest, see Conard, *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History* and Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*. Meringolo’s work on NPS historians is largely set in the Western United States, see Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks*.

³⁷ Howe, “Women in Historic Preservation: The Legacy of Ann Pamela Cunningham,” *The Public Historian* 12, (Winter 1990): 31-61; Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*; Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion: Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism*; Jeffrey C. Stewart and Faith Davis Ruffins, “Afro-American Public History in Historical Perspective” in *Presenting the Past*, 249-263; West, *Domesticating History*; Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory & the American Civil War*; Cox, “Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture” (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2003); Michael

Chapter Two, “‘The Sort of Fellow We Need’: Envisioning Public Historical Training Programs, 1945-1967,” examines the development of archival, museum studies, and historic preservation programs after World War II. Although early public history programs in archival administration, museum studies, and historic preservation varied widely, they led to new educational standards in archives and history museums and were some of the first history programs specifically focused on interpretive methods. I draw heavily from correspondence in North Carolina’s Division of Archives and History to show how a network of like-minded historians employed beyond the academy sought to augment traditional historical training at the undergraduate and graduate levels. I build upon Des Jardins’s scholarship on the feminization of historical knowledge and work by exploring how these new training programs created employment opportunities specifically for college-educated women.³⁸

Proliferation of archival, museum, and historic preservation courses in the 1970s coincided with several developments within the humanities. Chapter Three, “‘Sinking Ships’: Crisis and Transformation in Graduate History Education, 1968-1977,” explores how declining job prospects for history graduates and the influences of social activism contributed to a shift toward vocational training programs. In addition, Chapter Three explores how civil rights and labor activism, campus unrest, economic concerns, and the rise of social history gave rise to a national Public History Movement and reignited conversations about historians’ social responsibilities and professional identities.

Often, the origins of the Public History Movement are identified foremost with faculty at the University of California Santa Barbara and Carnegie Mellon University, among the most

Wallace, “Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation,” 165-199; White, “History as Uplift: African American Clubwoman and Applied History.”

³⁸ Jardins, *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America*.

vocal promoters of public history training, but their visions for public history do not accurately represent the scope of public history programs emerging in the 1970s and 1980s. Chapter Four, “*Raison d’être: Applied History at North Carolina State University*,” examines why faculty at North Carolina State University developed a graduate program in applied history in the 1980s and the extent to which the program responded to pressures brought on by the rise of social history, the economic crisis, and the realities of being a land-grant university.

Finally, Chapter Five, “‘The Human Process of History’: The Public History Movement, 1978-2000,” chronicles the formation of the National Council on Public History and explores the growing pains the organization faced in its first two decades as it sought to legitimize the field of public history. In the 1980s and 1990s, public historians established an intellectual foundation for public historical studies and called for substantial reforms to traditional graduate training. While Chapters Three and Four establish the significance of the job crisis to the establishment of public history programs, Chapter Five demonstrates how, by the turn of the twenty-first century, the Public History Movement had culminated into a broad call for reformation of graduate history education that stressed interdisciplinarity and the dialogical nature of the historical process.

The local and national stories told in “To Make History the Living Force” evidence the symbiotic relationships among teaching, scholarship, and service that formed historians’ professional identities throughout the twentieth century and shaped the Public History Movement that emerged in universities in the 1970s. Historians have limited studies of public history’s origins and evolution to certain time periods, rooting the field’s methods and academic programs to specific episodes in American history, including the Progressive era, New Deal, Civil Rights Movement, and the 1970s academic employment crisis. By focusing on the ways in which the

methods and goals of public historians are distinct from “traditional” historians, scholars have overlooked the ways in which the Public History Movement is part of an evolution of historical training and practice. Ultimately, I argue that the emergence of the Public History Movement in the late 1970s was the culmination of a persistent, century-long debate about the methods and purpose of historical training and practice.

Public history programs are rooted in the establishment of the American historical profession in the late nineteenth century. As historians formed an academic discipline, they also took control of private and state-managed historical agencies and established new standards for historical work in public life. As they took on roles as archivists, curators, and administrators, historians began to reform collegiate history education training through supplementary workshops, internships, and comprehensive courses of study. The historians I follow throughout this study never sought to develop a new field of historical study. Instead, they offered an entirely new vision of historical training that better reflected the diverse ways history shapes public life. Their vision entered the mainstream at a moment when social activism and national economic woes demanded reform within collegiate history departments, challenging exceedingly narrow notions of historical professionalism and offering a new model of historical training that centered the dialogical nature of history.

CHAPTER ONE

“To Make History the Living Force”: Crafting a Public Historical Practice, 1880-1945

On September 18, 1900, William Joseph Peele and other civic leaders gathered at the North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College in Raleigh to form the State Literary and Historical Association (NCSLHA). In an editorial that appeared in Raleigh’s *News and Observer*, Peele laid out the association’s main objectives: “the collection, preservation, production, and dissemination of our State literature and history, the encouragement of public and school libraries, and the inculcation of a literary spirit among our own people.”¹ Although the intentions of the association’s founders varied, collectively, they became the state’s most powerful promoters of history in the 1900s. In 1903, the group effectively lobbied the General Assembly to create the North Carolina Historical Commission, an appointed body charged with directing an official state history program.

Between 1900 and 1930, the North Carolina Historical Commission expanded the state’s investment in historical work, building an infrastructure for local and state history. Commission leaders positioned themselves as public servants, arguing that their efforts to preserve state records supported academics and, thereby, strengthened civic life. The commission’s public service evolved in the 1930s and 1940s as it increased grassroots archival collecting, expanded the state museum, and created a historic preservation program. Commission leaders increasingly emphasized their responsibilities to “taxpayers” rather than academics or politicians, reframing their commitment to public service. Commission leaders also set new standards for historical

¹ Founding members included North Carolina Supreme Court Justice Walter Clark, college professors Daniel Harvey Hill Jr., George Winston, Henry Jerome Stockard, and authors Rebecca Cameron, and Mary Oats Spratt Van Landingham; see Edward P. Moses, “The State Literary and Historical Association,” *Literary and Historical Activities in North Carolina, 1900-1905: Vol. 1* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell & Co., 1907), 3, State Library of North Carolina, Raleigh.

training that reflected the administrative and technical challenges emerging within expanding state archives, museums, and historic preservation programs. By the 1950s, these new standards led to the first public history seminars and internships—the foundations for public history programs in the 1970s.

* * *

Professionalization of public historical practice in North Carolina began with Peele, a steadfast Progressive who believed that educational investment advanced economic and political development. Peele, who had studied law at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill after it reopened following the Civil War, was one among many southerners who tried to reimagine education at the end of the nineteenth century.² After opening a law practice in Raleigh in 1880, Peele organized the Watauga Club, laying the foundation for the establishment of the North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College by the end of the decade. In his 1888 history of the college’s founding, Peele insisted that “pure theoretical and literary education is not of itself sufficient to meet the demands of the people or the necessities of the times.”³

Although Peele championed agricultural science, he viewed humanistic inquiry as the foundation for a democratic society. In *Civil Government of North Carolina and the United States* (1907), he emphasized the relationship between historical study and responsible governance. The bulk of *Civil Government* dealt with governmental and civil structures, but

² As early as the 1860s, Confederate General Daniel Harvey Hill (father of Daniel Harvey Hill Jr. mentioned in the previous footnote) sought to establish an educational program that could meet the demands of and develop an industrial society in North Carolina. From his home in Charlotte, he began publishing *The Land We Love*, a periodical that melded his own interests in history, literature, industry, and the military. In the first edition, Hill called for practical education to take the place of classical literature and history, see D. H. Hill, “Education,” *Land We Love* 1 (October 1866): 1-11, State Library of North Carolina.

³ W. J. Peele, “A History of the Agricultural and Mechanical College,” *North Carolina Teacher* 6 (September 1888): 5, State Library of North Carolina.

Peele argued that civic leaders also needed to understand the political and social circumstances in which systems of governments and laws had emerged.⁴ In 1890, as Peele pushed for industrial education at the new college in Raleigh, he helped to establish an endowed chair of history at his alma mater in Chapel Hill. University of North Carolina alumni hoped that whoever held the endowed chair of history would elevate the field of southern history and oversee the creation of “accurate historical knowledge of the state,” a subtle commentary on what they perceived as northern bias in southern education and within American historiography.⁵

An endowed chair of history at the University of North Carolina evidenced the status that historical study had acquired as an academic discipline and civic function by 1890.⁶ Under the tutelage of German historian Leopold von Ranke, many American historians had adopted a more methodological or “scientific” model of historical research where the historical seminar became the laboratory of history and students treated books as specimens and documents as artifacts. It had taken root at Johns Hopkins University, where Charles Beard trained a generation of historians who sought scholarly objectivity, considering their work part of a collective academic endeavor, effectively redefining the audience for historical scholarship. Scientific historians required a steady supply of documents or artifacts for their research, so some historians,

⁴ W. J. Peele, *Civil Government of North Carolina and the United States* (Atlanta: B. F. Johnson Publishing Company, 1907), 3-4, State Library of North Carolina. Peele provided models of effective citizenship through historical biography in *Lives of Distinguished North Carolinians with Illustrations and Speeches* (Raleigh: North Carolina Publishing Society, 1897), State Library of North Carolina.

⁵ “A Chair of History,” *The State Chronicle* (Raleigh, NC), May 4, 1890. At the first meeting of the NCSLHA, members lamented how “no State has been more misrepresented than our own”; see *Literary and Historical Activities in North Carolina, 1900-1905*, 2.

⁶ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 33; Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 196, 199.

positioning themselves as record-keepers for the federal government, began to lobby for a national records program and archive and secured a congressional charter in 1889 to form the American Historical Association. As academic historians increasingly wrote for their colleagues and not the general public, in 1895, the American Historical Association founded a disciplinary journal, the *American Historical Review*.⁷

In 1900, frustrated with North Carolina's neglect of public records, John Spencer Bassett, a native North Carolinian who had received his degree under Beard at Johns Hopkins and returned to North Carolina as professor of history at Trinity College in Durham, joined the American Historical Association's Public Records Commission.⁸ After acquiring appropriations from Congress, the American Historical Association relied on professors such as Bassett and state historical associations to report on and promote the building of state and national records repositories.⁹ American Historical Association President Edward Eggleston asserted that

⁷ William M. Sloane, "History and Democracy," *American Historical Review* 1 (October 1895): 2. On the organization of the AHA, see Herman Ausubel, *Historians and Their Craft: A Study of the Presidential Addresses of the American Historical Association, 1884-1945* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965), 18-45; Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 196-218; Robert B. Townsend, *History's Babel: Scholarship, Professionalization, and the Historical Enterprise in the United States, 1880-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2013), 29-35; Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 47-53.

⁸ John S. Bassett, "An Historical Opportunity," *Morning Post* (Raleigh, NC), May 17, 1900; "Report of the Public Archives Commission," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1900*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1901), 2: 5, AHA History and Archives, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/annual-reportsrians.org>. Trinity College was renamed Duke University in 1924.

⁹ The AHA formed the Public Records Commission in 1889 and the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1894. The latter limited its collections to private papers. The Public Archives Commission was founded in 1900 to survey governmental records. Ian Tyrrell and Rebecca Conard each examined the relationship between archives and history; see Tyrrell, *Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 175-77, 218; Conard, *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2001), 11-15.

members of state and local historical associations would prove invaluable to future historians as their recordkeeping documented the lives of everyday people.¹⁰

Yet, at the turn of the twentieth century, the state of public records in North Carolina was bleak. A fire that burned the state capitol in 1831 had destroyed most of the state's early public records, and even a half-century later, the state librarian had minimal resources and training to consolidate and organize state records. Some effort had been made in the 1880s to collect colonial records, but for the most part, North Carolina's historical records remained stuffed away in state buildings and private homes.¹¹

Bassett was critical of the state's disregard of historical records and the political motivations of the North Carolina Historical Association, whose members emphatically aligned themselves with the state Democratic Party and its pro-White, anti-Black politics.¹² After a coalition of Republicans and Populists captured the governorship in 1894 and enacted a series of reforms to broaden the electorate for African Americans, Democrats tried to reclaim power in nearly all aspects of society, through public memory and culture, including a boom in the erection of Confederate monuments. Party leaders relied on well-educated politicians to garner

¹⁰ Edward Eggleston, "The New History," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1900*, 1: 35-48.

¹¹ "Report on the Public Archives in North Carolina," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1900*, 2: 251-66. For an example of the state's efforts to collect and publish colonial records, see William L. Saunders, ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 10 vols. (Raleigh: F. M. Hale, 1886-1890), available through the *Documenting the American South* project at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, accessed June 19, 2021, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr>.

¹² See, for example, W. J. Peele, "Yankee and His Dollar," *Weekly State Chronicle* (Raleigh, NC), January 24, 1890; Walter Clark, "Card from Judge Clark," *Roxboro (NC) Courier*, August 8, 1894; "Southern Intolerance," *Charlotte (NC) Observer*, January 28, 1892; W. J. Peele, "Electoral Cooperation," *Progressive Farmer* (Winston, NC), October 13, 1896; "Republicans May Not Endorse Populist Nominees," *Asheville (NC) Weekly Citizen*, August 9, 1894.

political support for White supremacy, using the “Press, Pulpit, and party Politicians.”¹³

Whether in stone, in speeches, or on paper, North Carolina Democrats narrated a history of Anglo-Saxon supremacy and evoked a historical narrative that blamed the failures of Reconstruction on African Americans unfit for governance.¹⁴ By 1900, Democrats had reclaimed most of their political power, initiating a series of reforms that affirmed their promise to reassert White supremacy, including a disenfranchisement amendment that severely limited the voting rights of Black North Carolinians and demonstrating the significant power wielded by those who controlled the collection, preservation, interpretation of (White) history,

The North Carolina State Literary and Historical Association emerged on the heels of these vicious political campaigns. In an address at the association’s first meeting on October 23, 1900, Bassett critiqued how members used history to bolster Democrats’ claims to political

¹³ “Intellectual Inspiration,” *Charlotte Democrat*, January 15, 1892. For the most comprehensive account of the white supremacy campaign in North Carolina, see David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson, eds., *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). Gregory P. Downs also explored how a cohort of University of North Carolina alumni and NCSLHA members “coalesced into a political machine” committed to White supremacy, universal education, and state expansion; see “University Men, Social Science, and White Supremacy in North Carolina,” *Journal of Southern History* 75 (May 2009): 267-304.

¹⁴ W. Fitzhugh Brundage and David W. Blight each offered comprehensive discussions of race and history-making after the Civil War; see Blight *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001); and Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005). Also see C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951); Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Stephanie Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Karen L. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

power. He urged the association to encourage the thorough investigation and research of primary source materials.¹⁵

The membership took little notice of Bassett's warnings. The earliest commemoration projects led by the association affirmed the United States' White settler past to justify Democrats' seizure of state power and were laden with sentimentality and partiality. At the organization's second meeting on October 22, 1901, newly elected Democratic governor Charles B. Aycock, who had campaigned on a platform of White supremacy in 1900, strongly supported a proposal for a celebration of the Roanoke Colony, asserting that "Wherever the Anglo-Saxon sets his foot, he becomes a permanency. . . . Where he has once become established he is a fixture and he carries with him the infinite love of home, and out of that grows a respect for government and the power of self-restraint which makes government a possibility and a success." Overlooking colonists' failure to establish a permanent settlement, Aycock argued that Roanoke laid the foundation for later settlements in Virginia.¹⁶ George Winston, President of the Agricultural and Mechanical College and a co-founder of the NCSLHA, similarly commended Sir Walter Raleigh's persistence and commitment to Anglo-Saxon colonization.¹⁷

¹⁵ J. S. Bassett, "How to Collect and Preserve Historical Material," *The Morning Post*, November 25, 1900.

¹⁶ "Meeting of the State Literary and Historical Society," *The Morning Post*, October 22, 1901. See also "Proposed Celebration on Historic Ground," *The Morning Post*, November 22, 1901; "Aycock Speaks to Swarming Throngs at Goldsboro," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), July 15, 1900; "What the Amendment Will Do," *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), July 12, 1900; "Aycock Speaks in Surry County," *News and Observer*, May 19, 1900; "The Concord Debate," *News and Observer*, September 14, 1898; "Roanoke Island Celebration Company Is to Be Incorporated," *News and Observer*, January 3, 1902.

¹⁷ George Winston was a prominent leader in the push toward educational reform in North Carolina. He was a professor and then president of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. He then spent three years in Texas as the President of the University of Texas, before returning to North Carolina in 1899 to serve as the president of the North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College. While at the University of North Carolina, Winston had taught Charles Aycock; see D. Lyman Abbott, "The Educational Revival," *The Farmer and Mechanic* (Raleigh,

The Roanoke celebration demonstrated how historians contributed to the development of American nationalism in the early twentieth century. Celebration planners believed their public service promoted a national narrative of United States history firmly grounded in Anglo-Saxonism and performed through celebrations on North Carolina Day, Anglo-Saxon Day, and National Day.¹⁸ These were not only southern celebrations mired in Lost Cause ideology. Acknowledging that the state's political and economic stability demanded stronger relationships with northern politicians and business leaders, members of the association tried to make North Carolina history relevant to a national audience. Winston connected the history of the Roanoke colony to Republican-led imperialism, arguing that Roanoke provided valuable lessons for American leaders, drawing connections between past and modern-day colonization efforts and highlighting both parties' pursuit of White supremacy.¹⁹

At the turn of the twentieth century, history provided fertile fodder for the development of American nationalism and Jim Crowism, and North Carolina State Literary and Historical Association members outspokenly defended segregation and disenfranchisement. By 1900, most

NC), May 12, 1903; Downs, "University Men, Social Science, and White Supremacy in North Carolina."

¹⁸ Southern journalists expressed frustration with northern critiques of southern histories and sectionalism in the late nineteenth century. Responding to such critiques, one newspaper editor wrote, "The Post is right. The South is a section, a proud section, with a glorious history and a noble people, and a section that rejoices that along with the 'East,' and the 'West' and the 'North.' It goes to make an indivisible Union of indestructible States"; see "The Post, The Sun, The South and School Histories," *The Charlotte Observer*, February 21, 1897. As David Blight argued, a "reconciliationist vision of the Civil War and Reconstruction" came to dominate the historical conscience of White men, particularly in university settings. Many of these men turned to history-making, hoping to rewrite history and restore prevailing social orders, see Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 357-58.

¹⁹ "Roanoke Island Celebration Company Is to Be Incorporated," *News and Observer*, January 3, 1902; C. J. Rivenbark, "The Great Celebration at Roanoke Island," *News and Observer*, July 27, 1902. W. J. Peele also argued in 1898 that the state's post-bellum history provided important information on United States involvement in Cuba and Philippines; see W. J. Peele, "Our History and Our Schools," *The Raleigh (NC) Times*, December 17, 1898.

White intellectuals adopted some notion of the scientific racism that southern politicians employed to justify racist legislation. As imperialism raised new questions regarding immigration and citizenship, academics and politicians beyond the South also looked to the region's race relations to guide contemporary decision-making.²⁰ In 1901, the American Academy of Political and Social Science chose "American's Race Problems" as the theme for its annual meeting. Scholars gathered to discuss imperialism, immigration, and segregation in the South. In his address to the Academy, George Winston evoked history, eugenics theory, and childhood memories to argue that southern progress and race relations depended on the disenfranchisement of African Americans."²¹ Winston's sentimental address exemplified the type of passion and prejudice about which John Spencer Bassett had previously warned in his address to the North Carolina Historical Association.²² Following Winston's presentation, W. E. B. Du Bois, professor of history at Atlanta University, argued that southern progress demanded a reexamination of economic and political policies since the Civil War, arguing that economic segregation and disenfranchisement limited the opportunities of southern African Americans.²³ The exchange between Winston and Du Bois, as well as Bassett's earlier critique, evidenced a racial and generational divide within the historical profession that came to shape the sentimental

²⁰ Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 74. See also Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad* (New York: Macmillan, 2001).

²¹ George T. Winston, "The Relation of the Whites to the Negroes," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 18 (July 1901): 115.

²² J. S. Bassett, "How to Collect and Preserve Historical Material," *Morning Post*, May 17, 1900; "Organized Last Night: The State Literary and Historical Association," *The Morning Post*, October 24, 1900.

²³ W. E. Burghardt DuBois, "The Relation of the Negroes to the Whites in the South," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 18 (July 1901): 121-40.

and nostalgic, yet professional and records-driven, public historical practice emerging in North Carolina.

In contrast to the Midwest and Northeast, where state governments more commonly provided subsidies to private associations, southern states such as North Carolina became the first to develop official state agencies dedicated to archives and history, ensuring that state political parties were invested in the content and messages produced by these agencies. Since the founding of the North Carolina State Historical Association, William Peele had lobbied the General Assembly to invest adequate funding and space to recordkeeping. In March 1903, the legislature established the North Carolina Historical Commission under Chapter 767 of the North Carolina Public Laws. The historians whom Governor Aycock appointed to the North Carolina Historical Commission became responsible for a statewide records management program, including the collection and publishing of private manuscripts and public records, with support from the state printers and state librarian, and a \$500 appropriation from the state legislature.²⁴ Earlier that year, Alabama and Mississippi had created similar state departments that served as models for North Carolina. Thomas McAdory Owen, secretary of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, argued that the southern model was far superior to those in the Northeast and Midwest. Even with government subsidies, private associations in northern and midwestern states struggled to find spaces in which to build archives and, more importantly, could not effectively coordinate with state agencies to create record collection policies. When discussion within the American Historical Association arose over why state governments should establish archival agencies, Owen asserted that existing state libraries were ill-equipped to manage

²⁴ *Report of the Historical Commission to Governor Charles B. Aycock, 1903-1905* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell & Co., 1904), 4, State Library of North Carolina.

archives and lacked the skills to edit historical manuscripts and answer research questions. Peele likely shared such concerns when he helped draft the bill to create the North Carolina Historical Commission.²⁵ In the early 1900s, then, southern historians carved out a unique role for themselves within expanding state bureaucracies as they sought to preserve public and private collections.²⁶

Although the archival preservation model that came out of the South was quite radical, state agencies still struggled to secure adequate financial support. In 1904, representatives from state historical agencies formed the Conference of Historical Societies, which met concurrently with the American Historical Association's annual meeting and provided historians a venue to discuss how to lobby state legislatures. During its first five years, the North Carolina Historical Commission made slow progress on the archive and history program due to meager funding.²⁷ In 1905, the General Assembly expanded the duties of the North Carolina Historical Commission, Governor Aycock made new appointments, and the commission held its first official meeting in Raleigh. Still, the North Carolina Historical Commission accomplished only a few things over the next two years, including collecting some private photographs, reprinting historical narratives

²⁵ Thomas McAdory Owen, "State Departments of Archives and History," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1904* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1905), 235-57, AHA History and Archives, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/annual-reportsrians.org>; *Eighth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., 1921), 2, State Library of North Carolina; Frontis W. Johnston, "The North Carolina Historical Commission, 1903-1978," in *Public History in North Carolina, 1907-1978*, ed. Jeffrey J. Crow (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources Division of Archives and History, 1979), 1; Joshua Rowley, "Leaders of Lost Causes: The North Carolina Historical Commission and State (Re) building in the New South North Carolina," 31-32, unpublished paper in the author's possession.

²⁶ Owen, "State Departments of Archives and History," 238, 241-43.

²⁷ R. D. W. Connor, "Reminiscences," March 1948, R. D. W. Connor Papers, 1890-1950, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

about North Carolina's settlement, and publishing North Carolina Historical Association reports. A lack of funding and paid staff limited the commission's productivity. In 1907, the state legislature increased the commission's budget to \$5,000 and charged it with not only building and maintaining a state records office but also with planning historical celebrations, marking historic sites, and encouraging state-wide historical research and interest.²⁸

The 1907 law permitted the North Carolina Historical Commission to employ a salaried secretary. Having voluntarily served as secretary since its founding, Robert Digges Wimberly (R. D. W.) Connor, a graduate of the University of North Carolina and secretary of the state's education campaign committee, assumed the position officially. He focused most of his early efforts on collecting private manuscript records. Motivated by Bassett's 1900 report to the Public Archives Commission that outlined the dire conditions of North Carolina's public archive, Connor set procedures for collecting state, county, and local public records and private papers, whether gifted or loaned. He called upon "all patriotic citizens" to "render a service to the State" by submitting valuable records and manuscripts for preservation.²⁹

North Carolina's reinvestment in the North Carolina Historical Commission reflected a national trend as state legislatures increased appropriations for historical work. In 1907, the Alabama state legislature appropriated \$15,000 toward its state archives and history department, and Mississippi provided \$25,000 plus printing costs for a three-year budget. Although appropriations paled compared to midwestern states like Wisconsin and Minnesota, which appropriated \$25,000 and \$20,000 respectively, southern states clearly had accepted the

²⁸ Connor, "Reminiscences"; *Literary and Historical Activities in North Carolina, 1900-1905*, 1: 9; *Report of the Historical Commission to Governor Charles B. Aycock, 1903-1905*, 7-10.

²⁹ "Report on the Public Archives in North Carolina," 251; *Report of the Historical Commission to Governor Charles B. Aycock*, 9; Rowley, "Leaders of Lost Causes," 25-26.

American Historical Association's recommendations that state governments preserve and make accessible historical records.³⁰

However, state endorsement did not grant the North Carolina Historical Commission complete authority over historical work in North Carolina, nor did it mean that the General Assembly looked only to Connor when it came to matters of history. North Carolina's participation at the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition of 1907 provides some insight into the relationship between the North Carolina Historical Commission and public historical work led by others. Held from April to November in 1907 in Norfolk, Virginia, the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition was a national celebration of the first permanent European settlement in North America.³¹ It was an ideal opportunity to bind North Carolina's origins in the Roanoke Colony to the larger national narrative. The General Assembly directed the North Carolina Historical Commission to cooperate with a local exposition committee to develop a historical exhibit. Although North Carolina eventually sent two exhibits to the exposition, Connor and the North Carolina Historical Commission played no role besides contributing \$100 and publishing the exhibit booklet. Instead, the exposition committee appointed Mary Hilliard Hinton and

³⁰ Evarts B. Greene, "Report of the Conference on the Work of State and Local Historical Societies," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1907*, 2 vols. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1908), 1: 49-64, AHA History and Archives, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/annual-reportsrians.org>.

³¹ Organizers of the Jamestown Exposition took a mildly different approach than previous southern expositions by centering a historical and cultural event, the tercentenary of the founding of the Jamestown Colony, rather than featuring a specific industry. The event was one of several southern expositions between the 1880s and World War I that showcased the South's industrial resources. Expositions in New Orleans (1884) and Atlanta (1895) both focused on cotton. The Tennessee Centennial Exposition (1897), although celebrating the state's admission to the union, featured railroad companies. See Bruce G. Harvey, *World's Fairs in a Southern Accent: Atlanta, Nashville, and Charleston, 1895-1902* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 252; Theda Perdue, *Race and the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition of 1895* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

Rebecca Schenck to design an exhibit for the North Carolina Building, and Charles N. Hunter independently produced another exhibit for the Negro Building.³²

Charles N. Hunter had been born into enslavement in 1852. Upon his emancipation in 1865, he enrolled in a freedmen's school and took classes at several colleges, never completing a degree. Still, he was the foremost historian of Black North Carolina, engaged in various historical projects, including historical celebrations, exhibitions, and publishing. As early as 1869, Hunter had organized a Fourth of July celebration, hoping that America's revolutionary past would unite Black and White North Carolinians.³³ Hunter continued in 1870 with Raleigh's first Emancipation Day, a celebration of the past and present in which participants listened to orations, watched parades, and heard music on both the trauma of slavery and the joy and promise of emancipation.³⁴ In 1879, Hunter had co-founded the North Carolina Industrial

³² *The Second Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1906-1908* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell & Co., 1909), 12, State Library of North Carolina. The appointment of women to exhibit work was not unusual. At the 1893 Colombian Exposition in Chicago, Sallie Southall Cotton and Florence Kidder directed an exhibit about the Roanoke Colony. However, North Carolina was only one of two states, along with South Carolina, to select women to organize the main historical exhibit at the Jamestown Exposition indicative of their more visible roles in state and local commemorative cultures in those states. On the breadth and influence of historical work engaged by African Americans and White women in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, see Blight, *Race and Reunion*; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "White Women and the Politics of Historical Memory in the New South, 1880-1920," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, ed. Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 115-39; Anastatia Sims, *The Power of Femininity in the New South: Women's Organizations and Politics in North Carolina, 1880-1930* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 128-54; Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*; Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*; Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).

³³ John H. Haley, *Charles N. Hunter and Race Relations in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 23.

³⁴ "Negroes Celebrate Emancipation Day," *The North Carolinian* (Elizabeth City, NC), January 3, 1901; "Emancipation Day Address," *The Semi-Weekly Landmark* (Statesville, NC), January 18, 1901.

Association, which initiated the state's first Negro State Fair. The fairs, which also celebrated Black Carolinians' pasts, presents, and futures, demonstrated racial progress and highlighted African American contributions to the state.³⁵

In the summer of 1906, Charles Hunter opened a Raleigh office of the Negro Development and Exposition Company and began work on his exhibit.³⁶ Framing the Jamestown Exposition as an opportunity to sell North Carolina as friendly to Black laborers, Hunter secured \$5,000 for exhibit expenses from the state legislature, although Joseph Pogue, Commissioner General of the North Carolina Jamestown Exposition Commission, managed the budget.³⁷ Hunter left his principal position to work full-time on the exhibition. For a monthly salary of \$25 plus travel expenses, he visited churches, schools, and homes throughout the state, seeking historical resources and writing letters to church leaders, educators, scholars, and business owners.³⁸ Since racism denied him access to the state museum and archive, he relied on personal appeals to identify important documents and artifacts to be featured in the exhibit, ultimately collecting resources well past the exposition's opening in April 1907. Local committees helped

³⁵ "Negro State Fair," *News and Observer*, October 20, 1907; Haley, *Charles N. Hunter and Race Relations in North Carolina*, 22-23, 46-48; Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 370-71.

³⁶ In 1903, Giles B. Jackson and Webster Davis founded the Negro Development and Exposition Company (NDEC) of the United States. After securing a congressional appropriation of \$100,000, the NDEC set-up offices across the country to develop exhibits for the Jamestown Exposition; see Ruth M. Winton, "Negro Participation in Southern Expositions, 1881-1915," *Journal of Negro Education* 16 (Winter 1947): 34-43.

³⁷ Charles N. Hunter to Dwight Ashley, March 29, 1907; R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company Sales Department to Charles N. Hunter, May 28, 1907; Charles N. Hunter to R. J. Reynolds & Co., June 3, 1907; all in Charles N. Hunter Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University Libraries, Durham, NC; Haley, *Charles N. Hunter and Race Relations in North Carolina*, 158-65.

³⁸ Charles N. Hunter to Kemp P. Battle, April 9, 1907; Kemp P. Battle to Charles N. Hunter, April 12, 1907; Charles N. Hunter to K. P. Battle, May 11, 1907; all in Charles N. Hunter Papers; *The Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition* (Norfolk, VA: Colonial Publishing Company, Inc., 1909).

Hunter secure resources and draft exhibit sections. In Asheville, for example, Leonora T. Jackson, a local committee chairwoman, prepared a small community exhibit for Hunter.³⁹ The final exhibit occupied 2,000 square feet at the main entrance of the Negro Building, situated between the Virginia and Tennessee displays.

The challenges of creating such a large exhibit within a year's time demonstrated to Hunter a dire need for collecting historical resources on African American history. Shortly after the General Assembly increased the North Carolina Historical Commission's budget in 1907, Hunter wrote Livingstone College professor W. H. Goler: "To me this enterprise as it affects the whole race is of immense value. If we are ever to have any history it is high time for us to be gathering and systematizing available data that, in time, may be organized and enlarged into an authentic record."⁴⁰ Professional opportunities were rare for Black Carolinians, however. Since its founding, the North Carolina Historical Association had excluded African Americans from membership. Aside from delivering lectures at the State Normal and Industrial College in Greensboro, the North Carolina Historical Commission also excluded Black North Carolinians. Even the state archives and museum opened to Whites only, with Connor privileging archival acquisitions from Confederate soldiers, White politicians, and the antebellum slave-holding elite. Records amassed by the state archive between 1903 and 1907 reveal no effort to find and preserve documents directly related to the experiences of Black North Carolinians.⁴¹

³⁹ Leonora T. Jackson to Charles N. Hunter, April 16, 1907, Charles N. Hunter Papers; Sims, *The Power of Femininity in the New South*, 133.

⁴⁰ Charles N. Hunter to W. H. Goler, May 20, 1907, Charles N. Hunter Papers.

⁴¹ *The Second Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, 3-4; Clarence H. Poe, ed., *Minutes of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the State Literary and Historical Association* (Raleigh: Mutual Publishing Company, 1909), 26-40, State Library of North Carolina. Despite exclusion from the NCHC, Black secondary school teachers preserved African American history by emphasizing biography and countering White and Eurocentric narratives of American history

Mary Hilliard Hinton, too, had significant experience in public historical production. Born after the Civil War in Wake County, she had attended St. Mary's School and the Peace Institute. Hinton was an accomplished portrait artist, engaged by the state's Daughters of the American Revolution as their heraldic artist. Since 1903, she had served as editor of *The North Carolina Booklet*, a publication of the North Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution that included historical essays and biographies. Proceeds from the publication helped to fund the organization's commemoration efforts, such as their plans to erect a monument to "the patriotic women who composed the 'Edenton Tea Party.'"⁴²

As for North Carolina's official exhibit, at the Jamestown celebration, Hinton managed nearly every step of exhibit development with Rebecca Schenck's assistance, including writing loan contracts for artifacts and arranging transportation of artifacts from private homes. In addition, they enlisted the help of women across the state to collect artifacts related to North Carolina history. It was a pattern familiar to R. D. W. Connor who often relied on White women to facilitate public outreach and lobby for financial support. As he had centralized North Carolina's historical resources in Raleigh, women's voluntary associations garnered much-needed support for a public archive building.⁴³ Women's organizations also led much of the historical work that North Carolinians encountered daily through school programs, textbooks,

in their classrooms; see O. Faduma, "The Negro Teachers of North Carolina," *The Morning Post*, June 14, 1903.

⁴² Hinton served as editor for the first time in May 1903; see Mrs. D. H. Hill, "Preface," *The North Carolina Booklet: Great Events in North Carolina History* 3 (May 1903): 3, State Library of North Carolina; Samuel A'Court Ashe, "The Notable Work of One of North Carolina's Notable Women," *Sky-land* 1 (September 1914): 629-31, State Library of North Carolina.

⁴³ *Literary and Historical Activities in North Carolina, 1900-1905*, 1: 7; *The Third Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, December 1, 1908 to November 30, 1910* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., 1910), 5-6, State Library of North Carolina; Connor, "Reminiscences."

monuments, and public celebrations.⁴⁴ Although White women remained active participants in commemorative and preservation work, they struggled to advance within the broader historical profession. With greater access to universities and paid positions within state agencies, men more easily blurred the line between amateur and professional than women could. Yet, although Hinton and Schenck secured the support of the state's Hall of History, the North Carolina Historical Commission proved less cooperative. Connor restricted them from borrowing documents to take to the exposition for fear they would be lost or damaged.⁴⁵ It was more than caution on Connor's part: women had held leadership roles within the North Carolina State Literary and Historical Association, but none had served on the North Carolina Historical Commission.⁴⁶

Connor largely overlooked and disregarded women and others he perceived as antiquarian, including Fred Olds, the collector for the Hall of History. A newspaper columnist, lecturer, and collector, Olds maintained a loyal following in North Carolina. Preceding a summer school course that Olds taught at the North Carolina Agriculture and Mechanical College, a newspaper editor anticipated that Olds's "novel and interesting method of teaching North Carolina history"—incorporating a field trip to the Hall of History and lecturing at the Raleigh Cemetery where many of the individuals of study lay interred—"will probably teach the teachers

⁴⁴ *Report of the Historical Commission to Governor Charles B. Aycock*, 9-11.

⁴⁵ Mary Hilliard Hinton, *The North Carolina Historical Exhibit at the Jamestown Ter-centennial Exposition, Norfolk, Virginia, April 26-December 1, 1907: A History of the Exhibit, Together with a Complete Catalogue of the Relics, Portraits and Manuscripts Exhibited* (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1908), 14, State Library of North Carolina.

⁴⁶ Julie Des Jardins, *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America: Gender, Race and the Politics of Memory: Gender, Race, and the Politics of Memory, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 24.

more genuine history of North Carolina than they ever knew.”⁴⁷ Olds assumed the official state title of “collector” in 1902 after donating his private collection of artifacts to form the Hall.⁴⁸

Noting Olds’s reputation for mislabeling artifacts, however, Connor criticized Olds’s approach to scholarship, concluding that he was “very careless of his history.”⁴⁹ Under Connor’s leadership, the North Carolina Historical Commission minimally invested in the Hall of History and did not officially gain control of the collections until 1914.

For the most part, Connor positioned the North Carolina Historical Commission as a resource for policymakers and academics, construing public historical practice quite narrowly. In 1908, the commission published a documentary history of public education in North Carolina and a pocket manual for General Assembly members that included state traditions, history, and transcriptions of important state documents. Connor lobbied for four years to secure support for a legislature reference librarian who could provide guidance for policymakers. The General Assembly finally approved the position in 1914.⁵⁰ In his reports to the governor, Connor argued for continued archival support by boasting that researchers from throughout the United States

⁴⁷ “Lectures by Col. Fred A. Olds,” *The Morning Post*, February 28, 1904; Fred Olds, “Raleigh Oddities: Col. Fred Olds Brings Four into Print,” *Union Republican* (Winston-Salem, NC), August 6, 1908.

⁴⁸ Between 1902 and 1914, the Hall of History consisted of a collection of documents, artifacts, papers, and pictures housed within a “State Museum” located within the Agricultural Building. See “Fire-Proof State Library Building,” *News and Observer*, February 24, 1909.

⁴⁹ Connor, “Reminiscences;” Mark Anderson Moore, “Fred Olds: Father of the Museum of History,” in *History for All the People: 100 Years of Public History in North Carolina*, ed. Ansley Herring Wegner (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2003), 10.

⁵⁰ *Sixth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Commission, December 1, 1914 to November 30, 1916* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., 1916), 20-21, State Library of North Carolina.

visited or called upon the state archives for information on various research topics, including the Mexican-American War, Reconstruction, the Confederate Government, and railroads.⁵¹

As long as Connor and the North Carolina Historical Commission remained committed to White Carolina's history, Democratic state-building supported the commission.⁵² At a North Carolina State Literary and Historical Association meeting in 1911, former governor Thomas J. Jarvis called on the General Assembly to support a new building to house the commission, arguing historical work was part of a broader program of state expansion. He wanted the North Carolina Historical Commission to stand equal to other state agencies such as the Agricultural Department, the Corporation Commission, the Labor Commission, and the Insurance Commission.⁵³ In January 1914, the North Carolina Historical Commission moved out of the state capitol and into a new building with two dedicated exhibition rooms for the Hall of History, space for manuscript storage, two rooms for manuscript repair, a research room, and office space.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *Report of the Historical Commission to Governor Charles B. Aycock*, 9-11; James B. Rhoads, "The North Carolina State Archives," in Crow, ed., *Public History in North Carolina, 1907-1978*, 18-19.

⁵² Influenced by the emerging fields of political science, economics, and sociology, historians throughout the United States viewed their research as tools of Progressive reform in the early twentieth-century; see Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 98. At the AHA's annual meeting in 1903, Carrol D. Wright presented on a comprehensive study of economic history on behalf of the Carnegie Institute; see Ellen Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory: Writing America's Past, 1880-1980* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 44-53. In Iowa, Benjamin Shambaugh, leader of the Iowa State Historical Association and a political science professor at the University of Iowa had long made arguments for historians' relevance within expanding state bureaucracies; see Conard, *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History*.

⁵³ Clarence H. Poe, ed., *Proceedings of the Eleventh and Twelfth Annual Meetings of the State Literary and Historical Association* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., 1912), 23, 26-27, State Library of North Carolina.

⁵⁴ *Fifth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, December 1, 1912 to November 30, 1914 (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1914), 6.

In 1914, the United States Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act, establishing the Cooperative Extension Service and inspiring states to create agricultural extension services. Some North Carolinians saw an opportunity to initiate a broader extension movement through the university system. Dr. Edwin Mims, chairman of the Extension Committee, spoke of the public's "desire of high institutions of learning to be of service to the wider public than that found within the walls of those institutions."⁵⁵ He called upon all historians "who are fitted by temperament" to "not be satisfied unless he has something to do with the interpretation of history for many of his fellow citizens, who may be college graduates or who may never have had the advantages of such a training." Mims may have over-anticipated public interest. When the North Carolina State Literary and Historical Association organized a public lecture series on historical topics, they were poorly attended to members' disappointment.⁵⁶

Although North Carolinians appeared reticent to attend public lectures, Connor found them willing to participate in grassroots collecting efforts. During World War I, Connor and Olds, officially employed by the North Carolina Historical Commission, organized county volunteers to collect letters, photographs, and posters related to the war effort.⁵⁷ In Davidson County, volunteers administered a survey of residents "relating to their part in the 'big show.'" ⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Poe, ed., *Proceedings of the Eleventh and Twelfth Annual Meetings of the State Literary and Historical Association*, 10-11. In his address, Mims upheld the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin, and Columbia and Harvard Universities as examples of institutions committed to public service. The University of Wisconsin led in applied research in the 1900s. The "Wisconsin idea," according to John R. Thelen, "was the notion that campus and capital ought to cooperate"; see *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 137-38.

⁵⁶ Poe, ed., *Proceedings of the Eleventh and Twelfth Annual Meetings of the State Literary and Historical Association*, 36.

⁵⁷ Seventh Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, December 1, 1916 to November 30, 1918 (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1919), 20-22, State State Library of North Carolina.

⁵⁸ "To Keep History Straight," *The Dispatch* (Lexington, NC), October 28, 1919.

In 1919, the General Assembly created a permanent position dedicated to war records. Robert B. House, a native North Carolinian, graduate of the University of North Carolina and Harvard University, and a veteran of the war, became “Collector of World War Records” in June.⁵⁹

For the most part, volunteer collectors had no guidance on systematically organizing materials, and when House assumed the collector position, he described their efforts as “chaotic.” Regardless, he urged them to carry on their work and expanded the project to African American volunteers in sixty-two counties and women throughout the state.⁶⁰ In February 1920, House organized a series of workshops for volunteer collectors that covered the types of documents to preserve, cataloging, and preservation methods.⁶¹ House also published bulletins and authored newspaper articles that covered collecting best practices.

Beyond local collecting, women made significant inroads into the North Carolina Historical Commission before and during the war. In 1910, Connor hired William Edmonds as an archivist, Mary Wilson as a stenographer, and several temporary employees assigned to special publications and manuscript work. After Edmonds left the archivist position in February 1911, Connor permanently hired Emily Taylor as a manuscript restorer. Taylor had previously worked as a special copyist, and although she did not assume the position of archivist, she oversaw all manuscript collections. In the summer of 1911, Taylor traveled to Washington, DC to study the repair, mounting, and filing of manuscripts at the Library of Congress. When the

⁵⁹ *Eighth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, 15.

⁶⁰ “To Keep History Straight”; *Eighth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, 13-25.

⁶¹ “Collectors of War Records Meet,” *The Charlotte News*, February 5, 1920; “Makes Progress on War Records,” *News and Observer*, October 27, 1919; “War Record Body Plans for Action,” *The Charlotte News*, February 11, 1920; “War Records to Be Kept by State U.D.C.,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, February 11, 1920; “War Records Association,” *Roanoke Rapids (NC) Herald*, February 13, 1920.

North Carolina Historical Commission moved to the state administrative building in 1914, Taylor had two rooms dedicated to her work.⁶²

As the North Carolina Historical Commission expanded to include more North Carolinians, particularly women, in their work, some African Americans voiced renewed frustration over White historians' continued disregard for their history. In response, Charles Hunter continued to collect historical materials, hoping to write a complete history on the experiences of African Americans in North Carolina.⁶³ In an editorial submitted to the *Charlotte Observer*, a reader criticized Whites' failure to learn African American history, blaming segregation and the ways in which contemporary news covered African Americans. He also charged that White scholars actively used history to justify discrimination.⁶⁴

In 1921, Black educators, influenced by Carter Woodson, a Harvard graduate who had established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915 and the *Journal of Negro History* in 1916, organized the North Carolina Negro Historical Association.⁶⁵ Woodson offered a strong critique of the racist historiography most early-twentieth-century White scholars learned and perpetuated.⁶⁶ At Columbia University in New York, William Archibald Dunning

⁶² *The Fourth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, December 1, 1910 to November 30, 1912* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1912), 6-7, State Library of North Carolina.

⁶³ "Reunion of Ex-Slaves Is Plan of Raleigh Negro," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, November 26, 1927.

⁶⁴ "Negroes Organize New Association," *Durham (NC) Morning Herald*, October 13, 1921; T. L. McCoy, "Negroes Holding School Meeting," *News and Observer*, September 16, 1921; J. P. Funderburk, "Racial Pride," *The Charlotte Observer*, November 5, 1921.

⁶⁵ "Emancipation Day Will Be Observed," *Durham Morning Herald*, December 25, 1921. The founding leaders of the NCNHA included T. S. Inborden as president, Charlotte Hawkins Brown as vice-president, R. McCants Andrews as secretary, and Professor J. H. Johnson as treasurer; see Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 231.

⁶⁶ Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 231-33; John Herbert Roper Sr., "Ransack Roulhac and Racism: Joseph Gr Joseph Grégoire de Roulhac Hamilton and Dunning's Questions of Institution Building and Jim Crow," in *The Dunning School: Historians, Race, and the Meaning of*

and his students, among them Joseph G. de Roulhac Hamilton, professed that Reconstruction had been a White national tragedy and that African Americans were unfit for self-government. Ulrich B. Phillips, one of Dunning's students, went so far as to argue a position previously advanced by North Carolina State Literary and Historical Association founder George Winston: that slavery had produced positive race relations.⁶⁷ Woodson had determined not only to confront such racism within the historical profession but also to cultivate historical appreciation among the Black middle class. Throughout the 1920s, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History offered lectures and extension courses catered to general audiences as features of Negro History Week.⁶⁸ The North Carolina Negro Historical Association undertook similar work in North Carolina, including partnering with Victor R. Daily, editor of the *Journal of Negro History*, to discuss the work of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History at a lecture in a Winston-Salem church in 1922.⁶⁹

Although the organization's founders hoped the North Carolina Negro Historical Association would cooperate and liaise with the North Carolina Historical Commission, they were ultimately disappointed. By the 1920s, North Carolina Historical Commission leadership held few racially progressive views. In 1921, Connor left the North Carolina Historical

Reconstruction, ed. John David Smith and J. Vincent Lowery (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 179-202.

⁶⁷ Winston, "The Relation of the Whites to the Negroes"; Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 228-30.

⁶⁸ The public outreach of the ASNLH should not overshadow Woodson's scholarly work. Woodson, along with the growing number of African American scholars in the 1920s, challenged numerous White scholars' interpretations of American history; see Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory*, 156-63. For accounts of Woodson's public outreach, see Jeffrey C. Stewart and Faith Davis Ruffins, "A Faithful Witness: Afro-American Public History in Historical Perspective, 1828-1984," in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, ed. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 312-18; Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 128-29.

⁶⁹ "Noted Negro Orator to Speak Sunday," *The Twin-City Daily Sentinel* (Winston-Salem, NC), March 18, 1922.

Commission to pursue graduate training at Columbia under Dunning, remaining involved in the state archives from a distance. He developed a close friendship with Dunning's student Joseph Hamilton, now a professor at the University of North Carolina. As Connor worked to professionalize the state archives, Hamilton undertook a similar effort, traveling throughout the South collecting pamphlets, letters, and photographs to build a collection of material culture that would become the Southern Historical Collection.⁷⁰ Both collections remained nearly inaccessible to Black contributors and researchers through the 1950s.⁷¹ As Hamilton focused more on the Southern Historical Collection, after completing his degree, Connor assumed Hamilton's position as Kenan Professorship in History and Government at the University of North Carolina.⁷² Albert Ray Newsome, who became secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission in 1922 after earning his PhD from the University of Michigan, likewise studied in the Dunning tradition under Ulrich B. Philips. By the 1920s, then, North Carolina's public history infrastructure was dominated by men trained in Dunning School historiography and dedicated to the preservation and celebration of the White South.

⁷⁰ *Ninth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1920-1922* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1923), 5, State Library of North Carolina; Roper, "Ransack Roulhac and Racism," 179-202. For broader context on local history and the rise of "Americana" in the 1920s, see Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 310-444. Mike Wallace also explored popular history and material culture with an emphasis on corporate history in *Mickey Mouse History: And Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

⁷¹ John Hope Franklin, "The Negro's Dilemma," *The New York Times*, January 17, 1960; John Hope Franklin, *Mirror to America: The Autobiography of John Hope Franklin* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006), 83-84; Alex H. Poole, "The Strange Career of Jim Crow Archives: Race, Space, and History in the Mid-Twentieth-Century American South," *American Archivist* 77 (Spring/Summer 2014): 36-37.

⁷² R. D. W. Connor to R. B. House, April 22, 1926, Historical Commission, General Correspondence: 1926 (A-H), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh.

Under Newsome's leadership, the North Carolina Historical Commission expanded public outreach almost exclusively for White Carolinians and built an infrastructure for local and state history, developing a historical roadside markers program, radio shows as part of the NC Radio School, and a county historian program. Building off his predecessor's efforts to appoint county collectors responsible for war materials, Newsome worked with county local boards of education to appoint county historians whom he tasked with collecting manuscripts, records, and newspapers. He encouraged county historians to author essays for newspapers, host lectures, and organize local historical associations.⁷³ The program became part of a nationwide movement in which county historians formed a growing body of amateur (untrained) historians who fueled the efforts of state historical agencies.⁷⁴ Men made up the majority of county historians, but some North Carolina communities, including Buncombe, Robeson, Burke, Cumberland, and Forsyth counties, officially appointed women.⁷⁵ Newsome did not necessarily view county historians as colleagues, yet he yielded that "it has not been uncommon for interested and intelligent laymen to produce works of excellence in state and national history" and advocated county or state governments pay the historians their work.⁷⁶ The effort lost momentum when funding failed to materialize.

⁷³"Madison County History Wanted," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, June 8, 1927; "Mine of Facts Awaits Master Hand to Write Vivid Story of W. N. C.," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, January 27, 1929; "County Historian to Address Teachers," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, January 9, 1928; Brock Barkley, "County Historian Idea Is Proving Popular in State," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, June 13, 1927; *The Twelfth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1926-1928* (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1928), 26-32, State Library of North Carolina.

⁷⁴ Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 44-49. On the national development of local history, see Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 11-41.

⁷⁵ "Mrs. Gwyn Elected County Historian," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, May 11, 1928; *The Robesonian* (Lumberton, NC), June 16, 1927; Barkley, "County Historian Idea Is Proving Popular in State."

⁷⁶ *The Twelfth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1926-1928*, 27.

In 1926, the American Historical Association proposed an endowment to provide research grants, funds to publish a survey of American history, and support for the work of state historical associations and public archives. Newsome oversaw North Carolina's fundraising campaign. However, to his frustration, in 1927, the American Historical Association allocated only \$2,500 of its \$70,000 annual budget to surveying historical resources and only \$2,000 toward inventories of state and local archives.⁷⁷ The crash of 1929 seriously hindered Newsome's efforts to expand the commission. North Carolina Historical Commission appropriations plummeted, from \$30,856 in 1930 to \$11,315 in 1934. Regular staff dropped from ten to eight people. With minimal resources, Newsome slowed publications and the highway maker program, hoping to continue the radio programs and school visits to the Hall of History.⁷⁸

Newsome left the North Carolina Historical Commission in 1936, and his successor, Christopher Crittenden, carried on the commission's work with funds and laborers provided through New Deal programs. Crittenden, a native North Carolinian who held a PhD in history from Yale University, assumed the secretaryship amidst expansion and economic depression. Between 1934 and 1936, the North Carolina Historical Commission benefited from over \$60,000 of federal expenditures, doubling the commission's pre-Depression appropriations. New Deal expenditures and the fulfillment of long-awaited federal and state legislation for records management strained the commission's resources in the 1930s and 1940s. The Historical Records Survey, a project of the Works Progress Administration, occupied most of Crittenden's

⁷⁷ "Program for the Use of the Income from an Endowment Fund of a Million Dollars" and "American Historical Association Endowment Fund," both in American Historical Association, General Correspondence, 1926 (A-H), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁷⁸ *Fourteenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1930-1932* (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1932), 21-22, 24, State Library of North Carolina; *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1934-1936* (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1936), 22-24, State Library of North Carolina.

time and employed approximately one hundred workers from January to June 1936.

Additionally, the passage of the North Carolina Public Records Act in 1936 flooded the state archives with governmental records, extending the commission's ability to process and catalog the documents.⁷⁹

Federal investments in records management, including the establishment of the National Archives in 1934, sparked discussion among historians about archival standards, training, and support in the United States.⁸⁰ Before the 1930s, archivists and government historians had expressed minimal interest in developing archival practice because most agreed that training and experience in historical research was the best preparation for a career in archival work.⁸¹ The Public Archives Commission had met concurrently with the American Historical Association since its founding in 1900, and members included trained historians who primarily managed growing state archives, men such as Connor, Newsome, and Crittenden. To satisfy demands for specialized training schools, the American Historical Association and Public Archives Commission started work on an archival training manual in 1932.⁸² President Franklin Roosevelt's selection of Connor in 1934 as the first archivist of the United States was the work

⁷⁹ The Historical Records Survey provided federal funding to survey church, local, county, and state records. *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1934-1936*, 22-24; *Seventeenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1936-1938* (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1938), 32-33, State Library of North Carolina; Wegner, *History for All the People*, 17.

⁸⁰ A. R. Newsome to Dexter Perkins, October 29, 1932 and Julian P. Boyd to A. R. Newsome, July 11, 1932, both in American Historical Association, General Correspondence, June-December 1932 (A-B), Director's Office, Division of Archives and History Records Group.

⁸¹ A. R. Newsome, "Report of the Special A.H.A. Committee to the Executive Council," October 15, 1935, American Historical Association, 1931-1935, Outside Organizations in the Department of History Records, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁸² William J. Stratton to A. R. Newsome, March 8, 1932; Boyd to Newsome, July 11, 1932, both in American Historical Association, General Correspondence, June-December 1932 (A-B), Director's Office, Division of Archives and History Records Group.

of American Historical Association leaders like James Franklin Jameson who wanted to keep archival management as a professional path for graduates of history departments.⁸³

Although Newsome remained optimistic about the relationship between historians and archivists, others grew increasingly frustrated with the American Historical Association's monopoly on archival work.⁸⁴ In correspondence with Newsome, Thomas P. Martin, acting chief of the Division of Manuscripts of the Library of Congress, argued that the Association "should be prepared to step aside whenever it appears that archivists can better take charge of any phase of its work; such as, the preparation of a manual of archival theory and practice." A clear distinction between historian and archivist had emerged: "the archivist must be something more than the man behind the desk, as seen in the limited way of the professional historian."⁸⁵ When archivists began to pull away from the American Historical Association, Newsome voiced reserved support for a separate professional archival organization, agreeing that the demands of archival institutions at all levels precipitated specific problems and required specific skills and training. Still, Newsome held to the belief that, as scholars, the American Historical Association had a legitimate investment in the location and availability of guides and inventories related to archives.⁸⁶

Despite his desire to retain a connection to the Association, Newsome accepted the presidency of the Society of American Archivists when it formed as an independent organization

⁸³ Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 176-78.

⁸⁴ Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 224-25.

⁸⁵ Thomas P. Martin to A. R. Newsome, September 17, 1935, American Historical Association, 1931-1935, Outside Organizations in Department of History Records. On the evolution of the archives as separate from the historical profession, see Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 32-35.

⁸⁶ Newsome, "Report of the Special A.H.A. Committee to the Executive Council."

in 1936. In his 1939 address at the organization's annual meeting, Newsome acknowledged that "like the lawyer, doctor, and historian, the archivist professes that he has the requisite special knowledge, mastery, and inclination for devoting his time and energy to the service of others."⁸⁷ Although advanced training in history remained an accepted qualification for the profession, agencies increasingly required specific coursework on archival history, practice, and library science, as well as an apprenticeship.⁸⁸

From Newsome's perspective, archivists and historians shared a commitment to public service, but archivists' technical and administrative skills distinguished the two professions. Still, in 1939, Newsome spoke from the perspective of a scholar far more than that of a public administrator. Three years earlier, he had left the North Carolina Historical Commission to take R. D. W. Connor's former position as professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Faculty selected Newsome over other candidates because they valued the relationships he had developed across the state, his familiarity and investment in North Carolina, and, not to be underestimated, his affordability as a state employee. Newsome's work in the North Carolina Historical Commission also appealed to the university because it boosted history's reputation as professional training for policymakers and created opportunities for history careers beyond university teaching and research. In addition, Newsome promised to be an asset to any efforts the university history department might have pursued in cooperation with the state.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Albert Ray Newsome, "The Archivist in American Scholarship," *American Archivist* 2 (October 1939): 217.

⁸⁸ Newsome, "The Archivist in American Scholarship," 219.

⁸⁹ Henry Wagstaff, "Notes on the Reorganization of the Department of History and Government," General, 1923-1943, Administrative Files in Department of History Records, University Archives, Wilson Library.

The North Carolina Historical Commission's growth during the 1930s and 1940s, and Newsome's departure, required Crittenden to assume more administrative tasks, and he began to distinguish his work from colleagues within academia. "More and more he found himself becoming an administrator, with problems to solve in relations with other government agencies and the broader public, the budget, personnel, and other non-scholarly and non-academic functions and tasks. Dear old alma mater and its ivy-colored walls seemed to fade more and more into the background," Crittenden reflected in 1949.⁹⁰ When state appropriations dwindled, Crittenden struggled to find stable footing, going so far as to limit the amount of time staff spent on answering research inquiries. In 1938, he estimated the cost of fulfilling queries at \$10,000 annually, so he began to direct staff to forward genealogical questions to independent researchers.⁹¹

North Carolina Historical Commission expansion during the New Deal created challenges for Crittenden, but federal programs situated the agency to become more valuable as a community resource. With the assistance of Works Progress Administration laborers and students from the National Youth Administration, the Hall of History updated exhibit displays and began showcasing rotating exhibits. Mattie Erma Edwards, with an MA in history and economics from the University of North Carolina and the first woman to rise to leadership in the North Carolina Historical Commission when Fred Olds retired in 1935, became the curator of the Hall of History, working tirelessly to raise the standards of the museum which had long been neglected by the North Carolina Historical Commission. In 1936, Edwards oversaw North Carolina's participation in the Federal Archives Survey, taking leave to serve as Assistant

⁹⁰ Christopher Crittenden, "The Archivist as a Public Servant," *American Archivist* 12 (January 1949): 5.

⁹¹ *Seventeenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1936-1938*, 21-22.

Regional Director.⁹² By 1940, the Hall of History remained open on Saturdays to accommodate the demand from more visitors. When she stepped down in 1941, Edwards's successor, Marybelle Delamor, began to coordinate programs with school curricula and established a more systematic process for loans and acquisitions.⁹³

As head of the North Carolina Historical Commission, Crittenden began to advocate for new, more specialized organizations to support the commission's work, believing that the American Historical Association would not be sufficiently supportive. He looked to national agencies such as the National Parks Service to establish standards for historic preservation and manage large preservation projects.⁹⁴ His lack of faith in the American Historical Association was evident in 1936 when the North Carolina Historical Commission took ownership of Roanoke Island so the Works Progress Administration could build replica buildings at the site. Since Crittenden did not believe the commission could successfully maintain the historic site on its own and not rely on the Association for support, the state deeded it to the NPS in 1941.⁹⁵ Crittenden also helped form the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities in 1939, a private association dedicated to preserving and maintaining historic buildings, and he promoted a statewide museums' association that would offer training to local historians.⁹⁶

⁹² *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1934-1936*, 21, 26-27; "Dr. Chase Speaks for Arthur Page at U. N. C. Finals," *News and Observer*, June 12, 1928.

⁹³ *Seventeenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1936-1938*, 38, 50; *Eighteenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1938-1940*, 30 (Raleigh: Historical Commission, 1940), State Library of North Carolina.

⁹⁴ Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 225.

⁹⁵ The NCHC purchased Roanoke Island from the Roanoke Colony Memorial Association which had owned the site since 1894. However, concerned that the NCHC could not maintain the site, the state deeded it to the National Park Service in 1941; see *Nineteenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission* (Raleigh: The North Carolina Historical Commission, 1942), 45, State Library of North Carolina.

⁹⁶ *Eighteenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1938-1940*, 30.

Crittenden's most significant contribution extended beyond North Carolina when he played a leading role in transforming the Conference of Historical Societies into the American Association for State and Local History. The new organization brought together leaders of state historical agencies, archivists, professors, curators, and librarians under a broad banner of local history. Aiming to popularize local history, the association invested most of its resources to publishing handbooks for local historians and societies, collectively known as the Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History, the earliest of which explained how to organize and grow local historical societies.⁹⁷

In 1945, Crittenden called on historians to re-envision "our place in society."⁹⁸ Like his Progressive-era predecessors, Crittenden remained committed to public service, but rather than limiting the North Carolina Historical Commission to the preservation, collection, and publishing of documents, he argued that the responsibility of the State Department of Archives and History, formerly known as the North Carolina Historical Commission, was "to sell history to the public, to make history the living force that it ought to be in the lives of the populace."⁹⁹ Such historical

⁹⁷ Edward P. Alexander, *What Should Our Historical Society Do?*, Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1941); Sylvester K. Stevens, *Local History and Winning the War*, Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1942); Loring McMillen, *Using Volunteers in the Local Historical Society's Program*, Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1942); Arthur C. Parker, *The Local History Museum and the War Program*, Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History 1 (Washington, D C: American Association for State and Local History, 1942); J. Martin Stroup, *A Publicity Program for the Local Historical Society*, Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1943); Evelyn Plummer Read, *Broadcasting History*, Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1943).

⁹⁸ Christopher Crittenden, "History as a Living Force," *Pennsylvania History* 11 (January 1944): 10.

⁹⁹ Crittenden, "History as a Living Force," 4.

practice demanded broadening the objectives of historical training to include technical training.

Considering debates over archival education, Crittenden wrote,

Looked at in this light, is there any major difference in the viewpoint of those who stress the scholarly approach on the one hand and of those who emphasize administrative problems, and particularly the problem of handling current records, on the other hand? For are not all these merely parts of a larger whole? It would seem that broad training and a wide perspective are necessary, but that at the same time the practical facing of immediate problems of administration is also needed.¹⁰⁰

Yet, Crittenden remained committed to expertise. During the Depression, federal relief programs had required trained professionals to supervise projects, essentially forcing state and federal agencies to hire university graduates.¹⁰¹ During World War II, Crittenden also hired experienced historians to oversee local war records collecting, among them, Elmer D. Johnson who after completing his MA in history at the University of North Carolina, served as the Collector of War Records alongside John Hope Franklin, then Professor of History at the North Carolina College for Negroes in Durham and author of *The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860*.¹⁰² One of the foremost historians of the American South, Franklin left this volunteer position at the end of the war and shortly thereafter published *From Slavery to Freedom: A*

¹⁰⁰ Crittenden, "The Archivist as a Public Servant," 7.

¹⁰¹ Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 173. Throughout the country, new MA and PhD graduates found work within federal agencies and programs. Many returned to academia as positions opened, but others remained employed by the NPS or moved into other governmental positions to influence historical preservation policy and legislation, as described by Denise Meringolo in *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 99, 107.

¹⁰² *Twentieth Biennial Report of the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History (formerly the North Carolina Historical Commission), July 1, 1942 to June 30, 1944* (Raleigh: North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, 1944), 51-52, State Library of North Carolina; "Keep Valuable Relics Out of Waste Paper," *The Nashville (NC) Graphic* (February 3, 1944); "Newspapers Build Local War History," *The Robesonian*, November 18, 1942. See also Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1943). The North Carolina College for Negroes in Durham, previously named the Durham State Normal School, was renamed North Carolina College at Durham in 1947. The school is now North Carolina Central University.

History of American Negroes.¹⁰³ Johnson also left his position and returned to the University of North Carolina to earn his PhD, but his and Franklin's success convinced Crittenden to continue to invest in staff professionalization as the post-war economy improved. In 1945, the state's appropriations to the Department of Archives and History finally returned to pre-Depression levels, and by the 1949-1950 fiscal year, the North Carolina Historical Commission's budget peaked at \$84,850.51 as the post-war economy expanded. In 1949, the North Carolina General Assembly increased state employee salaries, making the commission competitive among jobseekers and reducing staff turnover.¹⁰⁴ In 1950, hoping to recruit "more and more professionally trained young persons," Crittenden raised the standards for employment at the Department of Archives and History, requiring employees to have a degree from a four-year college with a major in history or social studies.¹⁰⁵

Still, Crittenden remained committed to some of the pre-war expectations about on-the-ground training. In 1948, he partnered with Meredith College, a women's college in Raleigh, to offer an internship course in public historical work. Student interns divided 150 hours of service among the archival, museum, and publication departments. The internship prepared students for employment within the commission, providing the skills that traditional graduate training in history did not.¹⁰⁶ The decision to partner with a women's college evidenced R. D. W. Connor's

¹⁰³ Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes*, 1st ed. (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1947).

¹⁰⁴ *Twenty-Third Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, July 1, 1948 to June 30, 1950* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1950), 14-15, 17-26, State Library of North Carolina.

¹⁰⁵ *Twenty-Third Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History*, 16-17; *Twenty-Fourth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, July 1, 1950 to June 30, 1952* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1952), 13-14, State Library of North Carolina.

¹⁰⁶ Nancy Walker, "Alumnae Lives," *The Twig* (Meredith College, Raleigh NC), December 10, 1948; "Two Students Have New Job: Archivists," *The Twig*, May 19, 1950; "Seven Seniors Are

earlier emphasis on technical and administrative work, which women had overseen in North Carolina since Emily Taylor became a manuscript restorer in 1911. By 1950, women composed nearly all of the regular employees at the State Department of Archives and History, including senior and junior archivists, museum assistants, stenographers, and senior general clerks. Joye E. Jordan led the Division of Museums alongside two men, W. F. Burton and D. L. Corbitt, who ran the Division of Archives and Manuscripts and the Division of Publications.

Across the early twentieth century, the nature of historical work transformed, accelerating with the New Deal, World War II, and the post-war boom. As North Carolina increased investments in historical work throughout the twentieth century, historians' conceptions of public service evolved from "for the state" to "for the people," a shift that differed markedly from Progressive historians rooted in universities. As the North Carolina Historical Commission expanded its archival and museum divisions, Newsome and Crittenden had created an infrastructure for state and local history that challenged the American Historical Association's authority over local and state history. That new infrastructure, and the professionalization expected of it, demanded new standards for historical training that reflected the administrative and technical challenges emerging within the growing Department of State Archives and History. The growth of the Department of State Archives and History limited voluntary associations' authority of historic preservation initiatives but created new paths for White women and some Black historians to pursue this work under the guidance and supervision of academically trained male historians. However, most Black Carolinians continued to be excluded

Chosen for 'Who's Who among Students,'" *The Twig*, November 17, 1950; Jean Taylor, "Six History Students Plan Colonial House, Make Exhibit, Learn to Be 'Junior Archivists,'" *The Twig*, March 9, 1951; Margaret McArthur, "Anne Jane Barrey Work in State Archives and History," *The Twig*, November 20, 1953.

from participating in or benefiting from the state's expanded investment in historical activities
“for the people.”

CHAPTER TWO

“The Sort of Fellow We Need”: Envisioning Public Historical Training Programs, 1945-1967

In 1948, the North Carolina Department of Archives and History created an internship program to train women for work within local historical societies and museums. The training program was the first among many developed within archives, historical societies, and state agencies in the 1940s and 1950s. These programs were an extension of the professionalization efforts of the American Association for State and Local History and the Society for American Archivists began in the 1930 and 1940s.¹ Before World War II, these organizations created a network of like-minded historians, employed mostly but not exclusively outside academia in state and federal historical agencies, historical societies, and history museums, who sought to augment traditional historical training at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Their efforts to create historical training programs that better reflected their own vocational paths raised questions about the objectives, best practices, and professional standards of historical work in museums, archives, and state agencies. While the programs they developed varied widely, most initially focused on technical and administrative skills but, over time, began to emphasize new interpretive methods and theories, gradually giving rise to new educational standards and a loose theoretical foundation for historians working outside the academy.²

¹ Rebecca Conard, “Complicating Origin Stories: The Making of Public History into an Academic Field in the United States,” in *A Companion to Public History*, ed. David Dean (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 19-32; Rebecca Conard, “The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States,” *Public Historian* 37 (February 2015): 105-20; Ian Tyrrell, *Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

² Denise D. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012).

* * *

In the summer of 1948, Pauline Cone, the North Carolina Department of Archives and History's first intern, stood in the basement of the archives building, gazing in awe at the "almost human" linotype machine that stood before her. Even more impressive were the women who fed pages of the *North Carolina Historical Review* through the machine. "Mr. Harrison said it took years of experience to just know how to feed papers to the press. Women were doing this job," she recalled several weeks later.³ Cone might have also been impressed to learn that nine of the fifteen permanent employees within the Department were women.⁴

Cone studied history at Meredith College, a women's school located near downtown Raleigh. While many history majors went on to teach history or social studies in secondary schools, Cone sought a different path. Earlier in 1948, Cone approached her professor, Lillian Parker Wallace, for advice on how to broaden her undergraduate curriculum.⁵ Wallace, who herself had cultivated a dynamic career as an academic, educator, linguist, and pianist, broached the idea of an internship with Christopher Crittenden, Director of the Department of Archives and History.⁶ A bit uncertain about developing an internship for Cone, Crittenden conceded to a

³ Pauline E. Cone, "Division of Publications," 1948, Student Training, General Correspondence: January-December 1948 (R-Z), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh.

⁴ *Twenty-Second Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History* (Raleigh: North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, 1948), 9-10, State Library of North Carolina, Raleigh.

⁵ "Pauline Cone Beers," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), January 11, 2015.

⁶ "Brush Strokes of Lillian Parker Wallace," interview by James W. Reid, March 1970, phonographic recording, Meredith College Archives, Carlyle Campbell Library, Meredith College, Raleigh, NC.

month-long trial program.⁷ None of Crittenden's predecessors seriously had considered how to train students for work in the Department properly. Only the World War I collecting program had included a training program for volunteers.

Although hesitant about establishing a formal internship program with Meredith College, Crittenden certainly had the topic of professional training on his mind upon returning to Raleigh from Washington, DC in 1947. While on a leave of absence to serve as the Assistant Director of the WWII Records Project of the National Archives, Crittenden audited a course on archival administration offered jointly by the National Archives and American University's School of Public Affairs.⁸ Founded in 1934 to train public servants, the School of Public Affairs began offering a course in records administration and archives in 1939, the first program to do so. The archival administration course complemented curricula on diplomacy, trade policy, and personnel administration and mainly enrolled federal employees already working within the National Archives or other government agencies.⁹ Taught by Ernst Posner, a German emigrant scholar, and Solon Buck, Assistant Director of the National Archives, the course became the standard for archival preparation in the United States in the 1940s. Inspired by his own

⁷ Christopher Crittenden to Mrs. Lillian Parker Wallace," April 19, 1948, Student Training, General Correspondence: January-December 1948 (R-Z), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁸ *Twenty-Second Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History*, 8-9; Christopher Crittenden to Dr. Ernst Posner, May 29, 1948, Archives and Seminar, General Correspondence, January-December 1948 (A-C), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; Conard, "Complicating Origin Stories," 19-32.

⁹ "School of Public Affairs Will Offer Two Courses to Gov't Employees," *Eagle* (Washington, DC), February 7, 1935, Archives and Special Collections, American University Library, Washington DC.

experience taking the course, Crittenden sent W. Frank Burton, the Department of Archives and History's new head archivist, to attend the seminar in 1948.¹⁰

That same summer, Cone began her internship at the Department of Archives and History. She assisted and observed staff five hours each weekday for six weeks. In her final report, she wrote the Archives and History staff, "I thank you most of all for letting me work in your profession, which I now sincerely hope will become my profession." After graduating from Meredith in 1949, Cone took a position working with historical manuscripts at Duke University Library.¹¹

In February 1950, two more Meredith College students, Patsy Emory and Peggy Benbow, followed in Cone's footsteps. Crittenden collaborated with Lillian Wallace to broaden their exposure to professions in archives, museums, and publishing and dispersed the thirty-hour workweek across the Division of Archives and Manuscripts, the Division of Publications, and the Division of Public Displays.¹² Crittenden and Burton began instructing Meredith students on

¹⁰ Christopher Crittenden to Dr. Ernst Posner, May 29, 1948; *Twenty-third Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History* (Raleigh: North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, 1950), 31, State Library of North Carolina.

¹¹ Pauline E. Cone, "Division of Archives and Manuscripts," 1948, Student Training, General Correspondence, January-December 1948 (R-Z), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹² The Department of Archives and History also hosted a summer intern in June and July 1949; see "Report of Christine Williamson on Her Internship in the Dept., June-July, 1949", Student Training, General Correspondence, January-August 1949 (P-Z), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; Interns - Department: Meredith College Girls, July 9, 1948, Student Training, General Correspondence, January-December 1948 (R-Z), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; Patsy Emory, "Report on Archival Work," May 1950, Student Training, General Correspondence, September 1949-June 1950 (S-Z), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; Patsy Emory, "Report on Publications Department," May 1950, Student Training, General Correspondence, September 1949-June 1950 (S-Z), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; Peggy Benbow, "The Division of Archives and Manuscripts," May 1950, Student Training, General Correspondence, September 1949-June 1950 (S-Z), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

content from the American University seminar, supplemented by their own observations and pamphlets produced by the National Archives. Students learned about modern records management, including new technologies such as lamination and microfilming. They listened to lectures on the “dual role” of state archival departments, principally their responsibilities as cultural *and* administrative agencies charged with records management.¹³ The women also served menial labor demands, filling copy requests and assisting researchers.¹⁴

During the interns’ time in the Division of Museums, Joye Jordan, Director of the Hall of History, had begun stressing the museum’s educational purpose. Like other museum professionals of the 1950s, Jordan devoted most of her efforts to expand the public reach of the museum’s collections.¹⁵ Interns provided on-site tours to school groups and families, and they learned about the “trailer museum,” which took museum collections to schools across the state. The women also prepared artifact loans to other institutions and led public tours of the museum’s exhibits.¹⁶ At one point, Jordan tasked the interns with developing their own exhibit. Benbow and Emory struggled to settle on a topic that “would be in keeping with the theme of the museum, be interesting, and have available material,” finally deciding to create an exhibit on the

¹³ Alstine Salter, “Archives Report,” January 22, 1953, Meredith Archives Course - Prior Years, General Correspondence 1958, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹⁴ Benbow, “The Division of Archives and Manuscripts.”

¹⁵ Leading this effort was the National Park Service which began to hire more interpretive staff and increase space for interpretive displays; see Newton B. Drury, “The National Park Service,” January 7, 1949, 16, National Park Service, General Correspondence, January-August 1949 (M-N), Director’s Office, Division of Archives and History; Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2008); Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Patsy Emory, “Report on Museum Work Done in the Hall of History, Department of Archives,” May 1950, Student Training, General Correspondence, September 1949-June 1950 (S-Z), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

North Carolina state seal. First, they gave careful thought to the selection of artifacts and label text. Then, using documents and wax impressions, they designed an exhibit that showed how the use of official seals had evolved since the eighteenth century.¹⁷ Interns also spent a great deal of time on technical skills, learning how to print, engrave, etch, index, bind, file, mail, and accession and photograph artifacts.¹⁸ Jordan shared many of these lessons in “Shop Talk: Helpful Hints for Harassed Historians,” a column she co-authored for *History News*, the membership newsletter produced by the American Association for State and Local History.¹⁹

In the Division of Publications, students learned the effort it took to provide an intellectual framework for collections and publications. Patsy Emory acknowledged that “a large amount of research is required of the staff,” and Peggy Benbow struggled as she wrote introductions for edited manuscripts. Still, the interns developed some understanding of editing and curation. For example, when reviewing submissions to the *North Carolina Historical Review*, Emory ultimately rejected a primary source of a soldier’s account of the Civil War because it “was too general to be of any historical value.”²⁰

In the fall of 1952, Lillian Wallace consulted with the leadership of the Department of Archives and History—Crittenden, Jordan, and Burton—and decided that thirty hours in museums, thirty hours in publications, and sixty hours in archives and manuscripts did not

¹⁷ Emory, “Report on Museum Work Done in the Hall of History.”

¹⁸ Emory, “Report on Museum Work Done in the Hall of History”; Peggy Benbow, “The Hall of History,” May 1950, Student Training, General Correspondence, September 1949-June 1950 (S-Z), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹⁹ Joye E. Jordan and Frank O. Spinney, “Shop Talk: Helpful Hints for Harassed Historians,” *History News* 5 (December 1949): 16-17; Frank O. Spinney and Joye E. Jordan, “Shop Talk: Helpful Hints for Harassed Historians,” *History News* 5 (February 1950): 32-33; Joye E. Jordan and Frank O. Spinney, “Shop Talk: Helpful Hints for Harassed Historians,” *History News* 6 (January 1951): 11.

²⁰ Emory, “Report on Publications Department.”

provide students enough practice or specialized training. Instead, they agreed to offer the students the choice to invest sixty hours in either the Division of Museums or the Division of Publications. All interns would also spend ninety hours in the Division of Archives and Manuscripts.²¹ The additional thirty hours in archival training allowed for more intense instruction on conservation and research methods. One student expressed her excitement in learning about the cutting-edge technologies not yet in practice at the National Archives. As the Meredith student newspaper maintained, the “archives no longer give the connotation of being a dusty and moldy place.”²² Instead, the archives seemed to be a place brimming with opportunity for young women.

In their museum studies, interns experienced the greatest curricular changes. Jordan had students work ten hours a week across two days, each beginning with an hour-long lecture on topics like accessioning, education, photography, and handicap accessibility. Students then spent four hours “in practical application of museum principles,” designing exhibits, leading programs, answering visitor questions, and writing news releases. Students also reviewed staff tours and exhibits. Finally, in place of a final exam, students produced an exhibition from beginning to end, assessed on their research, curations, scale drawings, label writing, and designs.²³

²¹ “Course Given by the Division of Publications to the Meredith College Students,” July 1954, Student Training, General Correspondence 1955, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

²² Benbow, “The Division of Archives and Manuscripts”; Emory, “Report on Archival Work”; Salter, “Archives Report;” “Margaret McArthur, Anne Jane Barrey Work in State Archives and History,” *The Twig* (Raleigh, NC), November 20, 1953; Barbe White, “Thirteen Complete Work in Archives; Study Microphotography, Lamination,” *The Twig*, February 20, 1953; Jean Taylor, “Six History Students Plan Colonial House, Make Exhibit, Learn to Be ‘Junior Archivists,’” *The Twig*, March 9, 1951.

²³ Taylor, “Six History Students Plan Colonial House, Make Exhibit, Learn to Be ‘Junior Archivists;” “Margaret McArthur, Anne Jane Barrey Work in State Archives and History”;

The internship program became quite popular. One intern praised Meredith College as a “pioneer in offering history majors an opportunity to be trained as archivists,” and students attending school out-of-state requested that Crittenden offer the course via correspondence.²⁴ Crittenden began to receive regular inquiries from local historical societies and museums for trained job candidates. For example, in 1952, a Greensboro Historical Museum board member asked Crittenden to recommend a Meredith student for a full-time directorship. Concerned that the brief program hardly prepared students to assume leadership roles, Crittenden offered to provide their chosen candidate an extended internship in the Hall of History. He was also preparing potential employees for his own Department of Archives and History.²⁵ By the fall of 1953, at least three Meredith students had secured employment with the Department.²⁶

From American University, Ernst Posner, the professor of the archival administration course that had initially inspired Crittenden, wrote how he was quite impressed by the program. He hoped that other universities and agencies would establish their own plans for archival training.²⁷ By 1952, similar programs emerged in Denver, Colorado between the Colorado State Historical Society, University of Denver, and Northwestern University; in Salem, Oregon

Museum Course, July 2, 1954, Student Training, General Correspondence 1955, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

²⁴ White, “Thirteen Complete Work in Archives; Study Microphotography, Lamination,” *The Twig*; Christopher Crittenden to Mrs. R. H. Stockman, December 1, 1952, Student Training, General Correspondence 1953, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

²⁵ McDaniel Lewis to Dr. Christopher Crittenden,” February 28, 1952; Christopher Crittenden to Mr. McDaniel Lewis, March 14, 1952; McDaniel Lewis to Dr. Christopher Crittenden, March 15, 1952; Christopher Crittenden to Dr. Lillian Parker Wallace, March 20, 1952, all in Student Training, General Correspondence, March-December 1952, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

²⁶ “Margaret McArthur, Anne Jane Barrey Work in State Archives and History.”

²⁷ Ernst Posner to Christopher Crittenden, June 20, 1950, Student Training, General Correspondence, September 1949-June 1950 (S-Z), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

between the Oregon State Archives and Willamette University; and in Wisconsin, between the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and the Library School of the University of Wisconsin.²⁸

As training programs took shape in the 1950s, no clear national consensus developed on how to best train students. The founding of professional organizations like the Society of American Archivists in 1936 and the American Association of State and Local History in 1940 marked the end of a long phase of historical professionalization, out of which specialized fields of study like archival science and museum studies, and historic preservation emerged, muddling any attempt to develop a unified curriculum. Both organizations' memberships were broader and yet more specialized—including professors, archivists, librarians, genealogists, preservationists, architects, and city planners—than had been those of either the American Historical Association or Conference of Local and State Historical Societies. Such broad constituencies required the organizations to reassess how they supported members with specialized skills and knowledge.²⁹

In 1949, Crittenden addressed the Society of American Archivists, an organization that had determinedly committed to professionalization since its founding thirteen years earlier. He

²⁸ Philip C. Brooks to Christopher Crittenden, August 29, 1951, Society of American Archivists, General Correspondence, June 1951-February 1952, (N-W), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; "News and Notes," *American Archivist* 13 (October 1950): 402-403; "News and Notes," *American Archivist* 15 (April 1952): 190; "News and Notes," *American Archivist*, 15 (July 1952): 287-88; "New School Courses," *History News* 7 (July 1952): 34.

²⁹ Rodney A. Ross, "The National Archives: The Formative Years, 1934-1949," in *Guardian of Heritage: Essays on the History of the National Archives*, ed. Timothy Walch (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1985), 43-45; Philip C. Brooks, "Archivists and Their Colleagues: Common Denominators," *American Archivist* 14 (January 1951): 33-45; Oliver W. Holmes, "Areas of Cooperation between the National Archives and State Archives," *American Archivist* 14 (July 1951): 213-22; Karl L. Trever, "The American Archivist: The Voice of a Profession," *American Archivist* 15 (April 1952): 147-55; Lester J. Cappon, "The Archival Profession and the Society of American Archivists," *American Archivist* 15 (July 1952): 195-204; Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and Archives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 63-84; Conard, "The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States," 112-14.

underscored the inadequacies of traditional historical training, emphasizing that state historical work demanded broadening the objectives of academic historical education to include technical and administrative training. Crittenden worried about the narrowness of emerging archival training programs, writing that, “It would seem that broad training and a wide perspective are necessary, but that at the same time the practical facing of immediate problems of administration is also needed.”³⁰ For example, Crittenden noted the limitations of a program like that at American University that tried to balance theory and practice in just two weeks. The program’s director, Ernst Posner, shared this concern. He already aspired to enlarge the existing curriculum as archives and records agencies faced an increasing demand to process war records. It would be another five years, however, before an additional two-week institute on records management developed.³¹

A 1949 debate over a records manual revealed the challenge of providing guidance in such an expanding field. Society of American Archivists leadership, overwhelmingly made up of federal archivists, struggled to create publications and training materials that completely satisfied state and local archivists.³² When Philip C. Brooks, an archivist at the National Archives, wrote a

³⁰ Crittenden, “The Archivist as a Public Servant,” *American Archivist* 12 (January 1949): 7.

³¹ Ernst Posner, statement in response to questions submitted by Philip C. Brooks, December 1973, National Archives Oral History Project, RG 64.2.4, National Archives and Record Service, accessed July 25, 2021, <https://www.archives.gov/about/history/oral-history-at-the-national-archives#brooks>; “The American University Announces Two Institutes Records Management Archives Administration,” Archives: Institute, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, Archives and History Record Group.

³² H. G. Jones, interview by Philip C. Brooks, January 22, 1972, National Archives Oral History Project, RG 64.2.4; “News and Notes” *American Archivist* 13 (October 1950): 402-403; Philip C. Brooks, “Archivists and Their Colleagues: Common Denominators” *American Archivist* 14 (January 1951): 33-35; Oliver W. Holmes, “Areas of Cooperation between the National Archives and State Archives,” *American Archivist* 14 (July 1951): 213-22; Ross, “The National Archives: The Formative Years, 1934-1949,” 43-45.

records management manual for local officials, colleagues criticized his draft for not understanding “the realities of the small records office.” Henry H. Eddy, a state archivist in Pennsylvania, argued that “To reach local officials you must put yourself in their situation and also talk their language.”³³ Reviewers found that the guide included too much theory and nuance for public officials charged with local records management.

Soon after the American Association for State and Local History’s founding in 1940, the organization began editing and publishing newsletters and bulletins to answer such needs.³⁴ The publications offered more general archival advice than those published by the Society of American Archivists and the National Archives, providing practical guidance for local historical associations. Pamphlets covered topics like organizing local associations, developing volunteer programs, and generating publicity.

Most importantly, the publications engendered a consensus over the value of local history, an initial step toward uniting practitioners around a shared goal. Published during World War II, the first bulletins articulated the significance of state and local history as a defense against dictatorships and tyranny. In *Using Volunteers in the Local Historical Society’s Programs* (1942), Loring McMillen, Director of the Staten Island Historical Society, argued that historical societies were “the natural custodian and means of expression of those democratic

³³ Henry Howard Eddy to Phil Brooks, August 2, 1949, Society of American Archivists, General Correspondence, January-August 1949 (P-Z), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group. Before joining the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as an archivist, Eddy served as head archivist in the North Carolina Department of Archives and History; see Richard G. Wood, “In Memoriam: Henry Howard Eddy, 1899-1965,” *American Archivist* 28 (July 1965): 447.

³⁴ Edward P. Alexander, “Valiant Efforts and Good Intentions: American Association for State and Local History’s Beginning Years, 1940-1956,” in Frederick L. Rath, et. al., *Local History, National Heritage: Reflections on the History of American Association for State and Local History* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1991), 37-48; Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 31-32.

traditions and ideals.”³⁵ In *Writing Your Community’s War History* (1946), a state historian from Pennsylvania suggested that “our national history is but the sum of a thousand books like yours.”³⁶ In *The Local History Museum and The War Program* (1942), the director of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences instructed local museum professionals to confront tyranny and oppression: “a knowledge of the way of freedom is a dangerous knowledge to those

³⁵ Loring McMillen, *Using Volunteers in the Local Historical Society’s Program*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1, (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1942). For other examples of booklets issued by the American Association for State and Local History during wartime, see Edward P. Alexander, *What Should Our Historical Society Do?* *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1941); Sylvester K. Stevens, *Local History and Winning the War*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1942); Arthur C. Parker, *The Local History Museum and the War Program*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1 (Washington, D C: American Association for State and Local History, 1942); J. Martin Stroup, *A Publicity Program for the Local Historical Society*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1943); Evelyn Plummer Read, *Broadcasting History*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1943); Lester J. Cappon, *War Records Projects in the States, 1941-1943*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1944); Bertha L. Heilbron, *How to Organize a Local Historical Society*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1944); Thomas H. Spence, Jr., Virgil V. Peterson, and Thomas F. O’Connor, *Church Archives and History*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1 (Raleigh, NC: American Association for State and Local History, 1946); Marvin W. Schlegel, *Writing Your Community’s War History*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1 (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1946); Horace Bailey Carrol, *The Junior Historian Movement in the Public Schools*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 1 (Montpelier, VT: American Association for State and Local History, 1947); James H. Rodabaugh, *War Records Projects in the States, 1943-1947*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 2 (Montpelier, VT: American Association for State and Local History, 1947); G. Hubert Smith, *Pictures and History*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 2 (Montpelier, Vermont: American Association for State and Local History, 1949); Herbert A. Kellar, *Where Are the Historical Manuscripts?* *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 2 (Montpelier, Vermont: American Association for State and Local History, 1950).

³⁶ Schlegel, *Writing Your Community’s War History*, 333.

who seek to dominate. Our museums have been the bulwarks of fact, material fact, and now they must become agencies of knowledge in action.”³⁷

The Second World War offered historians, archivists, and curators an opportunity to rearticulate the national significance of local history.³⁸ Although exceptions remained—notably among African Americans and their histories—by mid-century, “The Cult of American Consensus” had coalesced with case studies grounded in local histories that helped explain American exceptionalism and distinctiveness. Not that local history had ever been removed from national politics. In the late nineteenth century, wealthy patrician families, often with the support of politicians, formed and supported historical societies and genealogical associations as a broader program of Americanization and White supremacy. By the turn of the twentieth century, as a body of professional historians emerged, the newly established American Historical Association justified federal support of historical activities by situating historians as national recordkeepers. Simultaneously, their efforts encouraged support for state historical agencies in places like North Carolina. For decades, private historical societies and the state agencies they bore had dominated local and state historical narratives, often excluding individuals and narratives that did not buttress locally powerful families. By the 1930s, as populist movements began to challenge such exclusive narratives, they found support through federal projects like the Historical Records Survey and Historic American Building Survey, which created opportunities to document and preserve a broader range of state and local historic resources.

³⁷ Parker, *The Local History Museum and the War Program*, 111.

³⁸ John Higham, “Changing Paradigms: The Collapse of Consensus History,” *Journal of American History* 76 (September 1989): 464-65; Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 198-99, 237-38; Kammen, *On Doing Local History*, 21-31; Mike Wallace, “Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States,” in *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 3-32.

The broadening historiographical landscape encouraged the professionalization of state and local history, underlining the importance of local historical societies and museums as places that reinforced American values.³⁹ In the bulletin “What Should Our Historical Society Do?” published in 1941, Edward P. Alexander, Superintendent of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, situated local historical societies, beginning with Massachusetts’s Essex Historical Society in 1821, in a continuous and predictable timeline of waxing and waning nationalism.⁴⁰ Alexander described the ideal historical society as “extremely democratic,” consisting of “trained scholars and enthusiastic amateurs,” and privately funded. Another American Association for State and Local History bulletin on how to develop youth programs argued that study of local history “is a prerequisite to a love of homeland, which is, in its turn, the basic essential of any worth-while patriotism.”⁴¹ Using that bulletin as a guide, Christopher Crittenden started the Tarheel Junior Historian Association in 1953, one of the goals of which was to teach students about the “American Way of Life” and “the economic foundation upon which their communities rest.”⁴² In the post-war years, historians within and outside academia played a part in using history to promote American nationalism, forming a consensus about the righteousness of the

³⁹ John Higham, “The Cult of the ‘American Consensus’: Homogenizing Our History,” *Commentary* 27 (January 1959): 94-97; August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915-1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 98-115; Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks*, 99-100, 118-20.

⁴⁰ Alexander, *What Should Our Historical Society Do?* 4-5; David Morris Potter, “The Historian’s Use of Nationalism,” in *History and American Society: Essays of David M. Potter*, ed. Don E. Frehrenbacher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 61-108.

⁴¹ Carrol, *The Junior Historian Movement in the Public Schools*.

⁴² Conference on the Junior Historian Movement, August 20, 1953, Junior Historian, General Correspondence 1953 (J-M), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group; “Tarheel Junior Historian Association,” 1955, Junior Historian, General Correspondence 1955, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group; *Twenty-fifth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1954), 28, State Library of North Carolina.

United States in opposition to the Soviet Union. At risk was the future of democracy.⁴³

Historians employed by federal agencies played supportive roles to the state as they directed the research and writing of federal foreign and domestic policy in the 1950s. At state levels, historians' efforts to contextualize states and localities in the national project bolstered a consensus vision of the nation's past, present, and future.⁴⁴

State and local history brought balance to the sweeping political histories of the United States.⁴⁵ In 1951, a decade after the American Association for State and Local History issued its first bulletin, the organization published *Making Our Heritage Live*, a short volume of three articles that outlined the significance of local history to building national identity. Sylvester K. Stevens, Director of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, cautioned local historians to avoid "sweeping generalizations" of American history. Instead, Stevens argued that historians should cultivate the spirit of national patriotism by elevating local heroes that were familiar and relatable. He also articulated local history's role in minimizing political, economic, and social

⁴³ S. K. Stevens, "An Anchor for Our Faith in America," in *Making Our Heritage Live*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 2 (Sturbridge, MA: American Association for State and Local History, 1951), 133.

⁴⁴ Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 198-201; Martin Reuss, "Public History in the Federal Government," in *Public History: An Introduction*, ed. Barbara J. Howe and Emory L. Kemp, (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1986), 293-309; Thomas P. Ofcansky, "The History of the United States Air Force History Program," in Howe and Kemp, eds., *Public History*, 310-23.

⁴⁵ At the American Association of Historians Annual Meeting in 1950, the great popular historian, Samuel Eliot Morison spoke on the relationship between local and national history, suggesting that historians ought to study a topic at the national, or more general level, as well as more specialized and local levels. Drawing from his own scholarship as a maritime historian, Morison acknowledged that the study of coral reefs is instructive but offers too narrow of a perspective, concluding that a historian may mistake a pond for an ocean; see Morison, "Faith of a Historian," *American Historical Review* 56 (January 1951): 261-75. See also, Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 227-228; and "Professors and Local History," *History News* 6 (February 1951): 14.

differences, concluding that “There are times, and this is one of them, when we need AMERICANS and not Republicans and Democrats.” In another essay, Clifford Lord, Superintendent of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, argued that “What emerges from the study of local history is a strong reaffirmation of the importance of the individual, a tenant basic to western civilization and essential to the American idea.”⁴⁶ Albert B. Corey, State Historian of New York and President of the American Association for State and Local History, concluded *Making Our Heritage Live* with an essay on the role of local historical societies in igniting and encouraging citizens’ interest in American history.⁴⁷

Stevens, Lord, and Corey believed their visions for local history demanded a higher level of scholarship and professionalism in state and local historical societies.⁴⁸ Corey encouraged the American Association for State and Local History to focus efforts on training amateur historians, including journalists, antiquarians, folklorists, and genealogists. He envisioned a training program that encouraged research and valued authenticity and accuracy without recreating “the dry as dust graduate study, Ph.D. thesis type of approach.”⁴⁹ Under Lord’s leadership, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin created a grant program to sponsor local history projects. Lord’s vision for local history’s relevance extended far beyond the state or nation, however: “When we are assuming leadership of half the world,” *Time* magazine quoted him in an interview, “We owe

⁴⁶ Stevens, “An Anchor for Our Faith in America,” 133, 135; Clifford L. Lord, “Focusing on Individuals and Localities,” in *Making Our Heritage Live*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 2 (Sturbridge, MA: American Association for State and Local History, 1951), 146.

⁴⁷ Albert B. Corey, “The Challenge to Our American Association,” in *Making Our Heritage Live*, *Bulletins of the American Association for State and Local History* 2 (Sturbridge, MA: American Association for State and Local History, 1951), 149-56.

⁴⁸ Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 229.

⁴⁹ Corey, *Making Our Heritage Live*, 151.

it to the world and to ourselves to know more about the detailed workings of the American experiment.”⁵⁰

In Wisconsin, Lord developed a summer institute for local history that united professionals and amateurs to learn about research, writing, collections management, and exhibition. He created two separate programs, one for amateurs and another for professionals, the latter a partnership with the University of Wisconsin in which participants took four three-credit courses constituting a minor for a PhD in American History. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, uniquely situated on the campus of the University of Wisconsin, made the seminar logistically convenient and appealing.⁵¹ In Pennsylvania, Stevens similarly fashioned a training program for local historians, but he cautioned that “too high a professional approach in the training of local historians” would discourage, more than promote local history. Instead of a formal training program, he organized several meetings and conferences.⁵² In 1953, Lord, Stevens, and Corey gathered in Chicago at a joint American Association for State and Local History and American Historical Association meeting, taking the lessons from their seminars to inform a session on “Training in Local History.”⁵³

In New York, a series of summer seminars begun in 1948 united a sundry field of professional and amateur historians, collectors, authors, and folklorists around the New York State Historical Association’s belief that “the safest road to a steadfast patriotism lies in an

⁵⁰ “Details of History,” *Time* (October 6, 1952), 57.

⁵¹ Courses in the Library School on The Work of Historical Agencies, 1955, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1955, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁵² “Association Meeting in Chicago,” *History News* 9 (February 1954): 13-14.

⁵³ “Program Announced,” *History News* 9 (November 1953): 1.

understanding of America's past."⁵⁴ Located in a small town on Lake Otsego and near the New York State Historical Association Library, Fenimore Art Museum, and Farmers Museum, the Cooperstown Seminars on American Culture met the related challenges of developing public support for local history and imagining a broad program of historical training that appealed to academic and non-academic audiences. The culture of the Cooperstown Seminars had much to do with the professional background of their creator, Louis C. Jones, who had succeeded Clifford Lord as Executive Director of the New York State Historical Association in 1947.⁵⁵

Jones had not been the natural successor to Lord. (Upon completing his military service, Lord had never returned to Cooperstown, choosing instead to take the position as Director of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.) Janet McFarlane Cooley, a trained museum technician, who served as acting director of the Cooperstown museums when Lord joined the war effort in 1943, was the more appropriate choice. However, Cooley turned down the directorship, believing that the role required a professional historian with a PhD. Jones, who had previously taught English and folklore at the State Teacher's College in Albany, was hired for his academic credentials and reputation for cultivating a people-centered approach to history.⁵⁶

Jones assembled experts to teach courses and workshops each summer in Cooperstown. Local historians, museum professionals, professors, teachers, archivists, and hobbyists gathered to learn and share resources related to historic preservation, local history, and public education.

⁵⁴ Mrs. F. Neff Stroup, "Town Historian Records Events on Recent Trip to Cooperstown," *Newark (NJ) Courier-Gazette*, August 12, 1954.

⁵⁵ Restoration Short Course Announced, May 4, 1955, National Trust for Historic Preservation, General Correspondence 1955 (M-Ne), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁵⁶ Gareth D. Livermore, "Revisiting 'The Cooperstown Idea': The Evolution of the New York State Historical Association," *Public Historian* 33 (August 2011): 74-75; Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, 2 vols. (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1981), 1: 104-6.

“All the town becomes a sort of university campus,” recalled historian Carl Carmer.⁵⁷

Participants took courses on American myths, graphic arts, writing, photography, decorative arts, architecture, landscape, and partnering with public schools. After panel discussions concluded, attendees enjoyed historical demonstrations, tours, and recreation on the lake.⁵⁸ Despite the occasional scholarly dispute when “arguments wax hot,” the relaxed atmosphere of the seminars contrasted to the more focused courses of study developed by American University, the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.⁵⁹

In 1955, Frederick Rath, Director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, partnered with Jones to develop a short course in Cooperstown titled “Historic House Keeping.” After earning a master’s degree in history from Harvard University, Rath secured a position with the National Park Service in 1937 where he became involved in historic preservation work. He joined the federal agency when it had only just begun to hire historians to conduct site research and develop educational programs.⁶⁰ By 1949, Rath served as the director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a position he held for seven years during which he built a national

⁵⁷ Carl Carmer, “Cooperstown,” in *My Kind of Country: Favorite Writings about New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 92.

⁵⁸ “Seminars Attract Countrywide Visitors Here: Most Museums Will Send Members,” *The Freeman’s Journal* (Cooperstown, NY), June 16, 1948; “Third Annual Seminars Open with 100 Here: Dr. Hayes Heard at Sunday Night Session,” *The Freeman’s Journal*, July 5, 1950; “Museum Service Aide on Seminar Faculty,” *The Greece Press* (Greece, NY), June 25, 1953; “At Cooperstown Seminar on Culture,” *Plattsburgh (NY) Press-Republican*, July 14, 1953.

⁵⁹ Carmer, “Cooperstown,” 92.

⁶⁰ Frederick L. Rath, Jr., “Reflections on Historic Preservation and the National Park Service: The Early Years,” *CRM* 14 (Supplement 1991): 1-5. For a history of NPS interpretive programs, see Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks*; and Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss, *Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s* (Denver, CO: National Park Service, 1983).

network of support for state, federal, and private historic preservation projects that lobbied for and drafted federal historic preservation legislation and promoted the importance of public education at historic sites.⁶¹

Rath's two-week "Historic House Keeping" seminar introduced a more nuanced course of study than previous seminars. In a lecture delivered on the opening day of the two-week program, Rath emphasized what he believed to be the ultimate purpose of historic preservation—public education. He argued that educational potentials at historic sites expanded beyond those of the textbook or classroom, "for the feel, the taste, and the sight of history [at historic sites] help to etch them into memory." Yet, Rath thought that many sites failed to realize their educational potential, attributing such failure to a lack of professional training in historical interpretation. Academics enamored with the "minutiae of American history" and enthusiasts with a "passion for relics equally failed to acknowledge or diminished the social implications of historic preservation and interpretation by focusing on too narrow of audiences." Rath argued that, regardless of one's academic background, "untrained personnel are intellectually inaccessible."⁶²

Only proper interpretive training could bridge a gap in the abilities of amateurs and professionals at historic sites. Rath's "Historic House Keeping" short course challenged participants to consider educational and societal purposes for historic preservation and to prioritize the practice of public interpretation.⁶³ Historian Rebecca Conard identified Rath as a

⁶¹ Frederick L. Rath, Jr., *The National Trust, 1947-1955: A Summary Report*, May 19, 1956, National Trust for Historic Preservation, General Correspondence 1955, Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁶² Frederick L. Rath, Jr., "Historic Preservation: The Challenge and a Plan," public lecture, Cooperstown, N.Y., September 18, 1955, 4-5, 9, National Trust for Historic Preservation, General Correspondence 1955, Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁶³ "Historic-House Keeping: A Short Course," pamphlet, 1956, National Trust for Historic Preservation, General Correspondence 1956, Director's Office, Archives and History Record

key figure in the development of humanities-based museum studies programs, but he was more likely a messenger for an interdisciplinary field of knowledge emerging within the broader historical profession, evidenced by an increasing interest in the practice of interpretation among historians working at historic sites and museums.⁶⁴ Rath was in the vanguard of public historical interpretation. Reflecting on the emergence of interpretive training and practice in the 1950s, one American Association for State and Local History member recalled,

To a commanding extent, the ideas of the American Association for State and Local History centered on this concept of making history accessible through interpretation. The word interpretation at that time had become something of a shibboleth. It was not a word in common parlance except among the kinds of people who belonged to the American Association for State and Local History, but if you could not pronounce “interpretation,” you were not one of the elect.⁶⁵

Addressing this new interest in interpretation, in 1957, Freeman Tilden, a National Park Service historian, published *Interpreting Our Heritage*.⁶⁶ Struggling to define the term, Tilden

Group; “Historic House Keeping,” *History News* 10 (June 1955): 29-30; “Historic House Museums Course Well Attended,” *Museum News* 33 (October 15, 1955): 3; “Historic House Keeping,” *Historic Preservation: Quarterly of the National Trust for Historic Preservation* 8 (Spring 1956): 3.

⁶⁴ Conard, “The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States,” 105-20; Charles B. Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 2: 926-36, 950-52.

⁶⁵ Holman J. Swinney, “Realizing the Intentions: American Association for State and Local History, 1956-1976,” in *Local History, National Heritage*, 57-58; Clement M. Silvestro, ed., *Life is a Local Story: A Collection of Talks Concerning Local History, Historic Sites, & History Museums* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1964), 9-10.

⁶⁶ Historical interpretation became an increasingly important focus within the National Park Service when the agency began to hire historians to develop public programs for park museums in the 1930s; see C. Frank Brockman, “Park Naturalists and the Evolution of National Park Service Interpretation through World War II,” *Forest & Conservation History* 22 (January 1978): 24-43; Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1986); “Conversations: Tilden’s Fifth Principle,” *Journal of Interpretation Research* 18 (December 2013): 97-104; Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks*; Daniel E. Coslett and Manish Chalana, “National Parks for New Audiences: Diversifying Interpretation for Enhanced Contemporary Relevance,” *Public Historian* 38 (November 2016): 101-28; Phillip Gordon Ablett and Pamela Kay Dyer, “Heritage and Hermeneutics: Towards a Broader Interpretation of Interpretation,” *Current Issues in Tourism* 12 (May 1, 2009): 209-33.

described interpretation as “a public service that has so recently come into our cultural world that a resort to the dictionary is fruitless.” He then offered a more complete explanation of interpretation: “An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”⁶⁷ Tilden parsed the relationship between interpreter and scholar. While interpretation required expert research, the scholar “must always remember that his tools are not the public’s tools, not his scholarly thoughts their thoughts.”⁶⁸ In the preface to Tilden’s second edition of *Interpreting Our Heritage* in 1967, Crittenden described interpretation as “a new philosophy” of historical work that required research, experimentation, and professional training.⁶⁹ With proper research and training, a successful interpreter inspired curiosity, encouraging their audience to uncover larger truths about their pasts and the world.⁷⁰

On the first day of “Historic House Keeping,” Rath charged each student with reconceiving their society, museum, or agency as an “educational-service organization” and developing an interpretive program grounded in the needs and interests of their own community.⁷¹ Throughout the week, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily, participants sat in on focused sessions dedicated to accessioning, collections care, and exhibitions. Interpretive training constituted nearly 25 percent of course content. The other 75 percent comprised informal evening discussions and socials “designed to broaden the view-point and horizons of historic

⁶⁷ Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 3, 8.

⁶⁸ Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 43-44.

⁶⁹ Christopher Crittenden, “Preface to the Second Edition,” in Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, xviii.

⁷⁰ For a reflective discussion on the relationship between interpreter and audience, see “Conversations: Tilden’s Fifth Principle,” 97-104.

⁷¹ Rath, “Historic Preservation,” 8.

preservation.”⁷² In addition, Rath and Jones scheduled a significant amount of consultation time, encouraging participants to bring examples of their own projects to troubleshoot with faculty. Program students and faculty also housed together, emphasizing collegiality and shared inquiry.

After the success of the first “Historic House Keeping” seminar in 1955, Rath spoke to Christopher Crittenden about developing a version of the course in North Carolina, an opportunity that appealed to Crittenden as he attempted to elevate standards of historical work across a new and quickly expanding historic sites program. In 1955, Crittenden required a four-year college degree in history or social studies for all professional positions within the Department of Archives and History. That same year, he established the Division of Historic Sites and hired William S. Tarlton, a professor of history, to head the new division, which took over several historic sites previously managed by the Department of Conservation and Development.⁷³ In addition to managing eight Department-administered sites, among them Tyron Palace, Town Creek Indian Mound, Alamance Battleground, and Brunswick Town, the Division of Historic Sites provided technical or financial assistance to sites owned by local historical societies and primarily run by volunteers. For example, the Division granted funds to the Historical Halifax Restoration Association to undertake various restoration projects.⁷⁴ By cooperating with or establishing formal contracts with local organizations, the Division of Historic Sites established some control over most sites whether or not they were owned by the

⁷² “Historic-House Keeping: A Short Course”; “Historic House Keeping,” *Historic Preservation Quarterly*, 3.

⁷³ Ansley Herring Wegner, *History for All the People: 100 Years of Public History in North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Office of Archives and History, 2003), 34-41.

⁷⁴ “Twenty-eighth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History” (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1960), State Library of North Carolina; “Dr. Crittenden Makes Appeal for Restoration of Halifax,” *Rocky Mount (NC) Telegram*, November 20, 1953; Wegner, *History for All the People*, 35.

state, situating the Department of Archives and History to maintain “acceptable standards of excellence” throughout the state. The expanding landscape of historical sites made North Carolina an ideal location for a “Historic House Keeping” course and provided local volunteers an opportunity to learn from experts. When work began in 1957 to renovate Tyron Palace, it provided a catalyst for expanding training in North Carolina. Crittenden and Joye Jordan expressed interest in hosting a “Historic House Keeping” course, but plans never materialized, perhaps because enthusiasm waned as the plans to open Tyron Palace to the public were delayed until 1959.⁷⁵

As Crittenden sought to expand interpretation and professionalism in North Carolina’s historic sites, Jordan traveled to Cooperstown to teach sessions on accessioning, cataloging, interpretation, and display techniques. Although dominated by men in the 1950s, the historical field began to open to some women who found professional opportunities in archives, museums, and historical societies. Some, like Joye Jordan, secured teaching positions in emerging training programs.⁷⁶ As an instructor at Cooperstown in 1956, she joined women like Helen Duprey Bullock, a historian at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Mary E. Cunningham, the Associate Director of the New York State Historical Association and co-founder and former editor of *American Heritage*, a popular publication produced by the American Association for

⁷⁵ Frederick L. Rath to Dr. Christopher Crittenden, January 4, 1956, National Organizations and the Like, General Correspondence 1956, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group; Christopher Crittenden to Mr. Frederick L. Rath, Jr., January 13, 1956, National Organizations, Historical and Like, General Correspondence 1956, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group; Frederick L. Rath to Dr. Christopher Crittenden, February 7, 1956, National Organizations, Historical and Like, General Correspondence 1956, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group; “Historic-House Keeping: A Short Course.”

⁷⁶ “Historic-House Keeping: A Short Course”; Jacqueline Goggin, “Challenging Sexual Discrimination in the Historical Profession: Women Historians and the American Historical Association, 1890-1940” *American Historical Review* 97 (June 1992): 769-802.

State and Local History.⁷⁷ Jordan, Bullock, and Cunningham were among eight women, out of twenty-three faculty members, to teach during the second year of the “Historic House Keeping course.”⁷⁸

By the 1950s, women’s colleges like Meredith College in Raleigh specifically looked to train women as part of a new generation of professionals working in state and local historical associations, archives, and history museums. In 1954, Radcliffe College, an all-women’s school in Massachusetts, founded an Institute on Historical and Archival Management in partnership with Harvard’s history department. Radcliffe’s President, Wilbur Kitchener Jordan, had begun developing an archive dedicated to studying women’s history, which enlightened him on how few training programs prepared women students for positions in archives and historical societies.⁷⁹ Modeling the programs recently developed in Washington, DC, Wisconsin, and New York, the Radcliffe Institute opened to men and women who had recently graduated from a four-year college or were already employed at an archival or historical agency. Jordan favored

⁷⁷ Elizabeth D. Mulloy, *The History of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1963-1973* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1976), 20-21; Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 2: 885; “Mary E. Cunningham (1911-1986), *New York History* 67 (October 1986): 450-51.

⁷⁸ Frederick L. Rath, Jr. to Dr. Christopher Crittenden, January 4, 1956, National Organizations Historical and Like, General Correspondence 1956, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group; “Historic-House Keeping: A Short Course.”

⁷⁹ Institute on Historical and Archival Management: Resources for Research, 1954, records group 24, series 5, folder 17.28, Institute for Historical and Archival Management, 1954-1960, Radcliffe College Archives Subject Files, 1869-2007, Radcliffe College Archives, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, accessed July 25, 2021, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:RAD.ARCH:17372556>; Patricia Miller King, “The Power of Preservation: The Schlesinger Library at Fifty,” *American Libraries* 24 (August 1993): 665-67.

admitting women with undergraduate degrees in history who, he believed, would most benefit from the program.⁸⁰

Still, Jordan was no proto-second-wave feminist. He saw an opportunity to reclaim women's longstanding presence in historic preservation through the traditionalism that framed women's lives and careers in the 1950s.⁸¹ Jordan recognized the historical role of women in archival work at the state and local levels, noting that "Women have done very well in the historical archives field."⁸² Women had served as voluntary stewards of the past through patriotic associations like the Daughters of the American Revolution, Colonial Dames, and Daughters of the Confederacy. Now, with proper training, women could assume the professional titles of archivist and curator.⁸³

However, even as more women began to pursue higher education after World War II, many educators and students themselves did not perceive higher education as a sure path to well-

⁸⁰ Earle W. Newton to Christopher Crittenden, March 4, 1954, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1954 (A-C), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁸¹ Among monographs that explore women's presence and participation in the fields of historic memory and preservation during the nineteenth and early-twentieth century are W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "White Women and the Politics of Historical Memory in the New South, 1880-1920," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, ed. Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 115-39; Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Julie Des Jardins, *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America: Gender, Race and the Politics of Memory: Gender, Race, and the Politics of Memory, 1880-1945*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991); Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museum* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).

⁸² Office of Publicity, Radcliffe College, "Archival and Historical Procedures," news release, March 1, 1954, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1954 (A-C), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁸³ Kammen, *On Doing Local History*, 25-26.

paying and satisfying careers for young women. Rather, many highly trained women married and never entered full employment or left school altogether.⁸⁴ Historian Elaine Tyler May argued that college-educated women often found themselves adapting or abandoning their own ambitions to follow their husbands' careers in the post-war era.⁸⁵ For women pursuing both a marriage and career, the professions they eventually occupied often came to be a consequence of wherever their husbands' careers took them.

The post-graduate experience of Doris Harris, a Meredith College graduate provides such an example. After graduation in 1948, Harris secured a position at the North Carolina Department of Archives and History researching early North Carolina Court Records.⁸⁶ In 1955, she left her position at the Department of Archives and History after her husband, a graduate student at the University of North Carolina, secured a teaching position at the University of Maryland. Eventually, Harris found a temporary job at the Library of Congress. The following year, Crittenden recommended Harris for a junior archivist position at the Hall of Records of Maryland, but she declined the opportunity, delaying her own professional ambitions because of her father's recent death and her husband's teaching and dissertation work.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Kimberley Dolphin Wheaton, "Challenging the 'Climate of Unexpectation': Mary Ingraham Bunting and American Women's Higher Education in the 1950s and 1960s" (EdD dissertation, Harvard University, 2001), 6, 26-28, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, 304696891.

⁸⁵ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 77-79.

⁸⁶ Nancy Walker, "Alumnae Lives," *The Twig*, December 10, 1948.

⁸⁷ Christopher Crittenden to Dr. Wayne C. Grover, August 31, 1955, National Archives, General Correspondence 1955 (M-Ne), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; Robert H. Bahmer to Mr. Christopher Crittenden, November 17, 1955, National Archives, General Correspondence 1955 (M-Ne), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; Morris L. Radoff to Christopher Crittenden, January 12, 1956, National Archives, General Correspondence 1956, Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; Crittenden to Radoff, January 18, 1956, National Archives, General Correspondence 1956, Director's Office, Archives and History

Anticipating that the Institute on Historical and Archival Management at Radcliffe College would prepare women for flexible and adaptable careers, Jordan expected that “the fact that women marry and scatter throughout the country is in the course’s favor in as much as there is an increasing need for the founding of local historical societies.”⁸⁸ However, such a broad program of training was hardly achievable. The Institute’s supervisor, Earle Newton, Director of Old Sturbridge Village, a living history museum in Massachusetts, struggled to balance a curriculum that provided “as *rich* and as *broad* a grounding as possible” in the far-reaching fields of historic preservation and museum work and the more specialized training of archivists and records administrators. Newton looked to Christopher Crittenden, Joye Jordan, and Frank Burton to advise on content and structure, as all had experience developing a similar program with a women’s college. An early draft of the course included nine sections covering governmental records, manuscript collections, business records, audiovisual materials, museum studies, historic restoration, publishing, access, and administration. Yet, in only 120-hours over eight weeks, students would just skim the surface. Having struggled with this issue themselves, Jordan and Burton suggested that Newton scrap museums, publications, and historical restoration altogether in order to focus on archival management.⁸⁹ Crittenden was less supportive, expressing concern

Record Group; Doris Harris to Christopher Crittenden, January 23, 1956, National Archives, General Correspondence 1956, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁸⁸ Office of Publicity, Radcliffe College, “Archival and Historical Procedures,” press release, March 1, 1954, General Correspondence 1954 (A-C), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁸⁹ Earle Newton to Dr. Christopher Crittenden, February 6, 1954, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1954 (A-C), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group; Christopher Crittenden to Mr. Earle W. Newton, February 19, 1954, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1954 (A-C), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group; “Earle W. Newton to Dr. Christopher Crittenden,” March 4, 1954, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1954 (A-C), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

that it might overlap too much with the American University seminar and suggesting that the program be offered as outlined until more specialized courses could be developed in future years.⁹⁰

Newton accepted Crittenden's advice, and the new Institute on Historical and Archival Management offered an extensive curriculum focused on the management of governmental records and papers, museum interpretation, exhibit development, and historic preservation.⁹¹ The inaugural program brought together archival and preservation professionals, with guest lecturers that included Christopher Crittenden, Ernst Posner, Edward P. Alexander (Vice-President of Interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg), Solon J. Buck (Assistant Librarian of Congress), Lester J. Cappon (Director of the Institute of Early American History and Culture and the archivist of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation), Albert B. Corey (State Historian of New York and President of the American Association for State and Local History), and Ronald F. Lee (Chief Historian of the National Park Service Interpretation Division).

The proliferation of historical training programs in the mid-1950s united a group of professionals who had been working in state and local history for decades. Hoping to draw from the momentum, in 1956, Crittenden drafted a long-range plan for the American Association for State and Local History that called on his colleagues to focus the organization's energy on professional development. Commonly referred to as the "Crittenden Report," the plan served as the organization's directive into the 1960s. Crittenden called for a reevaluation of the training of

⁹⁰ Crittenden to Newton, February 19, 1954.

⁹¹ "Institute on Historical and Archival Management: Third Annual Sessions," 1956, records group 24, series 5, folder 17.28, Institute for Historical and Archival Management, 1954-1960, Radcliffe College Archives Subject Files, 1869-2007, Radcliffe College Archives, accessed July 25, 2021, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:RAD.ARCH:17372556>.

practitioners in state and local history and advocated for greater professionalization at the national level. The report highlighted disparities in professional standards and wages across local and state historical agencies. For example, Crittenden pointed out that some state historical agencies required senior leadership to have PhDs while others, like the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, did not. Paradoxically, salaries at the North Carolina Department of Archives and History were out of reach for most other historical societies.

The American Association for State and Local History's new emphasis on training and professional standards risked alienating amateur historians, genealogists, and antiquarians. Founded on the heels of swelling popular support for American history in the 1930s, American Association for State and Local History leaders had hoped initially to cultivate a broad membership of professionals and amateurs. In 1947, the association began publishing *American Heritage*. This popular history magazine promoted local history and membership among the general public, but seven years later, as the magazine proved a large and expensive challenge, the association sold it to publishers. By 1956, Crittenden came to believe that without the magazine, the American Association for State and Local History membership had little to offer the public and seemed to stray from its traditional audiences. He warned that the organization must "never lose sight of the pitfalls of ivory-towerism, old-fogyism, and pedantry," and he advocated more instructional bulletins and handbooks, developing future historians through secondary school programs, and supporting internship programs.⁹²

⁹² Report of the Committee on Long-Range Planning, September 1956, 3, 7, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1957 (A), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

Other professional organizations also began to emphasize professional training. The American Historical Association had begun promoting federal government employment in the 1940s.⁹³ In 1956, the American Association of Museums determined to expend greater effort on professional development. Too long, they asserted, had the organization focused on the museum buildings, collections, and exhibits without focusing on “the caliber of its personnel.” Going forward, “the primary concern of the Association should be with individuals rather than with organizations,” and a committee charged with examining professional standards proposed that the alliance invest in “the establishment of more adequate museum training programs than now exist.”⁹⁴

The American Association of Museums proposed creating university courses, degrees, and certificates to help elevate staff at history museums. Before the 1930s, most museum training programs developed within departments of natural history where students learned taxonomy and display techniques such as taxidermy and diorama.⁹⁵ In the 1930s, a more interdisciplinary field of museum science emerged with courses dedicated to collections management, display, education, and research. Still, natural historians (largely archaeologists and anthropologists) dominated the museum field, with historical museums operating on the margins, relying heavily on volunteers and untrained staff.⁹⁶

⁹³ Albert B. Corey et al., “Long-Range Plans for Association Announced,” *History News* 12 (March 1957): 35-39; Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 199.

⁹⁴ A Series of Proposals to the Officers and the Councilors of the American Association of Museums, May 1956, American Association of Museums, General Correspondence 1956, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

⁹⁵ For its first five decades, leaders of natural history and fine art museums led the American Association of Museums; see Conard, “The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States,” 106-7.

⁹⁶ Christopher Crittenden, “A New Look at History Museums,” *History News* 14 (November 1958): 7-8; Conard, “The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States,”

In the early 1950s, the University of Delaware developed two humanities-focused programs which served as model training programs for the American Association of Museums. Rockefeller Foundation-funded fellowships provided graduate students in American history opportunities to study interpretation and presentation at the new Hagley Museum in Wilmington, the site of the gunpowder works founded by E. I. du Pont in 1802. The university also offered decorative arts, literature, and history courses at the more established Winterthur Museum.⁹⁷ In contrast to Cooperstown, which often attracted a mix of professionals, the University of Delaware programs targeted graduate students interested in early American studies. Although not precluding professionals, especially those who had entered museum work without a graduate degree, most fellowships went to graduate students interested in museum administration, teaching, and further study in doctoral programs.⁹⁸

American Association for State and Local History leaders similarly hoped to develop a new audience of graduate students.⁹⁹ Commenting on a draft of Crittenden's long-range plan, James C. Olson, Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society, suggested the association develop more formal relationships between professionals and graduate schools. "It seems to me

109; Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks*; Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 2: 926-36, 950-52.

⁹⁷ John A. Munroe to Christopher Crittenden, September 30, 1957, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1957 (A), Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; "John Munroe: Delaware Historian (Archived)," University of Delaware Library, accessed May 16, 2019, <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec//exhibits/munroe/index.html>.

⁹⁸ "Winterthur Fellowships," *Historic Preservation* 7 (Fall-Winter 1955): 2; E. McClung Fleming to Dr. Christopher P. Montgomery, November 27, 1959, Student Training, General Correspondence, July 1, 1959-June 30, 1962, Division of Museums, Department of Archives and History Record Group.

⁹⁹ Report of the Committee on Long-Range Planning; Albert B. Corey et al., "Long-Range Plans for Association Announced," *History News* 12 (March 1957): 35-39; Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 228-30.

that we ought to look toward increasing the interest of our academic brethren in local history and in improving their techniques, particularly in presentation,” he recommended.¹⁰⁰ The numbers of students pursuing history masters and doctorate degrees increased significantly after 1948, as did the number of undergraduate history majors.¹⁰¹ An educated workforce appealed to leaders of more prominent historical associations, many of whom had graduate training in history themselves.

However, volunteers and history enthusiasts had long been the primary boosters of local and state history, and most historical societies in the country remained entirely volunteer organizations or largely dependent on volunteer workers. Some professionals derisively labeled them antiquarians or, kindlier, amateurs and laypeople. Their assumptions about the need for professionalization risked displacing or alienating a vital labor force.¹⁰² After recommending that historical societies raise compensation to tempt professionally trained archivists and historians from academia, the newly established Committee for Attracting Competent Personnel explicitly stated that the recommendation should not “be misunderstood as being critical of the non-professional in the historical society.” Paid or volunteer, “each member of the committee knows how invaluable, indeed how often indispensable, the amateur, or the expatriate professional, can be.”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ James C. Olson to Christopher Crittenden, March 9, 1956, National Organizations, Historical and Like, General Correspondence 1956, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹⁰¹ Benjamin Fine, “Study of U.S. History Gains as More Colleges Require It,” *New York Times*, April 17, 1950; Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 147.

¹⁰² Clemente M. Silvestro, “A Perennial Problem,” *History News* 14 (July 1959): 80; Carl Guthe, “Our Ailing History Museums,” *History News* 14 (July 1959): 85-88.

¹⁰³ “Standards and Salaries of Historical Society Directors,” *History News* 11 (February 1956): 27-28; “Committee Makes Final Report on Professional Standards,” *History News* 12 (January 1957): 19-22.

In many cases, academically prepared historians and archivists did not recognize the change wrought in the post-war fervor for history. The boom in history majors and graduate students created a workforce that may have looked like the traditional ranks of laypeople but which was much better prepared for the work. A group of competent, and affordable, homemakers with degrees in history, archaeology, and biology formed a volunteer group at the Eastern Washington State Historical Society. After observing Eastern Washington's volunteer program, Clement Silvestro, then editor of *History News*, suggested that more historical societies seek out "enthusiastic" volunteers and take advantage of "the dilemma of the college educated housewife, who after a few years of married life finds herself tied down to housekeeping and child raising. Would not historical agencies do well to give these restless, intelligent women the opportunity to do creative volunteer work and thereby relieve them occasionally of the day-to-day monotony of their uxorial duties?"¹⁰⁴ An Eastern Washington volunteer kindly replied to Silvestro several months later in an editorial describing the challenges volunteers faced when managing the expectations of professional staff and the "headaches" produced by fundraising and planning for ad hoc initiatives.¹⁰⁵

Volunteer concerns aside, the perennial personnel issue plaguing museums and historical societies remained the difficulty of recruiting people with both academic and practical experience. "The present manpower shortage seems universal," Clifford Lord explained, blaming low wages and the "tendency, and a strong one, to regard historical agency work as a second choice, something for the culls."¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, informal relationships between local historical

¹⁰⁴ Clemente M. Silvestro, "Utilizing Volunteer Help," *History News* 16 (November 1960): 4.

¹⁰⁵ Katherine C. Bartleson, "A Volunteer Speaks," *History News* 16 (June 1961): 109-10.

¹⁰⁶ Clifford L. Lord to Dr. Christopher Crittenden, July 17, 1956, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence, January-August 1949 (P-Z), Director's Office,

societies and graduate students had developed throughout the nation, and Lord recommended the American Association for State and Local History lead a promotional campaign to capture the exciting work of historical societies. He even suggested hiring writers to create a series of articles describing the work of professionals outside the academy.¹⁰⁷

By the end of 1956, the Attracting Competent Personnel committee produced a report arguing that the association needed to encourage and develop its own professional training programs, citing as examples only four professional programs—the Meredith internship program, a course at the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin PhD minor in historical agencies, and Radcliffe College’s Institute on Archival Management. Key to such programs, the committee argued, was, and continued to be, cooperation between historical agencies and universities.¹⁰⁸

Archives and History Record Group; “Committee Makes Final Report on Professional Standards,” 21; “Midwest Museums Conference,” *History News* 13 (December 1957): 14.

¹⁰⁷ An article published in *History News* titled “Graduate Students Useful!” reported how one University of North Carolina graduate student wrote an outdoor drama for the Cherokee Historical Association and another was commissioned to write a history of Rowan County for the county’s 200th anniversary celebration. Another graduate student from the University of Wisconsin had written a thesis titled “Public Relations of Historical Societies.” The article also informed readers that in Minnesota, the Old Timers of St. Louis Park hoped to secure a graduate student to write a history of their town, and that the NPS encouraged historical societies interested in local archaeology to work with graduate students; see “Graduate Students Useful!,” *History News* 17 (January 1952): 9; Kermit Hunter, “Unto These Hills” (MA thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1950), North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; James S. Brawley, *The Rowan Story, 1753-1953: A Narrative History of Rowan County, North Carolina* (Salisbury, NC: Rowan Printing Company, 1953); Eloise Sara Block, “Public Relations of Historical Societies” (MS thesis, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1951), Minds@UQ, accessed September 26, 2021, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1793/37423>.

¹⁰⁸ Don McNeil, Committee Report: Attracting Competent Personnel in the Field of Local History, December 29, 1956, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1956, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

A pamphlet written by Clement Silvestro and marketed to college students combatted the idea that historical societies were “stolid” or “stuffy organizations.” Silvestro emphasized that many of the skills needed for historical society work could be acquired through on-the-job training, but he attributed the field’s “new dynamism” to professional training programs.¹⁰⁹ He outlined modern educational requirements for positions within local historical societies. For example, he recommended that curatorial positions require a master’s degree in American history or art, archival positions a degree in history, government, or social studies and advanced training in an archival program, and candidates with PhDs be considered for administrative positions in larger museums and historical societies. After publishing another article in the *Journal of College Placement* about employment opportunities in historical societies, Silvestro received numerous letters from recent BA graduates inquiring about open positions.¹¹⁰

Yet, not all trends looked promising. The committee for Attracting Competent Personnel expressed concern over a declining number of PhDs working at state and local agencies. Although most skills could be self-taught or developed over time, the committee argued that directors with advanced historical training, specifically PhDs, secured greater respect from their academic counterparts, a prerequisite to the public-academic collaborations that the committee imagined. The committee recommended that the American Association for State and Local History encourage historical organizations to offer higher salaries, tenure, and retirement

¹⁰⁹ Clement M. Silvestro, “Job Opportunities with a Historical Society,” American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1957 (A), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group; McNeil, Committee Report.

¹¹⁰ Clement M. Silvestro, *The American Association for State and Local History Semi-Annual Report of the Executive Secretary*, March 1959, 8-9, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1958, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

programs to lure people from academia.¹¹¹ Borrowing from the original 1956 plan by the Promoting Local History in Schools & Internship Program committee, the Attracting Competent Personnel committee promoted an internship program to train advanced graduate students as agency leaders. Lord imagined a program where interns shadowed current directors of historical agencies at policy and board meetings, anticipating that they would gain experience in administration and public relations:

I think some system where a man of promise in your outfit, or mine, or anyone else's, could experience a few months with Bailey Carroll, or Dick Williams, or Dick McCormick, or Lou Jones, or Ross Toole, or Tom Vaughn, etc., sitting in on policy conferences, learning the different philosophies and approaches and techniques that characterize each of our very different organizations, would be of inestimable value. I think it would be very attractive to the sort of fellow we need.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Brown, Committee Report: Attracting Competent Personnel in the Field of Local History; "Standards and Salaries of Historical Society Directors"; "Committee Makes Final Report on Professional Standards."

¹¹² Lord to Crittenden, July 17, 1956. The men cited in Lord's letter include Horace Bailey Carroll, Director of the Texas State Historical Association and Professor of History at the University of Texas; Richard D. Williams, Director of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society; Richard P. McCormick, Professor of History at Rutgers University and researcher adviser to Colonial Williamsburg; Louis C. Jones, Executive Director of the New York Historical Society and Farmer's Museum in Cooperstown, New York; K. Ross Toole, Director of the Montana Historical Society; and Thomas Vaughan, Director of the Oregon Historical Society. Each of these men had academic training as well as experience working for local, state, or federal historical agencies, and all, except for Thomas Vaughan, had a PhD in history. For example, as an undergraduate in 1936, McCormick worked as a historical technician for the National Parks Service. In 1948, he earned a PhD in history at the University of Pennsylvania and spent the remainder of his career as a professor of history at Rutgers. In 1953, McCormick accepted a position as a research adviser to Colonial Williamsburg and became involved with the American Association for State and Local History. Lord believed McCormick's training and career to be a good model for future directors of state historical agencies. Reflecting on his own education, McCormick remarked that "I believed that with my academic orientation I could press the point that public history must always be guided by a scholarly conscience if it is to serve a valid educational purpose;" see Richard P. McCormick, "A Historian's Education," *William and Mary Quarterly* 45 (July 1988): 552-59; George P. Isbell, "Dr. H. Bailey Carroll, 1903-1966," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 70 (July 1966): 1-6; W. L. L., et al., "K. Ross Toole: A Memorial," *History News* 31 (Autumn 1981): 54-61; Alan S. Newell, "'Home is What You Can

Each of these men had academic backgrounds, and most had PhDs in history. Lord hoped that their respective historical agencies would sponsor and host an intern each month. At the end of the program, agencies would have the option to hire interns immediately.¹¹³ As a training program, this type of top-level internship was an outlier. It could not contend with the university-based training programs emerging across the nation, and in the end, it did not garner the American Association for State and Local History's support.¹¹⁴

In 1957, Colonial Williamsburg developed a seminar in cooperation with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, finding a middle ground between existing training programs and the internship-centered training model. Leaders of the Williamsburg Foundation, hoping to expand interpretive programs, faced a dearth of prospective staff with scholarly training and practice in public interpretation.¹¹⁵ At a 1957 American Association for State and Local History Council meeting, Edward P. Alexander, Director of Education at Colonial Williamsburg, having stepped down as Superintendent of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, proposed that the American Association for State and Local History sponsor a seminar on historical interpretation at the historic town. Both the National Trust and Williamsburg Foundation had already allocated

Take Away with You': K. Ross Toole and the Making of a Public Historian," *The Public Historian* 23 (Summer 2001): 63-71.

¹¹³ Richard P. McCormick, Committee Report: Promoting Local History in Schools and Internship Program, December 29, 1956, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1956, Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹¹⁴ "Lord Reports Good Year," *History News* 13 (November 1957): 6-7; Silvestro, *The American Association for State and Local History Semi-Annual Report of the Executive Secretary*.

¹¹⁵ Williamsburg offered its first hostess training program in 1933; see Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 1: 46-48; William Joseph Tramposch, "The Seminar for Historical Administration: Companion to Change" (MA thesis, The College of William and Mary, 1984), 15, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, 1953259644; William J. Tramposch, "A Companion to Change: The Seminar for Historical Administration, 1959-1984," *Museum Studies Journal* 1 (Fall 1984): 8-18.

annual sums of \$5,000 over three years to fund the program. Alexander promised to raise enough funds to offer students a stipend of \$750 if the American Association for State and Local History committed \$2,500. After a lengthy discussion, the council voted to generally support the program.¹¹⁶

However, the American Association of State and Local History had reservations about directly funding a program at Williamsburg. Crittenden, well-respected among association leadership, endorsed the program, although he acknowledged it was a “gamble” for the organization to commit funds to a brand-new program. In addition to unpredictable printing costs and the declining profitability of *American Heritage*, in which the organization now had just a 15 percent stake, the association had recently decided to fund a new, full-time assistant to the president. Sylvester K. Stevens, the association’s treasurer, expressed no confidence in the organization’s ability to fund the seminar.¹¹⁷ Stevens also voiced his disfavor for investing in a professional training program at Colonial Williamsburg: “The conditions there are completely artificial and hopelessly beyond the realm of accomplishment which characterizes the local or State operation.” Stevens thought that the association would be better off if it allocated \$2,500 to fund people to intern at state historical societies across the country. Ultimately, the association opted not to provide Colonial Williamsburg the requested funds.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ American Association for State and Local History Meeting of the Council, October 3, 1957; Christopher Crittenden to Edward P. Alexander, October 16, 1957; Edward P. Alexander to Clifford L. Lord, November 25, 1957; Christopher Crittenden to Clifford L. Lord, December 2, 1957, all in American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1957 (A), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹¹⁷ Crittenden to Lord, December 2, 1957; K. Stevens to Christopher Crittenden, December 6, 1957; Christopher Crittenden to Dr. S. K. Stevens, December 9, 1957, all in American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1957 (A), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group. See also Conard, “Complicating Origin Stories,” 22-23.

Even without financial support from the American Association of State and Local History, Colonial Williamsburg moved ahead with the program in the summer of 1959, accepting six in-service participants who already worked in museums and historic sites, and eighteen fellows, most of whom had at least an MA. Six were doctoral candidates.¹¹⁹ Hoping to attract more students already working toward PhDs in American history, Alexander redesigned the program from “The Seminar for Historical Interpretation” to “The Seminar for Historical Administrators,” marketing to students with at least one year of graduate training in American history, American studies, and American art or architectural history. He encouraged universities to grant academic credit for the program and provide stipends. Even if the seminar failed to draw every participant into the field of historical administration, at the very least, program graduates who did secure academic positions would have a better understanding of historical administration and interpretation.¹²⁰ During the seminar, participants focused on interpretation, including tour and exhibit development. A great deal of the program covered the history of historical societies and museums.

In 1959, *History News* boasted about four graduate-level training programs in historical administration that year. Colonial Williamsburg joined Radcliffe College as the only program offering specific graduate-level education in historical interpretation, preservation, and administration. The College of William and Mary also introduced a fourteen-month program, similar to that provided by the University of Delaware, that combined a master’s program in

¹¹⁹ Edward P. Alexander to Christopher Crittenden, November 29, 1957, American Association for State and Local History, General Correspondence 1957 (A), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group; Tramosch, “The Seminar for Historical Administration,” 23.

¹²⁰ “Grads to Learn Historical Administration,” *History News* 14 (January 1959): 17; Tramosch, “A Companion to Change,” 9-10.

American history with practical training in publication, librarianship, and interpretation.¹²¹ Yet, four graduate programs were inadequate to meet the needs of an increasing number of historical agencies across the nation. In 1936, there had been 545 historical societies; by 1944, the number had climbed to around 833. By 1961, the number had skyrocketed to nearly 2,000.¹²² Since 1952, more than one hundred students had enrolled in the joint four-semester course offered by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and University of Wisconsin, yet only sixteen completed PhD degrees, and only seven went on to work in historical agencies.¹²³ After the first two years of the Williamsburg program, Alexander reported that over half of the participants took jobs in historical agencies.¹²⁴ Hoping to inspire greater participation and regretful of having passed up the opportunity in 1959, the American Association for State and Local History decided in 1960 to financially support the Seminar for Historical Administrators at Colonial Williamsburg. After the second year of the Williamsburg seminar, seventeen of the thirty-five students planned to pursue careers in historical administration.¹²⁵

As the American Association for State and Local History actively promoted new graduate-level programs, directors of the more established museum and archival training programs reasserted and reassessed their contributions to the field. In 1959, the public relations

¹²¹ "Four Institutions to Offer Training Programs at Graduate Level in Historical Administration," *History News* 14 (February 1959): 26-27.

¹²² Christopher Crittenden and Doris Godard, eds., *Historical Societies in the United States and Canada: A Handbook* (Washington, DC: American Association for State and Local History, 1944); Clement M. Silvestro and Sally Ann Davis, eds., *Directory of Historical Societies and Agencies in the United States and Canada* (Madison, Wisconsin: American Association for State and Local History, 1961).

¹²³ Alice Smith, "Historical Agencies Course Transferred," *History News* 14 (June 1959): 72.

¹²⁴ "Annual Report," *History News* 15 (September 1960): 133-35; Trampusch, "The Seminar for Historical Administration," 26.

¹²⁵ "Clement M. Silvestro, "Annual Report," *History News* 16 (September 1961): 149-52.

specialist at Cooperstown seized the opportunity to distinguish the Cooperstown Seminars from more formal academic programs. In an advertisement in *History News*, he emphasized the relaxed atmosphere of the seminars: “There are no hard and fast rules, no hard and fast people. The pace is yours to set.”¹²⁶ Such distinctions became more explicit the following year in a *History News* article titled “Seminars Combine Education, Vacation,” in which the author described Cooperstown as “Different from anything offered by university summer schools or graduate workshops, the Cooperstown seminars are designed for Americana enthusiasts of all ages and occupations.”¹²⁷

At American University, Ernst Posner had concerns about the quality and sustainability of archival training he offered through a six-week summer Institute on the Preservation and Administration of Archives.¹²⁸ The new Institute was an extension of the archival administration courses first offered in 1939. Posner marketed the new Institute to international and out-of-state professionals who could not take regularly scheduled classes throughout the academic year.¹²⁹ Still, Posner questioned his own merits and teaching. Although he had experience studying the history of archival development, he had come to his position as a recent emigrant from Germany with little experience in American records administration. Moreover, he lamented that there were

¹²⁶ George R. Clay, “Cooperstown Summer Seminars Emphasize American Folk Culture,” *History News* 14 (May 1959): 67-68.

¹²⁷ “Seminars Combine Education, Vacation,” *History News* 15 (May 1960): 80.

¹²⁸ First Institute on the Preservation and Administration of Archives: Class Schedule, July 1955, National Archives, General Correspondence 1955 (M-Ne), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹²⁹ Ernst Posner, statement in response to questions submitted by Philip C. Brooks, December 1973, 15; Richard J. Cox et al., “Founding Brothers: Leland, Buck, and Cappon and the Formation of the Archives Profession (Session 404),” *American Archivist* 74 (January 2011): 1-27.

no scholarships to attract students and believed that the seminar could do more to prepare individuals for leadership in state historical agencies.¹³⁰

In 1955, when Crittenden hired a new State Archivist for North Carolina, Posner confessed disappointment that one of his students did not receive the position: “I do not have to conceal from you that in a way I am sorry about the outcome of your efforts. It appears that we are not yet able to produce from the ranks of the profession the persons qualified for top positions in the States.”¹³¹ Many of the program’s graduates lacked advanced historical training, a criterion that Crittenden seemingly appreciated more than archival education. Crittenden’s chosen candidate, H. G. Jones, a recent PhD and teacher in North Carolina, confessed later in life that he was hired “without any qualifications whatsoever for being state archivist.”¹³² Yet, the North Carolina native’s PhD from Duke University and teaching experience got him the job.

In 1957, Crittenden sent Jones to the American University program. Jones appreciated the vibrant discussions facilitated by the varied backgrounds of course participants, the two-day trip to the Maryland Hall of Records, which provided a real example of how to put theories and techniques described in lecture into actual practice, and the opportunity to work with National Archives staff on projects related to North Carolina records. Still, he described the training as “intangible” and “theoretical.”¹³³ Ultimately, Jones was unsure how the program furthered his

¹³⁰ Posner, transcript of National Archives Oral History Project, 15.

¹³¹ Ernst Posner to Christopher Crittenden, April 3, 1956, Society of American Archives, General Correspondence 1956 (S-W), Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹³² H. G. Jones by Philip C. Brooks.

¹³³ H. G. Jones to Dr. Christopher Crittenden, June 23, 1957, Jones’ Trip to Archives Institute, General Correspondence 1957, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, Archives and History Record Group; H. G. Jones to Mr. D. L. Corbitt, July 1, 1957, Jones’ Trip to Archives Institute, General Correspondence 1957, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, Archives and History Record Group; H. G. Jones, interview by Philip C. Brooks.

work in North Carolina. A colleague reminded him, “I expect you to be filled with theories when you return, but if you can push some of them in the background and apply common sense according to the equipment, personnel, and circumstances available to you, you will be able to do, in my opinion, a much better job.”¹³⁴ With hindsight, Jones recalled that the program connected him to a larger archival community that he relied on for future expertise on the technical aspects of document restoration.¹³⁵

Although national training trended toward graduate and professional programs, staff at the Division of Archives and History in North Carolina continued to invest in the Meredith internship program, only gradually realizing that undergraduate students lacked sufficient preparation in historical research, archival techniques, and interpretation to compete with more thoroughly trained professionals in the job market. After a fall internship in 1961, intern Frances Gorham noted that one of her limitations was a lack of knowledge about North Carolina history. Meredith did not offer a North Carolina history class to orient the women to the Division of Archives and History’s collections, a struggle Meredith faculty had tried to remedy for some time.¹³⁶ At the Hall of History, Joye Jordan required the women to outline a popular book on North Carolina history to develop some historical context. Although the course remained popular

¹³⁴ D. L. Corbitt to Mr. H. G. Jones, July 3, 1957, Jones’ Trip to Archives Institute, General Correspondence 1957, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, Archives and History Record Group.

¹³⁵ Ross, “The National Archives,” 44.

¹³⁶ Frances Gorham, “A Survey of Archives 92,” January 18, 1962, Meredith Girls, General Correspondence July 1, 1959-June 30, 1962, Division of Museums; B. Y. Tyner to Dean J. E. Burk, December 11, 1945, in *Faculty Meeting and Academic Council Minutes, 1945-1959* (1959), Meredith College Archives, Carlyle Campbell Library, Meredith College, Raleigh, NC.

among Meredith students throughout the 1960s, interns expected more. Gorham lamented that the internship was only “skimming the surface.”¹³⁷

In 1969, Meredith retitled the internship class as “Introduction to Historical Professions,” creating a more focused course on historic preservation and museum studies. Division staff lectured on archaeology, architecture, interpretation, and museum operations. Field trips to the state archaeology laboratory, museum, and other historic sites supplemented lectures. Lectures wrapped in early November, and the next several class meetings focused on three capstone projects—one audiovisual, another a historic survey, and finally an archaeology project.¹³⁸ Students spent five weeks on archival training before choosing a concentration for the remaining ten weeks.¹³⁹ Historic sites became an option alongside museums and publications.¹⁴⁰ In 1967, hoping to address students’ woeful preparation in historical content, staff and Meredith faculty reevaluated the program and decided to eliminate the archival concentration, devoting the first five weeks, instead, to a broad study of the history and theory of historical administration.¹⁴¹ Staff also decided to offer the course just every other year.¹⁴²

With archival training reduced in the Meredith program, H. G. Jones approached the North Carolina State University’s history department in 1967 to offer a course on the history and

¹³⁷ Gorham, “A Survey of Archives 92.”

¹³⁸ Schedule for Meredith College Students Enrolled in History 400 R “Introduction to Historical Professions,” September 22, 1969, Meredith Internship Program, General Correspondence 1969, Division of Historic Sites, State Archives of North Carolina.

¹³⁹ Shera Jackson, “Nine Enjoy Archives Work,” *The Twig*, December 14, 1967.

¹⁴⁰ Sarah Lemmon to C. C. Crittenden, May 25, 1965, Meredith Training Course, General Correspondence 1965, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹⁴¹ Sarah Lemmon to Christopher Crittenden, February 22, 1967, Colleges and Universities, General Correspondence 1967, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹⁴² “Conference Notes Regarding Meredith Internship Program,” February 9, 1968, Meredith Training Program, General Correspondence 1968, Director’s Office, Archives and History Record Group.

administration of archives.¹⁴³ Without an undergraduate major or graduate program to elevate its visibility in the university, the history department performed a marginal service role, providing general courses to non-majors.¹⁴⁴ Jones's archival course proved a test as to how the history department could serve graduate and vocational students.¹⁴⁵ To bolster enrollment and better prepare his staff, Jones required all new employees to go through the two-semester course at North Carolina State University.¹⁴⁶ Meredith students wishing to pursue archival studies also took Jones's class at the nearby university.¹⁴⁷

* * *

In 1966, Christopher Crittenden wrote a short article titled "'For All the People:' The North Carolina Department of Archives and History," about the origins of "public" history in North Carolina:

This museum resulted in part from the efforts of a very colorful figure, Colonel Fred A. Olds—a man-about-town and indeed about the state—who brought together literally thousands of relics of bygone days and made them available in a

¹⁴³ Lemmon to Crittenden, February 22, 1967.

¹⁴⁴ "Annual Report of the Department of History and Political Science for the year 1959-1960," May 31, 1960; "Annual Report of the Department of History and Political Science for the year 1960-1961," May 18, 1961; "Annual Report of the Department of History for the year 1964-5," 1965, all in Department of History, General Records "Annual Reports" Folder 3, Special Collections Research Center, North Carolina State University Libraries, Raleigh.

¹⁴⁵ "Statement to accompany the Proposals for Revision of History Curriculum," January 1972, in Department of History, Committees, "Curriculum Committee" Folder 9, Special Collections Research Center.

¹⁴⁶ When an archivist from the Maine State Archives asked Jones for a copy of the policies and procedures of the State Archives of North Carolina, Jones was a bit befuddled and "flat-footed." Although he had certainly thought about an archival manual, he prioritized a more active employee training program. Several months later, Lowell asked Jones for information on the archives course to help him develop a similar course in Maine; see Howard P. Lowell to Mr. H. G. Jones, February 24, 1969; H. G. Jones to Mr. Howard P. Lowell, March 7, 1969, both in Archives and Records Management, August-December 1969, General Correspondence 1969, Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

¹⁴⁷ "Conference Notes Regarding Meredith Internship Program," February 9, 1968.

‘Hall’ in the State Museum. Colonel Olds knew very little about modern methods of museum display, but he was a master at interesting young people in history.¹⁴⁸

The professionally trained Crittenden was often condescending towards the amateur Olds’s work in private, but his admiration for Olds’s accomplishments came through clearly as he described how the Hall of History had evolved as “a modern, well-administered institution, with pictorial exhibits, dioramas, audiovisual programs, and the rest.”¹⁴⁹

“History for All People” encapsulated Crittenden’s service-oriented approach to government work and historical administration. Since taking over the Department of Archives and History in 1935, Crittenden had garnered a significant level of popular and governmental support for historical programs. During his tenure, he invested in a range of scholarly and popular publications to inspire a broader range of supporters. The growing historical marker program and new investments in historic preservation made North Carolina history more accessible to an increasing number of tourists and residents. He also worked to make the Department more valuable to families, fostering the Junior Historian movement and working with Joye Jordan to transform the Hall of History into a true “extension division.” Year after year, Crittenden boasted about these programs in annual reports and public presentations, creating support for his populist approach to history.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Christopher Crittenden, “‘For All the People:’ The North Carolina Department of Archives and History,” *History News* 21 (November 1966): 229-30.

¹⁴⁹ Crittenden, “‘For All the People,’” 230.

¹⁵⁰ For several examples of Crittenden’s emphasis on public service, see: “Seventeenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1936-1938” (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1938), 22-25, 40; “Eighteenth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1938-1940” (Raleigh: The North Carolina Historical Commission, 1940), 28-30; “Twenty-first Biennial Report of the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History” (Raleigh: North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, 1946), 12-13; “Twenty-fourth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History” (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1952) 2-9; “Twenty-sixth

One of Crittenden's most significant contributions to history was his commitment to the professional development and training of historical practitioners.¹⁵¹ Under his leadership during the heyday of consensus-driven history, the Department of Archives and History developed a structured and comprehensive internship program for women interested in archives, museums, and historical publications. Crittenden and Joye Jordan lent their expertise to other emerging training programs. They also united a broad coalition of historical practitioners around best practices and theory in local history through their contributions to American Association for State and Local History publications. The Department's professional standards increased during Crittenden's tenure as director, allowing him, by the late 1950s, to limit candidates for archival and interpretative positions to individuals with undergraduate or graduate history majors.¹⁵² By March 1967, as Crittenden prepared to retire, the executive board expected his replacement to have at least three years of graduate training and preferably a PhD, along with several years' experience in administrative work and knowledge of archival management. Such expectations

Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History" (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1956), 30.

¹⁵¹ Although Tyrrell emphasizes Crittenden's populist approach to history, or his tendency to believe "that the public was always right," as this chapter demonstrates, Crittenden prioritized the implementation of professional standards throughout the Department of Archives and History and took seriously his role as a professional historian and a public servant, although the latter seemed to consume him; see Crittenden, "The Archivist as a Public Servant," 3-81 and Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 227.

¹⁵² F. M. to H. G., June 2, 1957, Jones' Trip to Archives Institute, General Correspondence 1957, Division of Archives and Manuscripts; H. G. Jones to F. M., undated, Jones' Trip to Archives Institute, General Correspondence 1957, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, Archives and History Record Group.

allowed the board to keep the director's salary competitive with that of faculty in higher education, making the position a true alternative to a job in the academy.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Executive Board, State Department of Archives and History, Minutes of Meeting, March 21, 1967, Executive Board, General Correspondence 1967, Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group.

CHAPTER THREE

“Sinking Ships”: Crisis and Transformation in History Education, 1968-1977

Proliferation of archival, museum, and historic preservation courses in the 1960s coincided with several developments within the humanities in the 1960s and 1970s. First, a series of pedagogical and curricula innovations informed by civil rights and labor activism and the rise of social history prompted national debates and conversations about professional identity and the societal value of history. Second, a developing employment crisis in higher education, particularly among humanities disciplines, engrossed academic circles motivating universities to reimagine graduate programs in the face of declining enrollments.¹ New programs in “applied history” and “public history” developed, in part, to attract new students amidst declining enrollments, but they were often one of many curricular developments in humanities departments that reflected a longstanding and unresolved discussion among historians about the social value of historical practice in the United States.²

By the late 1960s, the American Association for State and Local History supported a variety of programs designed for historians working in the fields of historic preservation, archives, and museums. In June 1968, for example, the American Association for State and

¹ “‘Scholarship for Society’: Report on Graduate Education,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 3, 1973), 7-12; Malcolm G. Scully, “Student Focus on Practicality Hits Humanities,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* February 4, 1974, 1, 3; Malcolm G. Scully, “Reinvigorating the Humanities,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 22, 1975, 10; Philip W. Semas, “Graduate Schools Urged to Experiment,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 19, 1976, 1, 5; “Outlook and Opportunity for Graduate Education: Excerpts from the Final Report of the National Board on Graduate Education,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 19, 1976, 5, 6.
² Semas, “Graduate Schools Urged to Experiment,” 1, 5; Rebecca Conard, “The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States,” *Public Historian* 37 (February 2015): 11; Robert R. Weyeneth and Daniel J. Vivian, “Charting the Course: Challenges in Public History Education Guidance for Developing Strong Public History Programs,” *Public Historian* 38 (August 2016): 25.

Local History co-sponsored the tenth annual Williamsburg Seminar for Historical Administrators and an additional seminar on how to establish publication programs for historical societies and museums, the latter a partnership with Vanderbilt University and the National Endowment for the Humanities. In August, the association sponsored the State Historical Society of Wisconsin's third annual Seminar on the Administration of Historical Societies and Museums. In October, it partnered with the National Parks Service to administer a seminar on historical museum exhibit design techniques at Grand Canyon National Park.³

But the association remained reluctant to fund graduate training directly, doing so only indirectly through the Williamsburg Seminar which recruited graduate students into the fields of historic preservation and museums. Instead, American Association for State and Local History leadership supported several university-managed programs, including American University's Institute on Modern Archives Administration, the Annual Institute of Archival Studies sponsored by the University of Denver, the apprenticeship program developed by the College of William and Mary, and the Masters in American History and Historical Museum Work created by the University of Connecticut and Old Sturbridge Village.⁴ Despite the many workshops, summer seminars, and graduate fellowships developed between 1950 and 1970, the problem of attracting "new and better qualified people" to the field of historic preservation and museums remained a challenge.⁵

³ "Four Institutions to Offer Training Programs at Graduate Level in Historical Administration," *History News* 14 (February 1959): 26-27.

⁴ William T. Alderson, "Annual Report 968," *History News* 24 (January 1969): 11; "Advanced Training Programs Available," *History News* 25 (April 1970): 75, 90.

⁵ *First Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1966* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1966), 15, Annual Reports, NEH Digital Repository, accessed, July 25, 2021, <https://neh.dspacedirect.org>; "AASLH Continues Seminar Program," *History News* 25 (May 1970): 97, 111.

With the establishment of the National Endowment for Humanities in 1965, the American Association for State and Local History secured a determined partner to expand student training in the work of historical societies and museums. As a federal grantmaking agency created to support research, education, and public engagement in the humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities focused part of its efforts on the professional development of educators in formal and informal teaching environments, which included historical museums.⁶ The endowment's first annual report elaborated on how the professionalization of museums and historical societies was a priority:

Realizing that the museums and historical societies of the nation are a major source of humanistic information and understanding, the Endowment has allocated funds to pilot program designed to improve the professional competence of the small museum curator and historical society administrator by making him more aware of the ways in which the collections of materials belonging to his organization may be more effectively displayed, disseminated, and studied.⁷

By 1966, the National Endowment for the Humanities had already funded ten museum internships for museum curators, sixteen university-based graduate fellowships that balanced subject-area expertise and practical experience in exhibits and collections, and two seminars developed by the American Association of State and Local History. In 1969, the endowment awarded a \$20,800 grant to the University of Connecticut to establish a museum fellowship program in American history in cooperation with Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts. Program. The program's fellows participated in lectures and seminars and completed theses on early American history related to the museum's collections. Barnes Riznik, Vice President of

⁶ *First Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1966*, 3-5; *Fourth Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1969* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1970); Rebecca Conard, "Complicating Origin Stories: The Making of Public History into an Academic Field in the United States," in *A Companion to Public History*, ed. David Dean (London: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2018), 24-25.

⁷ *First Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1966*, 15.

Old Sturbridge Village, hoped that the partnership with the University of Connecticut would help meet the shortage of adequately trained museum personnel.⁸

Passage of federal historic preservation legislation, like the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, also spurred the development of historic preservation courses across the country. The National Historic Preservation Act, which created the National Register for Historic Places, required environmental reviews of government-funded projects, creating new opportunities for historians in local governments. In 1968, the North Carolina Department of Archives and History and the Institute of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which had helped draft a 1965 North Carolina statute allowing local governments to create local historic districts and co-sponsored a week-long short course titled, “Planning for the Preservation of Historic Buildings.” The short course brought together a cohort of professional and volunteer historians who worked with local planners and architects.

Robert Stipe, a city planner who joined the Institute of Government in 1957 to expand professional programs for municipal planners, took responsibility for the program’s development. He hoped that the one-week short course would identify shared goals between urban planners and local historic preservationists.⁹ Using publications created by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, instructors guided students through the history of the emerging

⁸ *Sixth Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1971* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1972), 59; “New Degree Program Set for Museum Training,” *History News* 24 (May 1969): 112.

⁹ Mike Wallace, “Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation,” in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, ed. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 165-99.

historic preservation movement and discussed how to navigate recently passed local, state, and federal preservation legislation. Students also studied archaeology and adaptive reuse projects.¹⁰

Stipe's model for historic preservation training challenged what he described as "the somewhat limited 'historic housekeeping' approach to historic preservation" previously developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and honed through summer seminars in Cooperstown that had focused on decorative arts and cultural history.¹¹ Stipe argued that the next phase of historic preservation work required legal and economic concerns "come more into balance" with traditional historical considerations. He regarded historic preservation as a social, environmental, and political issue. In 1972 he wrote, that "Success in preservation in this day and age requires we give as much of our attention to such problems as housing, schools, garbage collection, employment, and racial conflict we have traditionally given to architecture and history."¹² For Stipe, modern historic preservation required that preservationists understand contemporary concerns, clearly reflecting his own career as a city planner. Still, he recognized the challenge before him, lamenting that "there is perhaps no market in the state for the interests and skills" of preservationists like himself, as few local and state planning departments had

¹⁰ Bob Stipe, "Material on Historic Preservation Planning Course," March 4, 1968, Institute of Government, General Correspondence 1967, Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh; Bob Stipe to Guest Faculty, Historic Preservation Planning Course, memo, March 4, 1968, Institute of Government, General Correspondence 1967, Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group; Albert Coates, *The Story of the Institute of Government: the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill* (Chapel Hill: privately published, 1981), 218-21; Milton Heath et al., "The Heritage of a Life: Robert Stipe, 1928-2007," *Carolina Planning Journal* 33 (Summer 2008): 3-7.

¹¹ Robert E. Stipe to Mr. H. G. Jones, February 13, 1969, Institute of Government, General Correspondence 1969, Archives and History Record Group.

¹² Robert E. Stipe, "Why Preserve?" *Preservation News* 12 (July 1, 1972): 5-6, 8, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, New York; Robert E. Stipe, *Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 13-15.

developed preservation programs yet. Nor had many academic history departments developed courses on urban planning and cultural resource management.¹³

Archival, museum, and historic preservation courses and seminars developed in the 1950s and 1960s laid the groundwork for public history programs in the 1970s and 1980s, but probably the most powerful influence on the development of the Public History Movement was a developing “humanities crisis.”¹⁴ Despite experiencing tremendous growth since the end of World War II, by the late 1960s, student activism, weak administrative responses, financial crises, and mounting unemployment produced mistrust of and dissatisfaction toward American colleges and universities in the 1970s.¹⁵ A 1970 report on campus unrest recommended that universities reduce controversial political involvements and find “new ways to serve by relating their policies, programs, and expertise to pressing local and national problems.”¹⁶ Critiques leveled at humanities departments additionally questioned their failures to address declining job

¹³ Conard, “The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States,” 111-12.

¹⁴ “Sociologists Eye Alternatives to Teaching as Job Shortage Looms in Academe,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 10, 1973, 1, 6; “‘Scholarship for Society’: Report on Graduate Education,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 3, 1973, 7-12; Malcolm G. Scully, “Anthropologists Looking for Alternatives to Academic Careers,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 10, 1973, 6; Malcolm G. Scully, “Student Focus on Practicality Hits Humanities,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 8 (February 4, 1974), 1, 3; Malcolm G. Scully, “Reinvigorating the Humanities,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 22, 1975, 10; Malcolm G. Scully, “Graduate Schools’ Dilemma: Be Practical or Scholarly?” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 8, 1975, 1, 8; “Outlook and Opportunity for Graduate Education: Excerpts from the Final Report of the National Board on Graduate Education,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 19, 1976, 5, 6; Philip W. Semas, “Graduate Schools Urged to Experiment,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 19, 1976, 1, 5.

¹⁵ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The ‘Objectivity Question’ and the American Historical Profession*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 417-34; Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Boston: De Capo Press, 2002), xvi, 48.

¹⁶ *The Report of the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1970), accessed September 6, 2021, <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=ED083899&id=ED083899>.

opportunities.¹⁷ *The Chronicle of Higher Education* characterized the unemployment crisis with much drama. One author called the period an “impending national catastrophe.”¹⁸ Amidst the unfolding unemployment crisis, a national report on higher education published in 1971 challenged the narrow view of professional opportunities accepted by humanities professors and questioned the judgment of students who chose to pursue graduate work in fields like history.¹⁹

The “humanities crisis” threatened history departments. After the 1970 American Historical Association annual meeting where 2,481 applicants competed for 188 faculty positions, the association issued a cautionary letter to students informing them about growing unemployment within the field.²⁰ However, the vocational prospects of history PhDs were only part of the discipline’s predicament. Historians seemed to face an existential crisis about the future of the profession, principally a decline in undergraduate enrollment and a sense of general dissatisfaction and lack of interest in history courses among students. At American Historical Association meetings in 1971 and 1972, historians debated why students had become

¹⁷ Thelen, *A History of American Higher Education*, 311-21.

¹⁸ Earl J. McGrath, “Survival Kit for the Liberal Arts College,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 10, 1972, 8. See also, Philip W. Semas, “Shortage of Academic Positions for Ph.D.’s Seen Worsening in Next 20 Years,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 4, 1971, 1; 3; Edward R. Weidlein, “Is English Healthy? Profession Isn’t Sure,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 10, 1972, 1; 5; Earnest L. Boyer, “We Must Find New Forums for Higher Education,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 14, 1972, 8; Eugene Fram, “We Must Market Education,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 17, 1972, 8; “Carnegie Commission’s 35 Recommendations on the Job Market,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 9, 1973, 6; Earl F. Cheit, “The New Depression in Higher Education, 2 Years Later: ‘From a State of Steady Erosion to One of Fragile Stability,’” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 16, 1973, 4-5; “Reforms in Graduate Education Urged as Means of Meeting New Needs,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 3, 1973, 1, 10.

¹⁹ Frank Newman, et al., *Report on Higher Education* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1971); Frank Newman, et al., *The Second Newman Report: National Policy and Higher Education* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973); “9 Themes of Report on University Goals and Governance,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 18, 1971, 4.

²⁰ Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 574.

disillusioned with history classes, some blaming the field's shift toward social science and quantitative research methods, others debating how to reform traditional introductory courses by dropping "western civilization" for "global history" or creating more relevant and topical classes on revolution, empire, and technology.²¹

In 1956, Dexter Perkins, professor of American Civilization at Cornell University, had anticipated some of the issues surrounding historical training and professionalism in his presidential address to the American Historical Association. He asked historians to contemplate their roles as teachers and the utility of their research and called into question traditional doctoral training's ability to produce effective scholar-teachers.²² In response, the American Historical Association created a Committee on Graduate Study in History to explore the future of graduate training. The Carnegie Corporation partially funded the resulting report, *The Education of Historians in the United States* (1962), which reflected on the social value and worth of the "scholar-teachers" and the broader historical discipline, concluding that the study of history helped to develop perspective and empathy. But adopting a narrow vision of historical professionalism, the report accepted that most graduate students in history were preparing for and would end up teaching in colleges and universities and that doctoral training did not adequately train historians for classroom teaching.²³

²¹ Semas, "Shortage of Academic Positions for Ph.D.'s Seen Worsening in Next 20 Years; John A. Crowl, "History in Crisis Some Declare; Others Disagree," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 11, 1971, 1, 8; John A. Crowl, "Declining Appeal of Introductory Courses Causes Concern Among Historians," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 10, 1972, 6; Karen J. Winkler, "Historians, Their Field Evidently Losing Appeal, Weigh Reforms," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 8, 1973, 6.

²² Dexter Perkins, "We Shall Gladly Teach," *American Historical Review* 62 (February 1957): 291-303. Perkins wrote at the end of a "severe slump in the job market" in the late 1940s; see Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 363-64.

²³ Dexter Perkins and John L. Snell, *The Education of Historians in the United States* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 13-14.

Perkins's remarks had stirred nearly two decades of debates about the methods and purpose of historical training. Only a few years later, Merle Curti had criticized the historical profession, scholarship, and teaching, demanding colleagues confront a moral dilemma—"Are we serving any useful role in society? Or, perhaps more exact, how well are we serving our obligation to society? And this begs the question—what is the proper social role of historians or, more particularly, of American historians? What could they contribute?"²⁴ Throughout his career, Curti had called for historians to contribute to public education and produce scholarship relevant to public policy. In the postwar period, especially as the anti-intellectualism of the McCarthy era took root, a breakdown of historiographical consensus left Curti feeling that the discipline was "severely fragmented, in definition, methodology, and purpose."²⁵ A conference on "The Goals of American History" organized by John Higham in 1969 sought to unite historians around the social purposes of historical research. Higham asked his fellow American historians whether their work "gives any genuinely meaningful sense of where our society is in relation to where it has been."²⁶ Higham believed history had something to offer contemporary society. Historical research could place American history within world contexts and test social theories. He hoped the conference would unite historians around several shared goals, including developing "a stronger, more sensitive 'historical sense' in the American people."²⁷

²⁴ Merle Curti, "Memorandum on a Conference Concerning 'The State of American History,'" 1969, box 13, folder 3, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, IUPUI University Library, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis.

²⁵ Merle Curti, "Intellectuals and Other People," *American Historical Review* 60 (January 1955): 259-82; Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 318-19.

²⁶ John Higham, "Proposal for a Conference on The Goals of American History," March 7, 1969, box 13, folder 3, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

²⁷ Higham, "Proposal for a Conference on The Goals of American History."

In many ways, the debates that Perkins, Curti, and Higham had encouraged about the value of the historical discipline echoed older conversations among Progressive historians of the early twentieth century. However, the “scholar-teacher” archetype offered by Perkins and Curti left many historians unsatisfied. In his study of the American historical profession, Peter Novick argued that the historical discipline faced a “serious breakdown of interpretive framework, and ideological faith” in the 1960s and 1970s as a new generation of historians called for greater relevancy in teaching and research.²⁸ Searching for a “usable past,” an increasing number of young and seasoned scholars made or remade their careers as “teacher-activists,” many of them finding purpose in less traditional employment. Historian Daniel Kerr argued that many scholars modeled their work off radical educators and activists rather than the older Progressive-era historians in the 1960s and 1970s.²⁹

Labor and Civil Rights activists cultivated a participatory model historical practice that some historians sought to emulate in the 1960s and 1970s. The Highlander School, founded in the 1930s to train union leaders in the Appalachian Mountains of Tennessee, provides one example of how community leaders linked education to activism.³⁰ In addition to courses on economics and union politics, Highlander offered seminars on labor history that linked “the past to the present, giving the students a perspective on their present-day problems.”³¹ By the 1950s,

²⁸ Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 465, 510-512.

²⁹ August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915-1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 176; Daniel Kerr, “Allan Nevins is Not My Grandfather: The Roots of Radical Oral History Practice in the United States,” *Oral History Review* 43 (2016): 367-91.

³⁰ Kerr, “Allan Nevins is Not My Grandfather,” 367-91. Other examples of similar community history work include the Afro-American Heritage Association in Chicago; see Ian Rocksborough-Smith, *Black Public History in Chicago: Civil Rights Activism from World War II into the Cold War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018), 75-100.

³¹ Jane Lawson, “Highlander Folk School,” Highlander Folk School, Part I (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1941), FOIA Library, Department of Justice, accessed July 25, 2021,

the Highlander School had begun to draw the attention of Black community organizers and educators like Septima Clark, Esau Jenkins, and Bernice Robinson, who shared Horton's goal of expanding political engagement through education. With the support of the Highlander School, Septima Clark developed Citizenship Schools, an adult voter education and registration project that began on John Islands, South Carolina in 1957, and emphasized the links between the ballot and community empowerment through practical literacy training and political education.³² In 1961, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference took over and expanded Citizenship Schools both in geographic scope and through curriculum adaptations that linked class content to Black history, current events, developments in the movement, and citizenship rights.³³ Citizenship Schools made education relevant to everyday life and social change.

Similarly, when the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) launched the Freedom Schools as part of its 1964 summer project in Mississippi, activists included courses on Black history, and students interpreted historical events through theatrical productions, roleplaying, poetry, community newspapers.³⁴ As youth and teenagers determined the meaning of their own past, they engaged in what historian Daniel Kerr described as “a collaborative and

<https://vault.fbi.gov/Highlander%20Folk%20School/Highlander%20Folk%20School%20Part%201%20of%2019/view>; John M. Glen, *Highlander: No Ordinary School*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 31-46. See also Frank C. Adams and Myles Horton, *Unearthing Seeds of Fire: The Idea of Highlander* (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1975).

³² “SCLC Citizenship School Education Program (Mississippi),” 1964, Freedom Summer Digital Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, accessed September 26, 2021, <https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/p15932coll2>; Charron, *Freedom's Teacher*, 217-18.

³³ Charron, *Freedom's Teacher*, 308; Lara Leigh Kelland, *Clio's Foot Soldiers: Twentieth-Century U.S. Social Movements and Collective Memory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018), 14-18.

³⁴ Kelland, *Clio's Foot Soldiers*, 32-33.

democratic exercise in history making.”³⁵ By teaching the history of the liberation movement together with political organizing skills, SNCC organizers showed how history could become a mobilizing force in communities and created spaces where young people could study, interpret, and exhibit histories that centered their own experiences.³⁶

As the freedom struggle evolved in the late 1960s and shifted to Black Power, African American college students demanded that universities create classes, and entire departments, that spoke to their experiences. By 1970, “Afro-American history” had become a robust and diverse field within the historical discipline. With it, a Black historical tradition rooted in popular education and community-building entered the mainstream.³⁷ Historians August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick partially attributed the newly widespread popular interest in African American history to “the heroism and victories of the civil rights demonstrations in the early 1960s.” In the 1960s and 1970s, academic dissertations and monographs about the histories of slavery, reconstruction, racial politics, and labor exploded in number, along with public interest and engagement in Black history.³⁸

³⁵ Kerr, “Allan Nevins Is Not My Grandfather,” 379. See also Kelland, *Clio’s Foot Soldiers*, 23-35.

³⁶ Jeffrey C. Stewart and Faith Davis Ruffins, “A Faithful Witness: Afro-American Public History in Historical Perspective, 1828-1984,” in Benson, Briar, and Rosenzweig, eds, *Presenting the Past*, 28; Kelland, *Clio’s Foot Soldiers*, 24-25. See also William Sturkey and Jon N. Hale, eds. *To Write in the Light of Freedom: The Newspapers of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Schools* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015) and Hale, *The Freedom Schools: Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

³⁷ Meier and Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915-1980*, 161; Stewart and Ruffins, “A Faithful Witness,” 327-28, 332-33. For examples of Freedom School curricula, see “Nonviolence in American History,” “Negro History Study Questions: 20th Century,” and Otis Peace, “The Development of Negro Power in American Politics Since 1900,” Mississippi Freedom School Curriculum, Education and Democracy, accessed July 25, 2021, http://www.educationanddemocracy.org/FSCfiles/C_CC3f_DevelopmOfNegroPower.htm.

³⁸ Meier and Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession*, 176.

Inspired by their own involvement in the Civil Rights Movements, some activists entered the museum profession, creating institutions that modeled how history museums could become tools for community-building. For example, Byron Rushing, a community organizer and volunteer with the Congress of Racial Equality, left Boston's Urban League to direct the city's Museum of Afro American History in 1972. Dr. Charles Wright, an obstetrician-gynecologist who had worked to integrate hospitals in the 1950s and served as a physician during civil rights marches in Selma, Alabama, created a Black history museum in Chicago that would contest whitewashed narratives of American history.³⁹ In founding the International Afro-American Museum in 1965, Wright wanted to empower Black communities by challenging racist histories and interpreting the lives of influential Black Americans. Community participation was core to Wright's vision. The museum relied heavily on oral history interviews that captured elders' stories and a mobile exhibit van that took exhibits directly to communities. In 1969, Wright brought together employees of Black history museums, local and regional, at Wayne State University for a conference centered on involving local communities in museum development and planning.⁴⁰ Historian Joseph Tilden Rhea described this type of cultural activism that took shape after 1965 as the "Race Pride Movement," a culmination of cultural revolutions within Black, American Indian, Chicano, and Asian American communities that specifically challenged White supremacist culture and collective memory.⁴¹ Rhea reasoned that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Black Power activists and Afrocentrists deeply interrogated the collective memory

³⁹ Andrew A. Burns, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 28-29.

⁴⁰ Burns, *From Storefront to Monument*, 79-86; Stewart and Ruffins, "A Faithful Witness," 328-29.

⁴¹ Joseph Tilden Rhea, *Race Pride and the American Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 4, 102-23.

of African Americans and encouraged Black Americans to take steps to define and present their heritage.⁴² Ultimately, civil rights and Black Power activism reshaped the field of popular education, forming a foundation for modern critical education theory that led some historians to adopt a scholar-activist professional model, or at the very least try to democratize historical practice by incorporating a more grassroots approach to their research.

In some ways, historians like Byron Rushing and Charles Wright, especially in their emphasis on working-class people and community life, resembled populist historians in the 1920s and 1930s who chose to write about everyday Americans after delving into expanding state archives and local and county records. However, there are limits to comparisons of early twentieth-century Progressive historians and social historians in the 1960s and 1970s. For many historians of the earlier generations, the incorporation of marginalized Americans into the national narrative challenged perceptions of American exceptionalism. Moreover, many scholars believed that the cultural revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s, which birthed African American, women's and gender, and ethnic studies departments, as well as the emerging field of new social history, seemed to fragment any coherent understanding of American history.⁴³ Conversely, advocates of change believed that activists and social historians did more than expand historiography. They breathed new life into a discipline in crisis.

Across the county, college students eagerly took classes that resonated with tumultuous current events like the Vietnam War and Civil Rights Movement. Ralph W. Greenlaw, the head of North Carolina State University's history department, saw increasing "evidence that both

⁴² Rhea, *Race Pride and the American Identity*, 103-4; Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

⁴³ Robert Kelley, "1974 Annual Meeting," *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 1 (January 1974): 2, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

students and society may tend to insist on greater ‘relevancy’ on both the teaching and research of the department.”⁴⁴ When asked in 1965 to consider how historical studies related to contemporary society, Greenlaw responded that history acts as “the collective memory of mankind, fulfilling the same role for society that memory does for the individual.” He proposed reforming required introductory history courses that largely focused on European history, as “many of the scenes of current events have shifted to Asia and Africa.”⁴⁵ In 1967, Greenlaw was appointed chair of the Good Neighbor Council, an initiative to ease racial tensions on campus and support African American students, faculty, and staff. In 1969, history faculty at North Carolina State University began planning a course in Black history but remained resistant to administrative appeals to establish a more comprehensive program in Black studies, seemingly unwilling to recognize the growing ambivalence about traditional historical training.⁴⁶ In the fall of 1969, the department finally offered a black history course, “The Afro American in America,” taught by Julius T. Nimmons, a professor at St. Augustine’s College, a historically black

⁴⁴“Statement to accompany the Proposals for Revision of History Curriculum,” January 1972, box 9, folder 9; “Departmental Questionnaire,” ca. 1971-1973, box 1, folder 9; “Annual Report of the Department of History for the year 1956-66,” 10 June 1966, box 1, folder 3; “Annual Report for the Department of History for the year 1967-1968,” 1968, box 1, folder 3, all in North Carolina State University, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History Records, Special Collections Research Center, NC State University Libraries, Raleigh.

⁴⁵ Pat Beamer, “Greenlaw Has Plans for History Department,” *Technician* (Raleigh, NC), September 24, 1956, Special Collections Research Center, NC State University Libraries. John K. Fairbank evoked Carl Becker when he wrote about the importance of Chinese history to contemporary American historical works and explained “why Mr. Everyman must now become his own East Asian historian”; see “Assignment for the ‘70’s,” *American Historical Review* 74 (February 1969): 869.

⁴⁶ Pat Beamer, “Greenlaw Has Plans for History Department,” 1; Craig Wilson, “Black History Course Here? *Technician*, February 14, 1969; Nash Nicks Winstead, “The Inclusion and Involvement of African-Americans at North Carolina State University, 1953-1993,” February 21, 2000,” Special Collections Research Center, NC State University Libraries, accessed September 26, 2021, <https://d.lib.ncsu.edu/collections/catalog/LD3928-W5-2000#c=&m=&s=&cv=2&xywh=4244%2C4902%2C886%2C401>; “Departmental Questionnaire.”

institution in Raleigh.⁴⁷ In a questionnaire about the history department's future, Greenlaw revealed his increasing concern that "all of higher education may be on the defensive in the next decade." Trying to meet demands for relevancy while avoiding "the dangers of politicizing the discipline of higher education in general" was, in Greenlaw's opinion, one of the biggest factors in the Department's future.⁴⁸

However, by 1970, Black students across the country had begun to demand institutionalized opportunities to study and preserve Black history. Motivated by student protests, San Francisco State College created a Black studies department in 1968. In 1974, at the University of Buffalo, students influenced by Gabriel Kolko and Edgar Friedenberg organized the Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier. Most of the students had previously been secondary school teachers and were eager for the chance to work with labor and civil rights activists in Buffalo as they worked to microfilm local archives and develop a radio broadcast on Black history. Many historians, like the all-white and predominantly male faculty at North Carolina State University, were unprepared to imagine themselves and their department in similar ways.⁴⁹

As social history became "the liveliest concern of the [historical] profession" in the 1960s and 1970s, many historians called on their colleagues to play a more activist role in society. In 1971, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. asked historians to see themselves as participants in a period of

⁴⁷ "Black Studies Now Available," *Technician* (Raleigh, NC), *September 17, 1969*.

⁴⁸ "Departmental Questionnaire."

⁴⁹ Lillian S. Williams, "On the Founding of the Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier, 1974," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 35 (Summer 2011): 11-18; Mauliana Karenga, "Founding the First PhD in Black Studies: A Sankofa Remembrance and Critical Assessment of Its Significance," *Journal of Black Studies* 49 (September 2018): 676-703; Ibram X. Kendi, "Black Doctoral Studies: The Radically Antiracist Idea of Molefi Kete Asante," *Journal of Black Studies* 49 (September 2018): 542-58.

rapid social change, challenging perceptions of “the historian as a monastic scholar, austere removed from the passion emotions and conflicts of his own day.”⁵⁰ Surely, such a detached and objective historian had never existed, but many historians clung to the idealism that they could be impartial observers of the past. Schlesinger argued that perhaps the only field in which historians might obtain some sense of objective truth would be contemporary history, “for contemporary history means the writing of history under the eye of the only people who can offer contradiction, that is, the witnesses.”⁵¹ Activist-scholars, however, thought all history should be contemporary history, if not in content, then in relevance.

The careers of Howard Zinn and Staughton Lynd exemplify how civil rights and labor activism transformed historical practice. After earning a PhD in history at Columbia University, Zinn joined the faculty at Spelman College, a historically Black women’s college in Atlanta in 1956 where he became involved with SNCC.⁵² In 1964, Zinn provided the American public a glimpse of the inner workings of the organization, its founding, and its people when he published *SNCC: The New Abolitionists*. Zinn used interviews and personal observations, leading many to characterize his research methodology as “History from the bottom-up.”⁵³ According to Lynd, who joined Zinn at Spelman and later became a statewide director of Freedom Schools, “bottom-up history” challenged existing historical narratives of the past by focusing on oppressed people, accepting the brutality of colonialism and violence against Native Americans and African Americans, and incorporating marginalized people as colleagues in historical

⁵⁰ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “The Historian as Participant,” *Daedalus* 100 (Spring 1971): 342.

⁵¹ Schlesinger, “The Historian as Participant,” 351.

⁵² Bob Arrighi, “Staughton and Alice Lynd Collection: Finding Aid,” Kent State University Special Collections and Archives, Kent, Ohio, accessed July 25, 2021, <https://www.library.kent.edu/staughton-and-alice-lynd-collection>.

⁵³ Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 440-42.

interpretation.⁵⁴ Staughton and Alice Lynd later used oral history as a tool for labor organizing in Gary, Indiana, resulting in their publication *Rank and File* (1973).⁵⁵ Like Charles Wright, Zinn's and Lynd's involvements in the Civil Rights Movement demonstrated how community history, especially oral history, could democratize historical practice, or at least critically reflect on the authority and power that professional historians wielded over the nation's historical narrative.

Across the 1970s, more and more academic historians looked to the past for activist role models. In 1975, Michael R. Winston of Howard University used the opportunity of the sixtieth anniversary of the *Journal of Negro History* to honor Carter Godwin Woodson and explore the “*meaning* of his career for future generations.”⁵⁶ Winston wrote, “The belief on which Carter G. Woodson staked his manhood, his single-minded life effort was that Black people had a toughly resilient yet broad tradition which could be a refuge in times of trouble, inspiration in times of doubt, and foundation for new progress in times of precarious confidence.”⁵⁷ Gordon A. Craig, a historian of modern Germany, also found that German history documented, somewhat problematically, role models for activist historians. Craig presented the nineteenth-century German historian Georg Gottfried Gervinus as an example of a historian whose “purpose was political: to convince his readers that the time had come for them to speak out of the world of aesthetic contemplation and prepare themselves for political action.”⁵⁸ In a later essay, he

⁵⁴ Staughton Lynd, *Doing History from the Bottom up: On E. P. Thompson, Howard Zinn, and Rebuilding the Labor Movement from Below* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2014), xi-xiv.

⁵⁵ Alice and Staughton Lynd, eds., *Rank and File: Personal Histories by Working-Class Organizers*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973); Kerr, “Allan Nevins Is Not My Grandfather,” 375-76.

⁵⁶ Michael R. Winston, “Carter Godwin Woodson: Prophet of a Black Tradition,” *Journal of Negro History* 60 (October 1975): 461.

⁵⁷ Winston, “Carter Godwin Woodson,” 462.

⁵⁸ Gordon A. Craig, “Georg Gottfried Gervinus: The Historian as Activist,” *Pacific Historical Review* 41 (February 1972): 5.

explored the life and career of Johannes von Muller, who, even though he could have easily secured a university chair, found that it was “the world of politics that attracted him.”⁵⁹

Even as many historians tried to take on more active roles in American politics and society, major professional organizations grew increasingly concerned about the discipline’s future. A general decline in memberships threatened the financial solvency of both the Organization of American Historians and the American Historical Association. Furthermore, many members disparaged professional organizations for their inaction as disciplinary unemployment reached extraordinary levels. Surveys of employment opportunities in 1973 and 1974 indicated more candidates than positions for tenure track jobs, a gloomy sign for new graduates as colleges and universities remained the leading employers for history PhDs.⁶⁰

Within his executive report of 1975, Mack Thompson, Executive Director of the American Historical Association, identified what seemed like the association’s failure to respond to the unemployment crisis. “In part our paralysis stems from a lack of confidence in the value of higher education and the value of history as a discipline. We should be firm and vocal in our conviction that there is a need for a greater, not fewer, number of people of trained intelligence and humanistic understanding.” Although some members urged the association to discourage academic institutions from producing more PhDs, Thompson argued that the association should “persuade our leaders in education, business, and government to allocate more of our national resources toward maintaining and expanding opportunities for higher education in history and

⁵⁹ Gordon A. Craig, “Johannes von Muller: The Historian in Search of a Hero,” *American Historical Review* 74 (June 1979): 1491.

⁶⁰ “Employment and the Job Registry,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 1 (July 1973): 2; “Employment and Unemployment,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 2 (January 1975): 4, both in Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

related fields.”⁶¹ The American Historical Association was one of several organizations that lobbied Congress to expand funding for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, hoping to create more employment opportunities.⁶² In 1975, Gordon Wright, President of the American Historical Association, tried to partner with national foundations to secure funding for teaching and research fellowships for recent PhDs.⁶³

Most national foundations were sympathetic to the unemployment crisis but unwilling to fund fellowship programs outright. In 1975, the Mellon Foundation funded a study of career opportunities for humanities graduates by the Higher Education Research Institute and supported a program at the University of Florida to integrate humanities into undergraduate preprofessional education.⁶⁴ In 1974, the Organization of American Historians created two new committees to explore the discipline’s challenges, one on the status of history in schools and the other on non-teaching opportunities for historians.⁶⁵ Organizational leaders also hoped to demonstrate the

⁶¹ Mack Thompson, “Report of the Executive Director, 1974-75: The Unemployment Crisis,” *AHA Annual Program, 1975*, 76, Archive of Past AHA Annual Meetings, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.historians.org/annual-meeting/past-meetings-archive>.

⁶² Mack Thompson, “Report of the Executive Director,” in *American Historical Association: Annual Report, 1975* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1976), 76, AHA History and Archives, accessed September 6, 2021, Annual <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/annual-reportsrians.org>.

⁶³ Gordon Wright, “Report of the President,” in *American Historical Association: Annual Report, 1975* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1976), 32, AHA History and Archives, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/annual-reports>; Jean T. Joughin, “Report of the Vice-President, Professional Division,” in *American Historical Association: Annual Report, 1975* (Washington D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1976), 40, AHA History and Archives, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/annual-reports>.

⁶⁴ “Historians in Non-Academic Careers,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter 3* (January 1976): 7, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁶⁵ “The Executive Board,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter 2* (July 1974): 3; “Evaluation of the Teaching of History,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter 2* (July 1974): 5, both in Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

value of historical study during the annual meeting in January 1975, drawing “archivists, lawyers, sociologists, economists, librarians, television news commentators, film makers, political scientists, editors, and a talented group of historians from throughout the United States and seven foreign countries to testify to history’s public value.”⁶⁶

The history crisis was not limited to the academy. A 1975 report published by the Organization of American Historians’ Committee on the Status of History in the Schools argued that students, educators, administrators, and politicians doubted the discipline’s societal usefulness. Institutions increasingly promoted vocational fields at the expense of history departments, often dismantling them and embedding history classes into social studies programs.⁶⁷ The report identified several factors, including history’s declining status as a required course, “student tastes,” and unemployment concerns, all arising from “a widespread belief that it is not a practical subject and equally widespread unhappiness with the ways in which it is taught.” The committee also considered the training of history teachers insufficient, contributing to the dismal state of history in secondary schools.⁶⁸ The information gathered by the Committee on the Status of History in Schools suggested that the discipline needed to expand course offerings, adopt the methods and interpretive frameworks of social history, and improve teaching. The committee grimly reported that “doubts about [history’s] usefulness for the

⁶⁶ “1975 Annual Meeting,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 2 (January 1975): 1-2, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁶⁷ Richard S. Kirkendall, “The Status of History in the Schools,” *Journal of American History* 62 (September 1975): 557-70; “The Status of History,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 3 (July 1975): 2; “The Status of History,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 3 (January 1976): 5-6; “The Status of History,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 4 (July 1976): 7-8, all in Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁶⁸ “The Status of History” (July 1976): 7-8.

individual and for society” and failure to “lead to satisfactory employment” influenced students, educational administrators, and politicians.⁶⁹

The Organization of American Historians charged the Committee on Non-Teaching Opportunities, chaired by Wayne D. Rasmussen, a historian with the Department of Agriculture, to build upon the survey of the unemployment situation in order to identify how to advertise and increase non-teaching opportunities for historians in publishing, government, business, and state and local history museums.⁷⁰ As potential employers for history graduates, the committee reported that “The challenge is to professionalize these enterprises whenever funds permit.”⁷¹ Publishing, as well, traditionally viewed as a “feminine career,” presented historians with job opportunities.⁷² Rasmussen promoted positions within the federal government and encouraged students to pursue careers in archival administration and federal history divisions. Civil Service Commission statistics counted 650 federally employed professional historians, 600 of which were classified as historians and 50 as archivists.⁷³ The Organization of American Historians also lobbied for funding of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in

⁶⁹ “The Status of History” (July 1976): 7-8; Kirkendall, “The Status of History in the Schools,” 569-70.

⁷⁰ “The Executive Board,” July 1974; “The Executive Board,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 2 (January 1975): 2-3, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁷¹ “Non-Teaching Jobs for Historians” (Organization of American Historians, 1975); “Nonteaching Job Opportunities for Historians at the State and Local Level,” 1975; George L. Vogt, “Opportunities in Historical Editing,” 1975; John B. Putnam, “Opportunities in Publishing,” March 12, 1975, all in box 7, folder 21, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁷² Putnam, “Opportunities in Publishing.”

⁷³ Wayne D. Rasmussen, “The Federal Historian Today,” April 15, 1975; “Richard S. Kirkendall to Dr. Wayne D. Rasmussen,” February 5, 1974; Richard S. Kirkendall to Dr. Robert M. Warner, February 5, 1974, all in box 7, folder 21, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003; “Statement of Objectives by the Joint Committee on Historians and Archives,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 2 (July 1974): 3-4, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

hopes of creating more employment opportunities. By the end of 1975, the committee published a brochure on job opportunities for historians and sent it to individual members and universities.⁷⁴

Even as the financial situation of professional organizations seemed to rebound by the end of 1975 as memberships stabilized, employment prospects seemed dimmer than ever, with many historians expecting the situation to worsen. Allying with the Organization of American Historians, American Historical Association executive director Mack Thompson proposed developing a national program to reinvigorate the historical profession in the United States and increase demand for professional historians in private and public sectors. More than merely tackling unemployment concerns, Thompson argued that any steps taken by the organization might restore confidence in the historical discipline and promote the value of historical studies.

Early in 1976, the Organization of American Historians and the American Historical Association proposed a National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History and the Employment of Historians.⁷⁵ In initial discussions, the leadership of both organizations envisioned the National Coordinating Committee as a standalone entity. Their tax-exempt statuses, however, precluded them from forming a distinct entity devoted to expanding professional interests. To navigate this hurdle, the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History formed under the aegis of the American Historical Association. The abbreviated name and objectives of the committee downplayed the unemployment situation. Rather than investigate economic conditions or lead a study of graduate programs—often

⁷⁴ “Brochure on Jobs,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 3 (January 1976): 12, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁷⁵ “The Status of History” (January 1976); Richard S. Kirkendall, “What Has Happened to the Teaching of History in the United States?” *Social Education* 40 (October 1976): 446-51, box 17, folder 21, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

expected by national foundations—the National Coordinating Committee became an educational program dedicated to raising awareness of the value of historical studies and training.⁷⁶

The National Coordinating Committee quickly began to expand narrow perceptions of historical professionalism by creating “resource groups.” These were volunteer committees that researched and promoted professional opportunities in specific industries like agriculture, publishing, banking, foundations, and federal, state, and local governments. Generally aware that historians with MAs or PhDs were already working in these fields, the committee sought to identify these professionals to learn more about their career trajectories.⁷⁷

Resource group chairs conceptualized their own initiatives. Richard Hewlett, Chief Historian of the U. S. Energy Research and Development Administration, led the federal government resource group and hoped to strengthen graduate history training by encouraging better communication between history professors and federal historians. Robert Pomeroy, an economist at the Interamerican Development Bank, was an anomaly among history PhDs. After earning an AB in history, Pomeroy pursued a career in international finance and eventually joined the Inter-American Development Bank. As an economist, he became interested in informational resource management and a steadfast believer in historians’ value for the business

⁷⁶ “A National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of Historical Studies and the Employment of Historians, Draft,” March 23, 1976; “A National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of Historical Studies and the Employment of Historians, Draft,” February 17, 1976; Stuart E. Seigel and Julie Noel Gilbert to Dr. Mack Thompson, May 13, 1976; Mack Thompson to Professor Richard Kirkendall, May 20, 1976; Richard S. Kirkendall to Dr. Mack Thompson, May 28, 1976, all in box 62, folder 27, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁷⁷ “A National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of Historical Studies and the Employment of Historians, Draft;” Mack Thompson to Robert Kelley, April 1, 1976, both in folder 27, box 62, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

world.⁷⁸ Pomeroy formed the Business Resource Group in Washington DC, a group that never formally met but provided a network “to discuss ways of stimulating nonacademic employment of history graduates.”⁷⁹ Pomeroy tried to draw on the expertise of financial executives to expand the role of historical thinking in the private sector and articulated his thoughts in a handout and eventual essay titled “Historians’ Skills and Business Needs.” By the end of 1976, five professional organizations—the American Historical Association, Organization of American Historians, Southern Historical Association, American Studies Association, and the New England Historical Association—signed on to and provided funding for the National Coordinating Committee, allowing the organization to hire a paid full-time staff associate, Arnita Jones, in 1977. Jones, a historian with a PhD from Emory University, coordinated with resource group chairs, organized career talks at universities, and oversaw the publication of pamphlets and directories on career opportunities, funding opportunities, and vocational training programs.⁸⁰

When Mack Thompson and Richard Kirkendall, Secretary of the Organization of American Historians, asked Robert Kelley, a professor of history at the University of California Santa Barbara, to lead a resource group on employment opportunities in state and local governments, Kelley declined. Kelley believed that the National Coordinating Committee was premature in reaching out to private and public employers and recommended that the

⁷⁸ Robert W. Pomeroy III to John Lyle Defenbaugh, April 20, 1978, box 2, folder 6, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, IUPUI University Library, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis.

⁷⁹ Phil Cantelon, typed transcript, February 4, 1989, box 4, folder 3, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002.

⁸⁰ “NCC,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 4 (January 1977): 5-7; “NCC,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 5 (July 1977): 6-7, Arnita Jones, “NCC,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 5 (January 1978): 5-7, all in Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

organizations look to colleges and universities to reimagine new models of graduate education that are relevant to their local communities. Kelly reasoned:

I really doubt, from my experience, that it is going to do much good for anyone to go on training the usual kind of B.A. and M.A. and Ph.D. degree recipients and then say to state and local governments that we have a surplus of them and won't someone please hire them. Understandably, they are skeptical. Who needs people trained in broad, generalized fields of history and the usual forms of research? That, at any rate, is what they have as an immediate response. What they need are people trained with particular skills—quantitative, etc.—to be of value to them; equipped to understand and to value what it means to do concentrated, local history, knowing the research techniques, understanding the kinds of problems that will be encountered. We need to train urbanologist/policy oriented/social science trained historians.⁸¹

Kelley warned Thompson and Kirkendall that teacher-focused training in history departments left historians with a far too broad and generalized knowledge that did not meet the demands of governmental work. Instead, Kelley wanted to see history programs adopt courses on quantitative research and urban policy. Rather than trying to convince the private and public sectors to employ historians, Kelley argued that “The new consciousness concerning historians in state and local government must first emerge in the profession, before it can emerge among potential employment groups. We have to create our market.”⁸²

At Santa Barbara, Kelley was in the midst of developing a new graduate program that prioritized “community-centered and problem-oriented” research.⁸³ He used his own experiences as a consultant for the State of California and as an expert witness during a series of trials related to water resource management in the Sacramento Valley as models for the program in “Public

⁸¹ Robert Kelley to Mack Thompson and Richard S. Kirkendall, May 3, 1976, folder 27, box 62, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁸² Kelley to Thompson and Kirkendall; Robert Kelley, “Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects,” *The Public Historian* 1 (Fall 1978): 16-28.

⁸³ “Graduate Program in Public Historical Studies,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 3 (January 1976): 7-8.

Historical Studies.”⁸⁴ Kelly secured a three-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to provide fellowship funds, and the first class entered the Public Historical Studies program in 1976.⁸⁵ Kelley anticipated the program would model to other universities a new way to imagine historians’ role in society and expand career opportunities for history graduates. He encouraged Thompson and Kirkendall to work with colleges and universities to rethink how they could serve local communities.

In contrast to many of the historical training programs that had prepared historians to take on roles as archivists, curators, and preservationists, the Santa Barbara program anticipated graduates working on staffs of state and federal agencies, private corporations, newspapers, and other media companies.⁸⁶ Kelley assumed that governmental agencies and private organizations would value the historical research methods that “the Public Historian” would bring to an agency’s decision-making process. This was not a novel idea. Many historians had consulted on public policy issues. One of the most notable examples was John Hope Franklin who had served as a historical research consultant for NAACP lawyers during the *Brown v. Board of Education* case heard by the U. S. Supreme Court in 1953.⁸⁷

Kelley hoped students would graduate “with a sense that they are adding a new dimension to the process by which society understands itself, and makes its decisions.”⁸⁸

⁸⁴ John Higham, “Robert Kelley: Historian of Political Culture,” *Public Historian* 17 (Summer 1975): 73-74; Robert Kelley to Professor Carl Degler and Professor Richard Kirkendall, January 2, 1980, box 12, folder 25, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁸⁵ “Non-Teaching Careers,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 4 (January 1977): 7-8.

⁸⁶ “Graduate Program in Public Historical Studies;” Ellen K. Coughlin, “Where Are the Jobs? Outside Academe, More and More Historians Find,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 8, 1979, 1,11.

⁸⁷ John Hope Franklin, “The Historian and Public Policy,” *The History Teacher* 11 (May 1978): 377.

⁸⁸ “Graduate Program in Public Historical Studies.”

Students could specialize in one of three areas: History and Public Policy, Cultural Resource Management, or Community History. In the introductory course on public history, guest lecturers spoke about their experiences working in government agencies and cultural organizations. Statistics and computer science courses provided students with experience in modern research methods, and a course on intergovernmental relations instructed students on advanced research methods in public policy.⁸⁹

Faculty at Santa Barbara organized several programs that built on the work of resource groups and provided a place for historians working in businesses and governmental agencies to gather and discuss their professional careers. In April 1978, the university hosted a conference on Cultural Resource Management. During the program, David Clary, Chief Historian for the U. S. Forest Service, criticized the narrow professional view of most academic historians, arguing that the crisis faced by historians could not be attributed to an overproduction of history graduates, a tumultuous economy, or society's scorn of a perceived uselessness of the discipline, but academics' narrow and exclusive view of historic professionalism. Clary believed that graduate programs needed to train historians with the practical skills to become more than university-employed teacher-scholars, declaring that "Historians will prosper if they can learn to work elsewhere than on sinking ships."⁹⁰ The following month, University of California Santa Barbara faculty worked with Robert Pomeroy and the business and history resource group to organize a

⁸⁹ Carroll W. Pursell, "The Graduate Program in Public Historical Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara," *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology* 12 (1980): 127.

⁹⁰ David A. Clary, "Historic Preservation and Environmental Protection: The Role of the Historian," April 1978, box 9, folder 18, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003. A version of this essay was later published as David A. Clary, "Historic Preservation and Environmental Protection: The Role of the Historian," *The Public Historian* 1 (October 1978): 61-75.

“Business and History Dialogue,” among the topics for which were how historical research could be applied to policy analysis, records management, public relations, advertising, and market research; what areas of expertise would be required of businesses in the next five to ten years; how contemporary political and social concerns affect policy decisions; and the need for business history and the role of corporate historians.⁹¹ The program reinforced Pomeroy’s desire that the Organization of American Historians fund a young historian to work in an analytical or administrative position within a business or governmental agency.⁹²

The resource groups that had formed as a result of the Organizations of American Historians’ efforts to address the employment crisis catalyzed thinking about graduate education in history. As at Santa Barbara, Carnegie-Mellon University developed an applied history program. In 1976, Peter Stearns and Joel Tarr established master’s and doctoral curricula focused on training historians in public policy research.⁹³ Grants through the university’s Technology and Society program, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, provided student fellowships, research grants, and conference funding.⁹⁴ Stearns thought that the methods of social history strengthened social analysis of public policy issues, arguing that, in part, a lack of social-historical research limited policymakers’ abilities to understand the failures of Keynesian economics.⁹⁵ Reflecting on policy history, Stearns and Tarr claimed that social historians viewed

⁹¹ “Business and History Dialogue: Issues for Discussion,” May 1978, box 2, folder 6, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002.

⁹² Robert Balstad Miller, Marc Zlotnik, and Robert W. Pomeroy, “Proposal That the Organization of American Historians Design an Internship Program for Historians, Memo to Eugene Genovese,” December 21, 1978, box 2, folder 9, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁹³ Ellen K. Coughlin, “Where Are the Jobs,” 1, 11.

⁹⁴ Mark Cioc, Char Miller, and Joel Tarr, “Joel Tarr,” *Environmental History* 16 (January 2011): 121-36.

⁹⁵ Peter N. Stearns, “History and Policy Analysis: Toward Maturity,” *The Public Historian* 4 (Summer 1982): 12.

policy decisions as a series of interactions: “They operate in social contexts that themselves require historical understanding. When they reach their targets, they are shaped further by the social environment and by the often separate interests of the social groups involved.”⁹⁶ Stearns sought a more interdisciplinary, collaborative, and problem-solving approach to historical training, housing the applied history program not in any specific department but as a multidisciplinary conduit among faculty in the economic, political science, sociology, and history departments.⁹⁷

Like Kelley at the University of California Santa Barbara, Stearns thought that the program could provide much-needed historical perspective to existing policy science and alternative career paths for historians. In fact, some of the program’s first graduates pursued work with the Environmental Protection Agency, College Board, Army Corps of Engineers, as well as corporate and private agencies.⁹⁸ He insisted that historical methodologies bolstered the conceptual approach of policy researchers by readily providing historical analogies, specifically identifying false comparisons, paying close attention to how trends and behaviors change over time, possessing an ability to maneuver through qualitative and quantitative data, and serving as a bulwark against the tendency toward predictions among social and political scientists.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Peter N. Stearns and Joel A. Tarr, “Straightening the Policy History Tree,” *The Public Historian* 15 (Autumn 1993): 65-66.

⁹⁷ Peter N. Stearns, “Applied History and Social History,” *Journal of Social History* 14 (Summer 1981): 533; Peter N. Stearns and Joel A. Tarr, “Applied History: A New-Old Departure,” *The History Teacher* 14 (August 1981): 518.

⁹⁸ Stearns, “Applied History and Social History,” 518-19, 534.

⁹⁹ “Agenda for the Second Annual Conference on Public History: ‘History and Public Policy,’” *The Public Historian* 2 (October 1979): 117-20; Michael Grossberg, “A Report of the Conference on the History of American Public Policy,” *The Public Historian* 1 (January 1979): 23-33. Similar applied historical approaches were adopted by Ernest R. May and Richard Neustadt at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, see Stearns, “Applied History and Social History,” 535; Stearns and Tarr, “Applied History,” 519-30; Peter N. Stearns and Joel A. Tarr,

Although the blossoming of applied history programs in the 1970s suggested something new, they drew from the philosophies of Progressive historians, such as Benjamin Shambaugh of the Iowa State Historical Society who published the “Iowa Applied History Series” between 1912 and 1925, and John Hope Franklin, whose own research bolstered the arguments of Thurgood Marshall during the *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1953.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, historians had long been willing to contribute to policy discussions supporting racial segregation, disenfranchisement, and immigration restrictions.¹⁰¹

Within several months of the founding of the National Coordinating Committee, several more professional organizations signed on to its mission, including the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, the Western History Association, Phil Alpha Theta, the Conference on Peace Research in History, and the Conference Group for Social and Administration History. Notably absent was the American Association for State and Local History. Efforts to identify “practicing historians” and research what they “are being paid to do” generally excluded historic preservationists, even if employed by state and local governments. They already had a well-established professional identity acknowledged, if overlooked, by university historians. When it came to government historians, the National Coordinating Committee was much more interested in consultants like Robert

“Curriculum in Applied History: Toward the Future,” *The Public Historian* 9 (Summer 1987): 111-25.

¹⁰⁰ Stearns and Tarr, “Applied History,” 518; Rebecca Conard, *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2001).

¹⁰¹ Peter N. Stearns, “Applied History and Social Science,” *Social Science History* 6 (Spring 1982): 220; Franklin, “The Historian and Public Policy.”

Kelley or government historians like Richard Hewlett, whose federal career provided a model for graduate students looking for research positions outside of academia.¹⁰²

National foundations bolstered the work of the National Coordinating Committee by expanding investments in researching humanities education. The Higher Education Research Institute received additional grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities to continue its *Study of Highly Trained Humanists Employed in the Public Sector* (1977) and *A Study of the Master's Degree in the Humanities* (1978).¹⁰³ In 1977, the Rockefeller Foundation published a working paper by Rita D. Jacobs titled “The Useful Humanists: Alternative Careers for Ph.D.’s in the Humanities” that explored how humanities training could transfer to non-academic jobs in business and government. The paper built off two Rockefeller Foundation conferences in the spring and fall of 1974 on humanities employment concerns.¹⁰⁴

However, the National Coordinating Committee, and new public and applied history programs, did not engender full support across the field. Responses to a National Coordinating Committee fundraising appeal revealed frustration about the unemployment crisis, the solutions proposed by professional organizations, and new graduate programs. Historians in all stages of

¹⁰² “Wanted,” *History News* 33 (June 1978): 145; Arnita A. Jones, “The National Coordinating Committee: Programs and Possibilities,” *The Public Historian* 1 (Autumn 1978): 49-60; “NCC,” July 1977.

¹⁰³ Human Resource Policy Corporation, Inc., “A Study of Highly Trained Humanists Employed in the Public Sector, Higher Educational Research Institute,” Funded Projects Query, National Endowment for the Humanities, accessed July 25, 2021, <https://securegrants.neh.gov/publicquery/main.aspx?f=1&gn=AO-10357-77>; Lewis C. Solmon to Mr. Robert W. Pomeroy, December 1, 1977, box 2, folder 5, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002. See also Lewis Solmon, Nancy L. Ochsner, Margo-Lea Hurwicz, *Alternative Careers for Humanists PhDs: Perspectives of Students and Graduates* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979).

¹⁰⁴ Rita D. Jacobs, *The Useful Humanists: Alternative Careers for Ph. D. 's in the Humanities*, Working Papers (New York: Rockefeller Foundation, 1977), v, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED164433>.

their careers complained to the Organization of American Historians recommending that it would be better to audit graduate history programs. Some advised that professional organizations limit universities' abilities to grant PhDs. Others suggested more extensive graduate training for secondary teachers. Responses revealed the breadth of problems facing individual historians and departments: budget cuts, frozen salaries, part-time employment, and lengthy unemployment.¹⁰⁵

Not all responses to the National Coordinating Committee were negative. Some historians enthusiastically wrote to the Organization of American Historians describing their experiences working in foreign universities, media companies, government, and foundations. Conversations about the National Coordinating Committee made visible the creative and entrepreneurial careers crafted by historians. For example, a symposium about suburban communities organized by Kenneth T. Jackson and Michael P. McCarthy connected historians, city planners, and land developers. In Atlanta, several historians joined to create The History Group, Inc., a private company that was part of an emerging field of contract historians who published guidebooks for cities and consulted on urban renewal and development projects.¹⁰⁶

Yet, the situation seemed not so bleak for some historians who questioned the National Coordinating Committee's assumption that history needed wider promoting to confirm its legitimacy as a discipline. One historian instructed that the real lesson to be learned from the present moment was that "while the profession is bemoaning its fate, *history* is booming (in terms of state and local and preservation interests) and the need for historical *perception* throughout our society continues to increase."¹⁰⁷ The popularity of social history coincided with

¹⁰⁵ "NCC," January 1977, 5-7.

¹⁰⁶ "NCC," January 1977, 5-7; Darlene Roth, "The Mechanics of a History Business," *Public Historian* 1 (Spring 1979): 26-30.

¹⁰⁷ Robert H. McKenzie, "To the Editor," *AHA Newsletter* 15 (November 1977), box 2, folder 5, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002.

American Bicentennial celebrations to generate an enthusiasm for American history that promised to drive enrollments and innovations in history education within universities, according to the Organization of American Historians' Committee on the Status of History. At college and universities across the nation, the prominence of social history and the turn toward a more useful history inspired new topical courses that explored civil rights, criminal justice, gender issues, and environmentalism. The emergence of adult education and extension courses, and a boom in oral history projects began to elevate the status of history departments within universities. Between 1975 and 1976, college enrollments in history courses stabilized, and some schools even saw increases in enrollments.¹⁰⁸

Bicentennial celebrations certainly fed the growing interest in history. The debate over history's role in society that had wracked the academy for years seeped into community organizations, businesses, and government agencies as they planned their Bicentennial celebrations. As historian Tammy S. Gordon demonstrated, the Bicentennial, particularly its focus on consumerism and commercialism, "helped make history the province of the people."¹⁰⁹ It generated an increase in visitation to museums and historic sites in the mid-1970s. Local communities took a "do-it-yourself" approach to historical commemoration, and grassroots history became a powerful "tool for community organization and action."¹¹⁰ Local Bicentennial celebrations invigorated Americans' interest in their national past, revealed new career paths for

¹⁰⁸ "The Status of History," *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 5 (July 1977): 6, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

¹⁰⁹ Tammy S. Gordon, *The Spirit of 1976: Commerce, Community, and the Politics of Commemoration* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 3-4; M. J. Rymza-Pawlowska, *History Comes Alive: Public History and Popular Culture in the 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 40-41; Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 33.

¹¹⁰ Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 25.; Gordon, *The Spirit of 1976*, 45.

history graduates, and created opportunities for professors to participate in local commemorations alongside local historians, business leaders, and community leaders.¹¹¹

Social history, the applied history trend, and the Bicentennial resulted in a proliferation of workshops, courses, and programs in public and applied history around the country. In 1977, the University of California, Berkeley began a project entitled “Careers for Historians.” To direct the program, the university hired a graduate student on a part-time basis to develop workshops and offer counseling to students entering the job market. The program hosted panel presentations by historians who left college and university teaching to work in the private and public sectors.¹¹² Simultaneously, the University of South Carolina partnered with the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to hold a two-week summer Institute for the Editing of Historical Documents for individuals with masters in American history. In addition, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission created a fellowship in documentary editing in American history.¹¹³ The Harvard-Danforth Program for the New England Community held a series of programs on Experiments in History Teaching for history teachers at secondary and post-secondary levels, the final session for which was held in April 1977 in conjunction with the meeting of the New England Historical Association and in collaboration with the New England History Teachers Association. Session topics included the use of cultural artifacts, community history, biography, “History from the Bottom Up,” and “Quantifying the Past.” The program resulted in a newsletter and survey of history educators. The final spring program featured an

¹¹¹ Harold M. Hyman, “The Uses of History: Job Alternatives at the Bicentennial,” *The History Teacher* 11 (May 1978): 393.

¹¹² Georgiana Davidson, “Careers for Historians,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 5 (January 1978): 7, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

¹¹³ “Non-Teaching Careers,” 7-8.

address by Bernard Bailyn on “The *New York Times* History Survey: Data and Significance.”¹¹⁴

The American Association for State and Local History continued to hold its workshops in Interpretation of Historic Sites.¹¹⁵

Recognizing the groundswell of historical work and training beyond the academy, the Organization of American Historians developed more formal partnerships with historians working in museums and historic preservation. In 1977, Richard Kirkendall reformed the Historic Preservation Committee, bringing in historic preservationists and consultants like Charles Hosmer and Clement Silvestro.¹¹⁶ Members of the Historic Preservation Committee of the Organization of American Historians considered evaluating and ranking emerging historic preservation courses and programs, arguing that “better communications should be encouraged between the professional and those public agencies and private firms who need qualified individuals to meet their planning and cultural resources management requirements.”¹¹⁷

The energy around vocational training programs and ongoing conversations about the social value and notions of historical professionalism coalesced in *The Public Historian*, an academic journal founded by the University of California Santa Barbara in 1978. The journal’s founders, G. Wesley Johnson and Robert Kelley, wanted to create a network of historians working beyond the academy. Accordingly, *The Public Historian* created a new space to debate methods and the social value of historical practice and encourage a national Public History Movement to meet the challenges and opportunities of historical practice in the 1980s and 1990s.

¹¹⁴ Paul H. Tedesco, “Experiments in History Teaching,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 5 (July 1977): 8, Organization of American Historians Newsletter.

¹¹⁵ “Non-Teaching Careers,” 7-8.

¹¹⁶ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. to Mr. Richard S. Kirkendall, June 3, 1977, box 9, folder 18, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

¹¹⁷ Ronald W. Johnson to Dr. Richard S. Kirkendall, May 31, 1977, box 9, folder 18, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

Like the decade of the 1970s, it also brought academic and public historians into closer alignment.

CHAPTER FOUR

Raison D'Être for the Revolution: Applied History at North Carolina State University

The crisis and transformation of graduate history education over the 1970s manifested in hundreds of ways in collegiate history departments across the United States. Between 1978 and 1986, over eighty colleges and universities offered some sort of certificate or degree program in public history.¹ Programs proliferated as an academic employment crisis threatened history departments and as social history's rise to prominence pushed historians to develop new courses of study that resonated with the tumultuous political climate. The most well-known public and applied history programs established at Carnegie-Mellon and the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1976 and 1978 served as models for history departments. Their visions for public history were among many in an emerging Public History Movement; however, few historians have closely examined why public history programs manifested the ways they did.²

Debates among historians over new applied history or public history programs—terms often used interchangeably during the 1970s—were part of a wider dialogue about the professional identity and social value of history after World War II. Historian Cathy Stanton fittingly characterized these conversations as a “general scholarly soul-searching” as history departments debated the social responsibilities of historians.³ Public history programs became one way to prepare historians to contribute to public education, policymaking, and community-

¹ *Public History Education in America: A Guide* (Berkeley, CA: National Council on Public History, 1986).

² Robert Kelley, “Public History: Its Origins, Nature and Prospects,” *Public Historian* 1 (Autumn 1978): 16-28; Peter N. Stearns, “Applied History and Social History,” *Journal of Social History* 14 (Summer 1981): 533; Peter N. Stearns and Joel A. Tarr, “Applied History: A New-Old Departure,” *The History Teacher* 14 (August 1981): 518.

³ Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 12.

building. However, university history departments often failed to embrace the revolutionary potential of public and applied history programs. An examination of North Carolina State University's efforts to develop an applied history program from the 1960s to 1980s reveals that while some faculty members sought to connect coursework to a broader program of community extension and service, as evidenced by the Good Neighbor Council described in the preceding chapter, the adoption of public historical work was an inward-looking and utilitarian effort by the all-white, and predominantly male, faculty to reform disciplinary training amidst economic uncertainty and increasing pressure from administrators and students to add new social and cultural history courses to the existing catalog, which tended to be dominated by European and American political and military history courses.

Between 1967 and 1982, the history department cautiously adopted new skills-based courses in archival administration and historic preservation in hopes of attracting new students amidst declining enrollments. Yet, these courses were among several curricular innovations the department experimented with between 1963 and 1981, and they were hardly the easiest solution to the problems plaguing the department.⁴ Academic bureaucracy consistently proved a stumbling block to any real collaboration between the history department and an outside agency, despite the eager efforts of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History to expand its partnership with the university. The experiences of faculty at North Carolina State University were hardly unique. This study of the applied history program provides context for how the national Public History Movement manifested at local levels across the United States.⁵ It reflects

⁴ Philip W. Semas, "Graduate Schools Urged to Experiment," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 11 (January 19, 1976): 1; 5.

⁵ *Public History Education in America: A Guide*; "Public History in the Academy: An Overview of University and College Offerings," *Public Historian* 2 (Autumn 1979): 84–116.

how the diversity and fluidity of the Public History Movement, something that can be at times hard to discern from the high-level national narratives.⁶ Finally, it reveals the hasty proliferation and even chaotic development of programs that muddle contemporary understanding of public history practice and education.

* * *

Larry Tise started his career with the North Carolina Department of Art, Culture, and History as a Bicentennial coordinator for northwestern North Carolina. As a graduate student at the University of North Carolina, Tise earned a living helping to restore old houses and writing histories of Methodist churches. When he joined the state's Bicentennial Commission, he took responsibility for the publication program and aided communities in designing local history programs in order to be certified as official Bicentennial Communities.⁷ As Tise worked with local historians to publish books and pamphlets, preserve historic buildings, erect markers and monuments, design parks, and plan celebrations, he came to view community-based history projects as opportunities for introspection, encouraging community members to rethink the historical values and character of their communities. These experiences drove Tise to create opportunities for academically employed historians to interact with local communities beyond the Bicentennial.⁸

⁶ Rebecca Conard, "Complicating Origin Stories: The Making of Public History into an Academic Field in the United States," in *A Companion to Public History*, ed. David Dean (John Wiley & Sons Ltd.: 2018), 31.

⁷ M. J. Rymsza-Pawlowska, *History Comes Alive: Public History and Popular Culture in the 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 59-60.

⁸ Larry Tise, interview by author, December 5, 2015, digital recording, in possession of author; Harold M. Hyman, "The Uses of History: Job Alternatives at the Bicentennial," *The History Teacher* 11 (May 1978): 393-399.

In 1975, after becoming the director of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Tise formulated plans for a statewide Institute of Applied History that would connect academic history departments to local communities and expand historical training in the fields of museums, archives, and historic preservation. “Applied history” described the study and practice of relating historical research and interpretation “to concrete social needs,” ranging from the management of archives, museums, and historic preservation projects to private and public sector policy research.⁹ The Institute would have three goals: “(1) to give students practical experience and training in non-academic, history related fields; (2) to assist colleagues and universities in developing their own Applied History program; (3) to provide a vehicle for involved local communities in a wide range of history related programs.”¹⁰ Although Tise originally conceived of the Institute as a stimulus for community history projects, as it developed, the initiative focused much more on broadening educational experiences for history students. For example, Tise hoped the Institute would facilitate internships at museums, archives, and historic sites, and he anticipated that it would offer interdisciplinary perspectives—much like the applied history program at Carnegie Mellon—with courses in anthropology, archaeology, architecture, archives, art history, museum studies, and cartography that would be cross-listed at universities throughout North Carolina.¹¹ As Tise imagined it, the Institute would help the Department of Archives and History meet new expectations brought on by the implementation of the 1966 National Historic

⁹ “Plans Announced for Institute of Applied History,” *Carolina Comments* 24 (May 1976): 49, 51, D. H. Hill Library, NC State University Libraries, Raleigh.

¹⁰ “Plans Announced for Institute of Applied History;” Larry E. Tise, Declaration of Agreement in the Establishment of the North Carolina Institute of Applied History, November 25, 1975, box 1, folder 6, Department of History Records, Special Collections and Research Center, NC State University Libraries, Raleigh.

¹¹ Larry E. Tise, Declaration of Agreement in the Establishment of the North Carolina Institute of Applied History.

Preservation Act that led to the creation of a state historic preservation office and spurred preservation projects across the state. He also recognized that the Institute could address the growing interest in genealogy inspired by the Bicentennial and the publication of Alex Haley's *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* in 1976 and the subsequent miniseries that aired on television in January 1977.¹²

Tise did not have to start from scratch. Since the late 1960s, the North Carolina Department of Archives and History had looked to improve professional training beyond the Meredith College internship program. In 1967, H. G. Jones, then head of the Department of Archives and History, decided to transfer the archives course initially developed with Meredith College to North Carolina State University. Jones became an adjunct professor at North Carolina State University, and he developed a two-course sequence: "History and Principles of the Administration of Archives and Manuscripts" and "Application of Principles of Administration of Archives and Manuscripts."¹³ The courses continued to draw students from Meredith College, as well as from the University of North Carolina.¹⁴ Jones also required new Division of Archives and History employees to take the North Carolina State University courses, scheduling them in evenings alongside other history courses so that full-time state employees could earn a master's degree in history within two years. The classes remained popular in the 1970s, and after Tise

¹² For a discussion of the reinterpretation of local and state historic sites in the 1970s; see Rosalind Remer, "Historiography and Public History in Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 75 (2008): 422-27; Rymza-Pawlowska, *History Comes Alive*, 37.

¹³ R. W. Greenlaw, "Annual Report of the Department of History for 1966-1967," June 1, 1967, box 1, folder 3, Department of History Records; *Meredith College Quarterly Bulletin* (1970): 63, Meredith College Archives, Carlyle Campbell Library, Meredith College, Raleigh, NC.

¹⁴ "Thirty-Second Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History" (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1968), 34, State Library of North Carolina, Raleigh.

assumed the directorship of the Division of Archives and History, he began envisioning ways to expand Jones's curriculum.¹⁵ In the fall of 1975, he approached the history department at North Carolina State University, hoping that the university would sign on to his idea for an Institute of Applied History and take the lead in administering the degree program.

For years, North Carolina State University's history department had experimented with a graduate program in history. When the university established a School of Liberal Arts in 1963, the Department of Political Science and History faculty began to imagine how a graduate program might align with the land grant university's emphasis on extension and public service.¹⁶ The first proposed graduate program modeled a "research agency or bureau" that, drawing from both history and political science, would support graduate internships and applied research, and function independently "or in cooperation with the research unit of the professional schools, with the Research Triangle, with business or with government."¹⁷ The proposed research agency resembled the Institute of Government, an initiative out of the University of North Carolina at

¹⁵ H. G. Jones stepped down from the Division of Archives and History in 1974. Robert Stipe succeeded Jones but stepped down due to health concerns shortly thereafter in 1975. Larry Tise, assistant director under Stipe, assumed the directorship in 1975.

¹⁶ Land-grant universities throughout the country developed relationships with outside agencies to extend their research into the public; see Dorothy T. Frye, "Linking Institutional Missions to University and College Archives Programs: The Land-Grant Model" *American Archivist* 56 (Winter 1993): 36-57; Peter Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech Land-Grant University, 1872-1997: History of a School, a State, and a Nation* (Blacksburg, VA: Pocahontas Press, 1997), 201; Tim Wallace, "The Land Grant Concept and Extension Leadership," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 70 (December 1985): 1133-36; George R. McDowell, "Engaged Universities: Lessons from the Land-Grant Universities and Extension," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Studies* 585 (January 2003): 31-35.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Reagan, *North Carolina State University: A Narrative History* (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1987), 202-205.

¹⁷ "Long-Range Planning Report: Department of History and Political Science," December 9, 1957, box 3, folder 1, Department of History Records; John B. Rae, "The 'Know-How' Tradition: Technology in History," *Technology and Culture* 1 (Spring 1960): 139-50; John M. Staudenmaier, "Rationality, Agency, Contingency: Recent Trends in the History of Technology," *Reviews in American History* 30 (March 2002): 168-67.

Chapel Hill, founded in 1932 to consult on municipal administration and urban planning.¹⁸ In 1965, North Carolina State University restructured the Department of Political Science and History into distinct and degree-granting departments, creating a masters-level history program in the process. Because faculty no longer needed to develop a graduate program grounded in history *and* political science, plans for the research agency never came to fruition.

When the Division of Archives and History moved its archival course from Meredith College to North Carolina State University in 1967, faculty again began to imagine how a masters-level archival administration program might align with the land grant university's emphasis on extension and public service. Ralph W. Greenlaw, chair of the new history department and French historian, stressed the importance of serving "the growing constituency in the Triangle area for history and related courses."¹⁹ Having previously directed one of the first Peace Corps training programs in the early 1960s, Greenlaw brought a background in public service that aligned well with the university's service-oriented mission. He expressed interest in "new approaches to historical studies" that emphasized vocational training and proposed that the department investigate expanding courses in archives, historic preservation, and museums in order to develop a certificate for teaching high school social studies to attract professionals looking for specialized training and new career opportunities.²⁰ A 1972 departmental review of

¹⁸ Robert E. Stipe, "Institute of Government Announces Course in Planning for Preservation of Historic Buildings and Areas," December 27, 1967, Institute of Government, General Correspondence 1967, Director's Office, Archives and History Record Group, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh.

¹⁹"Annual Report of the Department of History for the year 1964-65," 1965, box 1, folder 3, Department of History Records.

²⁰ "Statement to accompany the Proposals for Revision of History Curriculum," January 1972; R.W. Greenlaw to Dean J. Bryant Kirkland, February 24, 1966, both in box 9, folder 9, Department of History Records; "Annual Report of the Department of History for the year 1965-66," 4, box 1, folder 3. Vocational courses and programs became increasingly prevalent in humanities and social science departments during this period; see "Sociologists Eye Alternatives

its graduate program affirmed Greenlaw's efforts to develop new vocational opportunities. After an enrollment peak in the 1960s, the department's undergraduate numbers began to level off, and faculty suspected that the department's best chances to expand enrollments would be to attract "teachers or archival specialists who live in the Raleigh area."²¹

Between 1972 and 1975, the history faculty outlined several plans to develop a relationship with the North Carolina Division of Archives and History. In addition to the archival courses, professors from the English and History departments partnered with the Department of Archives and History on an experimental freshman seminar in 1972 and 1973. In 1973, students in the new course led a "multi-media reader's theater program" titled "1864—A State Divided," presented to the public in the university theater. Students performed a script based on the words of soldiers, public leaders, and civilians from the Civil War era, played and sang music, and showed period photographs.²²

In September 1972, Bernard Wishy, the new department head and an American historian, wrote to faculty regarding several National Endowment for the Humanities grants that supported the development of new programs or courses to place humanistic disciplines in "wider contexts."²³ For example, universities could use the grants to develop preservation, museum, and heritage programs or branch into specializations like Asian or Latin American history. Although

to Teaching as Job Shortage Looms in Academe," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 10, 1973, 1; 6; Malcolm G. Scully, "Anthropologists Looking for Alternatives to Academic Careers," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 10, 1973; 6; Malcolm G. Scully, "Student Focus on Practicality Hits Humanities," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 4, 1974, 1, 3.

²¹ "Statement to Accompany the Proposals for Revision of the History Curriculum," June 1, 1972, box 9, folder 9, Department of History Records.

²² "NCSU Utilizes Archives in Experimental Program," *Carolina Comments* 23 (January 1973): 9, D. H. Hill Library.

²³ Bernard W. Wishy to All Full-Time Faculty, memo, 26 September 1973, box 1, folder 9, Department of History Records.

faculty would not approach the NEH until 1977, as early as March 1974, the department's graduate studies committee encouraged expanding the graduate program to include courses suited to career opportunities within state and local history, including a certificate in historic preservation. After conferring with H. G. Jones, Professor Mary Wheeler, a Russian historian and member of the history department's Graduate Studies Committee, proposed that any new programs should be a joint effort between the university and the state's Division of Archives & History as the institutions already had collaborated several times before.²⁴

Wheeler and Jones were "strongly in favor of an 'academic' rather than a 'craft' program," assuring colleagues that the program would offer students a grounding in traditional document-based studies of history, supplemented by archival and historic preservation courses taught by the state archives department, and interdisciplinary courses at NC State in music, literature, and economics to expand the breadth of their training. Wheeler titled the proposed program "M.A. in History and Certificate of Advanced Study in Historic Preservation," adding an asterisk after "historic preservation" to emphasize that the curriculum would expand beyond the university's current courses in archival administration. As models for the program, Jones and Wheeler cited Colonial Williamsburg's historical administration seminars, co-sponsored by the American Association for State and Local History, and the Cooperstown seminars in historic housekeeping.²⁵

²⁴ History Graduate Studies Committee (Brown, King, Wheeler, Downs, Beers) to All Full-Time Members, memo, March 18, 1974, Unfiled Department of History records relating to the Applied History Program.

²⁵ Mary Wheeler to Members of the Graduate Committee, n.d., box 1, folder 6, in History Department Records; History Graduate Studies Committee (Brown, King, Wheeler, Downs, Beers) to All Full-Time Members, memo, March 18, 1974, Unfiled Department of History records relating to the Applied History Program. Records described as "unfiled Department of History Records related to the Applied History Program" have since been sent to Special Collections and Research Center, NC State University Libraries, Raleigh for processing. The

The chaotic development of the new historic preservation program reflected the department's growing concerns about the unemployment crisis. Even as the university's enrollment numbers soared, history faculty feared the department expanded far too quickly. Faculty delayed planning for the program delayed into fall 1974 as they led a campaign to attract history majors. They distributed flyers advertising the importance of history education to high schoolers, stressing that most industries had a great "need for people who have been trained to think."²⁶ Wishy briefly debated entirely replacing the MA in history with "post B. A. training" in archival and manuscript management, thinking that it would attract adults looking for continuing education and convince undergraduate students that they would "be able to 'do something' in the job market with only a bachelor's degree in History."²⁷ Concerned about the prospects of the historic preservation program, Wheeler suggested that the program might help the university recruit students through North Carolina Central University, Shaw University, and other historically Black colleges and universities. Such partnerships never manifested, and the MA in History and Certificate of Advanced Study in Historic Preservation floundered.

When Larry Tise proposed the Institute of Applied History and gathered history departments together at the Division of Archives and History in 1976, several universities had

researcher consulted these files while they were still housed within the Department of History offices.

²⁶ "University Open Day," October 12, 1974, box 2, folder 1, Department of History Records; Eugene Fram, "We Must Market Education," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 17, 1972, 8; Malcolm G. Scully, "Student Focus on Practicality Hits Humanities," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 4, 1974, 1, 3.

²⁷ Bernard W. Wishy to Dean Robert O. Tilman, 7 August 1974, box 2, folder 1, Department of History Records; History Graduate Studies Committee (Brown, King, Wheeler, Downs, Beers) to All Full-Time Members; "Adults Want More Education, Panel Finds, But Not the Traditional College Fare," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 5, 1973, 1; 7; Earnest L. Boyer, "We Must Find New Forums for Higher Education," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 14, 1972, 8.

already considered how they might create such a program. North Carolina State University had spent several years mapping one out, and Wake Forest University and Eastern Carolina University already had individually approached the Division about developing historic preservation collaborations, although their distances from the state agency made partnership less ideal.²⁸ Tise understood the advantage of working with North Carolina State University to develop the Institute's certificate program. They were both in Raleigh—within two miles of each other—and already had an established relationship.

Yet, Tise and North Carolina State University's history faculty struggled to define the roles they would play when hiring faculty members and project leaders, funding preservation projects, and organizing internships. Faculty were incredibly reluctant to allow an outside agency any voice in faculty appointments and curricular decisions.²⁹ Tise recommended the history department fill an open position in North Carolina history with someone who was a “model ‘applied historian’ in the academic community in North Carolina.” Tise even designed a course for the new position, “The Philosophy and Practice of Public Historical Administration,” a philosophical introduction to public history. The class, as Tise imagined it, would be “the *raison d’être* for the revolution in the historical profession we are trying to foment.”³⁰ However, faculty had already voted to fill the position with a late-nineteenth or early-twentieth-century U. S. historian capable of taking over introductory courses and upper-division North Carolina

²⁸ M. E. Wheler to Members of the Graduate Committee.

²⁹ Robert O. Tilman to Larry E. Tise, September 18, 1975; Burton F. Beers to Dr. Larry E. Tise, February 6, 1976, both in unfiled Department of History records relating to the Applied History Program.

³⁰ Larry E. Tise to Dr. Bernard Wishy, December 29, 1975; Roy Carroll to Dr. Larry E. Tise, February 16, 1976, both in unfiled Department of History records relating to the Applied History Program; Departmental Meeting Minutes, February 23, 1976, box 12, folder 5, Department of History Records.

history.³¹ Without further consultation with Tise, the department hired Donald Scott, a nineteenth-century American historian, during the summer of 1976.

Change, particularly dramatic change, happened slowly in the academy. Initially, Tise imagined that the Institute of Applied History would sponsor courses at several universities across the state, all contributing to an MA or graduate certificate from North Carolina State University. In 1976, faculty reviewed a proposal by Tise entitled “Enlarged Opportunities for Studies in Applied History Offered by NCSU in Cooperation with the N. C. Division of Archives and History.”³² The plan advised that North Carolina State University take full responsibility for administering the degree program and maintaining traditional procedures for course review and faculty appointments. The courses would be made available to students at all twenty-six North Carolina colleges and universities that signed onto the Institute of Applied History.³³ Although North Carolina State University faculty were generally supportive of the proposal, the department decided to proceed slowly, deciding to review the current curriculum before adding or expanding course offerings, indirectly delaying implementation of the new program.³⁴ In lieu of a full program, in the fall of 1976, Donald Scott and William Price from the Division of Archives and History, both supporters of a joint program, cotaught a course titled “Principles and Practice of Applied History,” which complemented the well-established “History and Principles of the Administration of Archives and Manuscripts” and “Application of Principles of

³¹ Beers to Tise, February 6, 1976.

³² Larry E. Tise to Dr. Bernard W. Wishy, January 12, 1976, unfiled Department of History Records.

³³ Larry E. Tise to Burton Beers, April 18, 1976, box 1, folder 6, Department of History Records.

³⁴ Departmental Meeting, minutes, February 23, 1976, box 12, folder 5, Department of History Records.

Administration of Archives and Manuscripts” courses already taught by Division of Archives and History staff.³⁵

As statewide coordinator for the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History—the organization formed by the American Historical Association and Organization of American Historians dedicated to raising awareness of the value of historical studies and training—Tise administered a survey about historical training in the fields of museums, archives, and historic preservation and to gauge historians’ interest in the Institute of Applied History. At the very least, the survey helped Tise identify historians interested in forming a statewide committee to work with the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History and to guide the development of the Institute of Applied History. He sent the survey to twenty-five public and private universities asking historians to nominate individuals and rank areas of focus for a statewide committee for the promotion of history. He divided areas of priorities into the “Promotion of Historical Studies” and the “Promotion of History Profession.” Sixty-eight historians responded to the survey, nominating 151 individuals to the committee, most of whom were academics, many working in public and private sectors.³⁶

For the most part, survey responses were quite traditional, some even hostile to the burgeoning Public History Movement. Many indicated reluctance to expand history programs while the job crisis endured.³⁷ The highest priority given in the “Promotion of Historical Studies”

³⁵ Burton Beers and Don Scott, “Program in Applied History,” memo, ca. 1977, unfiled Department of History records relating to the Applied History Program.

³⁶ Larry E. Tise to Historians in North Carolina, July 9, 1976; “Nominations for Membership on the North Carolina Committee for the promotion of Historical Studies,” 1976; “Survey Report for North Carolina Committee for the Promotion of Historical Studies, compiled by Larry E. Tise,” ca. 1976-1977, unfiled Department of History records relating to the Applied History Program.

³⁷ Curriculum Committee Department of History, minutes, October 29, 1975, box 12, folder 10, Department of History Records; Malcolm G. Scully, “Student Focus on Practicality Hits

was “increased teaching of history (as opposed to social science courses) on the high school or grammar school levels.” In addition, respondents advocated for adult continuing education courses, an initiative in which public university historians had long participated. The writing of local histories, community forums, public lectures, along with promoting higher levels of required history courses at college and university levels made up the third-, fourth-, and fifth-ranked priorities, respectively. Promotion of “the creation of courses stressing the applications of history by historians (e.g., oral history, historic preservation, archival management, historical archaeology)” ranked seventh before increased involvement in radio, television, and newspapers.³⁸

Under the “Promotion of the Historical Profession,” those surveyed ranked the hiring of historians by state and local governments highest, followed by hiring historians in local governments. Respondents seemed less convinced by the more novel options proposed, such as creating local historian-in-residence programs, ranking it fifth, followed by “the creation of undergraduate and graduate curricula in applications of history to prepare students for specific non-academic history work.” They ranked lowest the promotion of hiring historians in businesses and industry, federal and state unemployment programs for historians, and state laws requiring county or municipality historians.³⁹

Many of those surveyed questioned the survey itself, particularly its focus on job creation. One commenter wrote, “I disagree strongly with the reasoning behind many of the

Humanities,” 1, 3; Malcolm G. Scully, “Graduate Schools’ Dilemma: Be Practical or Scholarly?” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 8, 1975, 1, 8.

³⁸ “Survey Report for North Carolina Committee for the Promotion of Historical Studies, compiled by Larry E. Tise.”

³⁹ “Survey Report for North Carolina Committee for the Promotion of Historical Studies, compiled by Larry E. Tise.”

above objectives. They are being proposed to make jobs—this will not get very far. I disapprove of union featherbedding and regard history as a profession, not a labor union.” Another wrote, “We will win no friends by forcing local governments to put jobless graduate students in a historical WPA. Voluntary county action is another thing entirely.” Such responses demonstrated concern for the profession’s reputation. Many respondents warned against “crying for laws to force students to take history courses or agencies to hire historians.” One individual cautioned that creating applied history positions at that moment only set the stage for the next economic downturn: “Suppose we do get a few non-academic openings created. They will only be slashed in the next round of economizing. We will then be faced with a job crisis among ‘applied historians.’ This is bad for individuals and bad for the profession. . . . Providing and promoting liberal education are what we do best, and I think we should stick to our best.” Another stated, “The notion of ‘applied history’ is fine as a survival kit for someone stranded in the middle of a job crunch. In the long run, however, this is not our strength as a discipline.”⁴⁰

Skepticism about the National Coordinating Committee and the Institute of Applied History reflected not only the economic uncertainty of the 1970s but also concerns about the discipline’s status. H. G. Jones, who had left as the director of the Department of Archives and History in 1974 to become curator of the North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, became especially critical of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History’s focus on employment rather than the public value of history and its place in secondary schools. He argued that history’s crisis was “in the elimination or reduction of requirements for the study of history in schools and colleges, a step which undermined the

⁴⁰ “Survey Report for North Carolina Committee for the Promotion of Historical Studies, compiled by Larry E. Tise.”

rationale for history as a basis for understanding our work and our place in it.” Jones believed that the most significant challenge facing historians was the elimination of required history courses, and he proposed that university departments commit more courses and research into local history.⁴¹

In June 1977, the Institute of Applied History sponsored a six-week Archaeology Field School at the Stagville Center for Preservation and Technology, administered by North Carolina State University’s Department of History and taught by Don Scott with John Glauser, an archaeologist with the Division of Archives and History, and, featured guest instructors with backgrounds in botany and geosciences.⁴² Located in Durham County, Stagville had been part of the Benneham-Cameron plantation, the largest in antebellum North Carolina. The site included Horton Grove, an area of the plantation where the enslaved community resided in several two-story dwellings. In August 1976, the Liggett Group donated the property to the state and provided funds to create a center for historic preservation technology. By the following summer, the Stagville Center for Preservation Technology was home to year-round internships, courses, and technical training programs.⁴³ The 1977 field school’s ultimate mission was to instruct students on new and emerging archaeological techniques such as resistivity survey methods.⁴⁴ Following the field school, North Carolina State University’s history department developed a

⁴¹ H. G. Jones, “The Rape of History,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 54 (April 1977): 158-68.

⁴² “Archeology Field School: June 20-July 29, 1977,” ca. 1977, unfiled Department of History records relating to the Applied History Program.

⁴³ Larry E. Tise, “From the Director’s Desk,” *Carolina Comments* 24 (November 1976): 106, D. H. Hill Library.

⁴⁴ “Archeology Field School: June 20-July 29, 1977; “Department of History: “Stagville Field School: Critique,” ca. 1977, unfiled Department of History records relating to the Applied History Program; “Annual Report, 1976-77,” 1977, box 1, folder 4, Department of History Records; “Educational Programs Get Under Way at Stagville,” *Carolina Comments* 25 (September 1977): 97-98, D. H. Hill Library.

new course titled “Archaeology for the Historian,” partly in response to the lack of context that students showed during the field school.

Beyond the field school and new archaeology course, North Carolina State University’s history department proceeded sluggishly, slow to expand its degree program or even officially sign on to the Institute of Applied History and eventually even withdrawing from the programs at Stagville Center. The Division of Archives and History hosted several university-training programs at the site between 1977 and 1981, collaborating instead with Duke University, Durham Technical Institute, and Columbia University, and hosting courses on city planning, landmark preservation, and traditional skills like tool-making, woodworking, and blacksmithing.⁴⁵ As at other universities and colleges, historians at North Carolina State University had begun to express concern over the applied humanities trend, wondering whether it genuinely led to long-term vocational success. As the job prospects of graduates worsened, many universities capped enrollments in doctoral history programs. At North Carolina State University, history enrollments stagnated, and faculty worried not only about a new applied history program but about the existing MA program as well.⁴⁶

Implementation of an applied history program at North Carolina State University needed a catalyst. In 1977, faculty met with the National Endowment for the Humanities, which had helped to fund similar applied history programs, to discuss funding options.⁴⁷ It was an

⁴⁵ “Educational Programs Get Under Way at Stagville.”

⁴⁶ Malcolm G. Scully, “Career-Oriented Studies: The Debate Intensifies,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 9, 1976, 3; Arnita A. Jones, “Public History Now and Then,” *Public Historian* (Summer 1999) 21: 21-22.

⁴⁷ Bernard Wishy to Burt Beers, ca. September 1976, unfiled Department of History records related to the Applied History Program. The National Endowment for the Humanities had helped fund a training program in archival management and historical editing within the Department of History at New York University. Students earned a master’s degree in history and an archival

encouraging meeting after which the department unanimously approved Don Scott and William Price's request to apply for a planning grant, with a formal examination of the proposal to follow.⁴⁸ After inquiring into almost fifty universities, colleges, and historical societies, Scott and Burton Beers presented another proposal for an applied history program that could be developed within the existing MA program.⁴⁹ Students would specialize in archives and records, historical sites, historical editing and publication, historical preservation, or museology. Proposed courses included state and local history, popular culture, oral history, urban history, architectural history, archaeology, folklore, urban planning, and public administration. At the core of all the classes were two priorities: developing skills to record and preserve the past and interpreting the past for diverse audiences.

However, before Scott and Price could present the program proposal to the department, colleagues on the history graduate and undergraduate programs committee completed their review of current curricula.⁵⁰ The committee determined that the existing MA program suffered from a "lack of students of sufficient quantity and quality" and an overall "lack of involvement" by faculty, many of whom were more invested in developing new social history courses—on the histories of Africa, women, sports, urban life, and art.⁵¹ The committee recommended reorganizing, standardizing, and strengthening advising within the current program, pausing

management and "state-authorized certificate in archival management and historical editing; see "Non-Teaching Careers."

⁴⁸ "Meeting Minutes," 3 October 1977, box 12, folder 7, Department of History Records.

⁴⁹ Bernard Beers and Don Scott to Department, April 4, 1977, unfiled Department of History records related to the Applied History Program.

⁵⁰ E. D. Sylla to All Full-Time Faculty, October 19, 1977; Committee on Graduate and Undergraduate Programs, Report on Graduate Program, November 7, 1977, both in box 9, folder 11, Department of History Records.

⁵¹ Committee on Graduate and Undergraduate Programs, Report on Graduate Program; Department of History Annual Report, 1976-1977, 1977, box 1, folder 4, Department of History Records.

consideration of an applied history program until faculty could clearly establish its vocational need and prove that it could compete with the ever-increasing number of applied history programs developing around the country. The report also expressed reservations that faculty could satisfactorily teach courses on museum studies, urban planning, and historic preservation.⁵² Then, during a faculty meeting a few months later, the department abruptly moved to abolish the MA program, arguing that low demand provided little justification to maintain it. After a bitter fight, the MA program barely survived. Faculty compromised 16-2 that if university administration approved “piggybacking,” the dual listing of graduate and undergraduate courses, the graduate program could survive. If the university administration did not approve “piggybacking,” the department would phase out the MA courses. Clearly, the department was not unified about applied history or the future of graduate history education.⁵³

Between 1977 and 1980, national foundations increased investments in new models for humanities education, hosting conferences and funding research into vocational training and “alternative career” paths for humanities graduates. A Public History Movement emerged, marked by the founding high-profile public and applied history programs at the University of California Santa Barbara and Carnegie Mellon University, and the founding of *The Public Historian* in 1978. However, North Carolina State University’s story relates how the Public History Movement often collided with scarce university resources, the decline in student interest that had precipitated the employment crisis, and the paradox that historians who taught change over time struggled to change over time. Faculty put brakes on developing a new applied history

⁵² Committee on Graduate and Undergraduate Programs, Report on Graduate Program.

⁵³ Committee on Graduate and Undergraduate Programs, Report on Graduate Program.

graduate program, and energy around the Institute of Applied History dissipated.⁵⁴ Instead, they sought more traditional ways to attract history majors, presenting at elementary, middle, and high schools hoping to “advertise” the department to future students. Faculty partnered with the Wake County School District in offering in-service teacher workshops to explore possibilities for adopting advanced placement courses that might inspire student interest in history. The faculty also developed an honors program and dropped prerequisites for special topic courses.⁵⁵

Two years after the initial proposal for an applied history graduate program, North Carolina State University faculty finally resurrected plans for a graduate program in applied history when Chancellor Joab Thomas asked for new program proposals to justify a fundraising campaign. A specialized program in archival management and records preservation seemed like the best option to attract a new cohort of students.⁵⁶ By January 1981, the history department’s Ad Hoc Committee on Applied History, which included William Price from the Division of Archives and History, presented a revised proposal. The committee’s report referenced the

⁵⁴ Lewis C. Solmon, “Study of Highly Trained Humanists Employed in the Public Sector, Higher Educational Research Institute,” National Endowment for the Humanities, accessed July 25, 2021, https://securegrants.neh.gov/publicquery/main.aspx?f=1&gn=OP-*1076-77; Lewis C. Solmon to Mr. Robert W. Pomeroy, December 1, 1977, box 2, folder 5, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, IUPUI University Library, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis; Rita D. Jacobs, *The Useful Humanists: Alternative Careers for Ph. D.’s in the Humanities*, Working Papers (New York: Rockefeller Foundation, 1977), v, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED164433>.

⁵⁵ “Department of History Annual Report, 1978-1979,” box 1, folder 4; “Department of History Annual Report, 1979-80,” box 1, folder 5, both in Department of History Records.

⁵⁶ “Report of the Ad Hoc Committee: Chancellor’s Century Fund,” April 22, 1980, box 3, folder 8 and “Department of History Annual Report, 1981-1982,” box 1, folder 5, both in Department of History Records; Occupational Outlook for College Graduates, 1978-79 Edition” (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1978), 131-132; *Occupational Outlook for College Graduates, 1980-81 Edition* (Washington D. C.: U. S. Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 1980), 107-108, both accessed September 11, 2021, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/4796>.

previous failure to establish a program, citing uncertainty in the job market and unclear roles for the collaboration between the department and government agencies. To justify reviving the proposal, the committee referenced its vocational merits, along with the growing number of programs already involved in applied history. Unique to the 1981 proposal is that the committee objected to including artifact conservation and historic preservation, arguing that although these had been important aspects to the 1978 proposal, shrinking funding and the establishment of several similar programs reduced the need for such courses and created unnecessary competition. Furthermore, the department would become reliant on too many adjunct faculty members from partner agencies.

In April 1981, the committee addended its proposal considering further job opportunities available to graduates, the program's value to the history department, and hiring issues. The addendum pointed out that the Society of American Archivists identified five thousand archival jobs in the United States. In addition, the United States Department of Labor projected an increase in library-related fields throughout the 1980s. Finally, the committee stressed that the value of the program was its uniqueness. Although many programs offered archival management, most provided only an elective or two, and few incorporated a "significant history component." The North Carolina State University program would emphasize archival and document management and address audiovisual materials and computer files ignored by most other programs.⁵⁷

Still, faculty members expressed concern about how any future applied history candidate, especially those more qualified in archival management than history, would contribute to the

⁵⁷ Ad Hoc Committee on Applied History to All Faculty, Addendum to Committee Report of January 22, 1981, memo, April 2, 1981, box 4, folder 1, Department of History Records.

department's scholarship. The committee assured more skeptical colleagues that candidates would adhere to the same scholarly standards.⁵⁸ Such concerns revealed how faculty viewed applied history as seemingly different from history and lacked the interest, or maybe the imagination, to see the program as an opportunity for community building and societal change. Faculty finally approved the program only when presented with enough evidence that graduates would secure jobs after graduation.⁵⁹

When, in April 1981, the National Council on Public History held its Third Annual Public History Conference in Raleigh, the conference theme—"The Philosophy and Practice of Public History"—reflected the skills-based curriculum adopted by North Carolina State University and similar programs around the country.⁶⁰ Keynote speakers addressed how historians could contribute to policymaking and practices in archival and cultural resource management. Workshops on exhibit development and historic site preservation offered practical advice on grant writing and operations.⁶¹

Passage of North Carolina State University's applied history program proceeded rapidly after the meetings in 1981, but not without criticism. The Society of American Archivists questioned the curriculum for not meeting the society's guidelines for archival programs. Citing similar concerns, a professor from Michigan State University's archival program refused to recommend candidates to the history department's open position.⁶²

⁵⁸ History Department Meeting, minutes, 29 April 1981, box 4, folder 2, Department of History Records.

⁵⁹ "Department of History Annual Report, 1981-1982."

⁶⁰ "Third Annual Public History Conference: Principal Addresses," box 3, folder 15, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002.

⁶¹ Arnita Jones to Stan Turesky, memo, May 1, 1981, box 4, folder 15, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002.

⁶² Frederick L. Honhart to James A. Mulholland, December 3, 1981, unfiled Department of History records related to the Applied History Program.

The criticism may have caught faculty off-guard considering that North Carolina State University had been offering archival training since 1967 with its initial course developed under the direction of H. G. Jones, a well-known figure in the archival profession. Jones's original archival curriculum had made North Carolina State University one of only four universities that offered collegiate archival training in the United States.⁶³ Despite being a pioneer in archival training, the inheritors of Jones's curriculum had not evolved it to keep up with archival advances. Although archival training had remained mainly the prerogative of history departments through the mid-twentieth century, in the 1970s, the archival field trended toward information science, public administration, computer science, and social science, and increasingly library science programs became homes for professional archival training.⁶⁴ Criticisms leveled against North Carolina State University's program reflected the growing rift between historical and archival training.⁶⁵

The deficiencies of the North Carolina State University program also exhibited the program's haphazard planning by faculty pressed to attract new majors and justify their graduate program. Standards adopted by the Society of American Archives in 1977 remained flexible

⁶³ H. G. Jones, "Archival training in American Universities, 1938-1968," *American Archivist* 31 (April 1968): 135-154; Frank B. Evans, "Postappointment Archival Training: A Proposed Solution for a Basic Problem" *American Archivist* 40 (January 1977): 57-74.

⁶⁴ Edward Weldon, "Archives and the Practice of Public History," *Public Historian* 4 (Summer 1982): 54-55; Rebecca Conard, "The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States," *Public Historian* 37, (February 2015): 113.

⁶⁵ The following essays reflect the debate over whether history or library science departments were the best home for archival training, see: Evans, "Postappointment Archival Training," 57-74; Lawrence J. McCrank, "Prospects for Integrating Historical and Information Studies in Archival Education" *American Archivist* 42 (October 1979): 443-455; Nancy E. Peace and Nancy Fisher Chudacoff, "Archivists and Librarians: A Common Mission, A Common Education" *American Archivist* 41 (October 1979): 456-462; Frank G. Burke, "The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States" *American Archivist* 44 (Winter 1981): 40-46. See also Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and Archives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

whether archivists needed a graduate degree in library science or history but insisted that any legitimate professor of archival studies required five years' experience in archival work and one years' worth of archival theory and laboratory practice. North Carolina State University's program required only two years in an archival setting, a PhD in American history, and some experience with American art and material culture.⁶⁶

As North Carolina State University's history department prepared to search for its first applied historian, Larry Tise accepted a position at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The search committee invited William Price, now Director of the state's Division of Archives and History, to join them. In spring 1982, the department had hired John David Smith, a graduate of the University of Kentucky who had some experience working with museum collections and archives. Smith quickly began working with Price to finalize the applied history curriculum.⁶⁷ The Graduate Administrative Board accepted the proposal in September 1982, and the University's General Administration approved the degree the following year, changing its program title from "Applied History" to "Archival Management."⁶⁸

North Carolina State University's MA in Archival Management continued to grow after 1984, and by 1987, there were equal numbers of students in the applied and "traditional" graduate programs. Alumni experienced success in their job searches, and by the end of the decade, the department considered expansion into historic preservation or museum studies and a

⁶⁶ "Archives Education Guidelines Approved" *SAA Newsletter* (May 1977): 4-5; Ruth W. Helmuth, "Education for American Archivists: A View from the Trenches," *American Archivist* 44 (Fall 1981): 299; Ad Hoc Committee on Applied History to All Faculty, Addendum to Committee Report of January 22, 1981, memo, April 2, 1981, box 4, folder 1, Department of History Records.

⁶⁷ "Department of History Annual Report, 1981-1982."

⁶⁸ "Department of History Annual Report, 1983-84," 1984, box 1, folder 5, Department of History Records.

doctoral program.⁶⁹ They retitled the program as a Master of Arts in Public History in 1994, reflecting the field's flourishing in the 1990s, but the curricular offerings largely remained the same.⁷⁰

The founding of North Carolina State University's program marked the rise of several new public history programs in North Carolina, particularly at schools that had been involved in the defunct Institute of Applied History. In 1985, Appalachian State University began offering courses in archival management. At a time when many universities were questioning the practicality of providing graduate training amid an unprecedented employment crisis, one Appalachian State University professor remarked that public history programs offered the only "coherent rationale" for the existence of a graduate program at a state school because they prepared historians to justify historical work "to the taxpayers whose dollars fund their jobs."⁷¹ In 1995, Meredith College officially offered its first "public history" course, taught by then retired William Price. East Carolina University established a program in 1997, and by 2000, branches of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and Greensboro offered graduate student minor concentrations in public history.⁷²

The development of public history programs in North Carolina or, or anywhere else, cannot be understood by observing broad national economic or historiographical trends,

⁶⁹"NCSU Graduate School: Annual Graduate Program Profile–1986," 1986, box 12, folder 11; "NCSU Graduate School: Annual Graduate Program Profile–1987," May 29, 1987, box 5, folder 6; Department of History Meeting, minutes, March 18, 1988, box 12, folder 13; "Academic Department Plan: Summary of Goals, Objectives and Strategies," ca. 1988, box 5, folder 7, all in Department of History Records.

⁷⁰ *Graduate Catalog*, June 1994, Graduate School Publications, Special Collections Research Center, NC State University Libraries, Raleigh, NC.

⁷¹ Antone, "Why public history?" box 6, folder 1, ASU Department of History Records, Appalachian State University Special Collections, Boone.

⁷² "News from History Department," *Meredith Herald* (Raleigh, NC), September 27, 1995.

particularly considering that the evolution of individual programs depended on institutional goals and budgets, and departmental and personal motivations and experiences.⁷³ Since the 1960s, the archival courses offered at North Carolina State University had served a vocational purpose and they continued to do so as the program expanded into historic preservation and museum studies. Faculty at North Carolina State University had seen their partnership with the state's Division of Archives and History as an innovative way to address declining enrollments but never appreciated it as an opportunity to reform traditional disciplinary training, build community relationships, or reimagine historians' social responsibility.

In 1986, the National Council on Public History's Curriculum and Training Committee declared that the sheer volume of public history programs increasing around the country demonstrated that public history's status was secured within collegiate history departments.⁷⁴ But public history's acceptance into the academy as a solution to the discipline's practical problems did not necessarily equate to the academy's acceptance or even appreciation for public history's philosophy of interdisciplinarity and the dialogical nature of historical practice. Reflecting on the growth of academic programs in what year, Page Putnam Miller, director of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, captured the remaining challenge:

The goal of the last decade, to secure a place for public history within the historical profession, has to a great extent been achieved. The task ahead for public historians is to help broaden and enrich the historical profession by encouraging new opportunities for the exchange of ideas and fostering the use of new research strategies.⁷⁵

⁷³ Rebecca Conard also makes this point in "Complicating Origin Stories: The Making of Public History into an Academic Field in the United States," 31.

⁷⁴ *Public History Education in America*, 4.

⁷⁵ Page Putnam Miller, "Reflections on the Public History Movement," *Public Historian* 14 (Spring 1992): 70.

As public history programs flourished around the country, they offered a new model of historical training and practice that would culminate into a broad call for reformation of graduate history education in the 1990s.

CHAPTER FIVE

“The Human Process of History”: The Public History Movement, 1978-2000

The Public History Movement that had emerged by 1980—the flourishing of academic programs, journals, and organizations calling for a cohesive identity and refreshed historical curriculum—might be best interpreted as innovation rather than invention. Historians’ work within the public and private sectors was nothing novel by the 1970s when applied and public history programs emerged. By World War II, historians working outside of the academy, especially within archives, museums, and historic preservation programs, had crafted a professional identity through conversations about their work’s methods, training, and purpose. In the mid-1960s, these historians had developed training programs with the support of national organizations like the American Association for State and Local History and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Such initiatives gained greater legitimacy as academia faced an unprecedented job shortage in the 1970s and historians began to reconsider the purposes of graduate historical training. The Public History Movement that emerged in the 1970s, then, was yet another attempt to craft a new definition of historical professionalism.

However, the Public History Movement was notably different from previous efforts to develop new history training programs, in part because the Public History Movement largely involved academic historians. More importantly, despite the ways in which it pushed academics to consider vocational training, the Public History Movement was less skill-focused than previous evolutions in the field, calling instead for more substantive reform to the American historical discipline. Following the lead of social historians, public historians stressed the importance of local contexts in historical research and emphasized interdisciplinarity. Public historians also embraced debates about ethics, objectivity, and historical authority, and they

envisioned historians working in a space between expertise and collective historical consciousness. Facing the hierarchy of the academy, many public historians advocated for a different model of historical interpretation. Ironically, the movement would be criticized for reproducing the most distinctive and exclusive features of academic life, including a professional journal and organization.

* * *

In 1979, the University of California Santa Barbara Public History Graduate Studies Program and the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation hosted the first national symposium on public history. One hundred historians—university faculty, state historical society leaders, government historians, corporate historians, and private consultants—gathered in Montecito, California and participated in several roundtable-style discussions about the evolution of the field, the relationship between public history and the humanities, curricula, public history practice and employment, and future directions. Although the job crisis framed much of their discussions, participants did more than reimagine career paths for historians: they called for reforms in historical training that stressed local and contemporary contexts and interdisciplinarity.⁷⁶

By the summer of 1979, at least forty universities offered public history training programs in the United States, and the historians gathered at the Montecito conference insisted

⁷⁶ Suellen Hoy, National Council on Public History Questionnaire, January 30, 1989; G. Wesley Johnson, Founding and Early Years of the National Council on Public History, memo, March 23, 1989; Robert W. Pomeroy, National Council on Public History Questionnaire, January 10, 1988, all in box 4, folder 3, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, IUPUI University Library, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis. See also, “National Symposium on Public History,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 7 (July 1979): 11-12, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives.

that the job shortage facing universities had become distinct from and irrelevant to the Public History Movement. Joel Tarr, a professor in the Department of History and the School of Urban and Public Affairs at Carnegie Mellon, asserted “that public history and applied history are not creatures of the job crisis; they are an approach to using history in regard to contemporary society that have a valid intellectual base and that they would have arisen, and the field would have grown whether there was a job crisis or not.”⁷⁷ Faculty in Carnegie Mellon University’s applied history and social science degree program sought to reimagine how to prepare students for work in government agencies, arguing that that “main stream policy disciplines” like economics or political science “have proven inadequate to master the kinds of information and to produce the types of judgment necessary for effective policy in a number of fields.”⁷⁸

G. Wesley Johnson and Robert Kelley, cofounders of Santa Barbara’s program, expressed reluctance to define public history as a new *field* of historical practice. Johnson argued that historical training *as it existed* provided historians the “professional competence” to effectively navigate careers in government and politics, business administration, and education. He hoped that the Public History Movement would unite historians around a shared philosophy that historical research, especially as performed by academic historians, could benefit communities beyond the academy. As the inaugural editor of *The Public Historian*, a journal first published in October 1978, Johnson suggested that the publication operates on the simple assumption “that historians are professional people, who possess certain marketable skills.”⁷⁹

⁷⁷ “First National Symposium on Public History: A Report,” *Public Historian* 2 (Autumn 1979): 9.

⁷⁸ Peter N. Stearns and Joel A. Tarr, “Applied History: A New-Old Departure,” *The History Teacher* 14 (August 1981): 519.

⁷⁹ G. Wesley Johnson, “Editor’s Preface,” *Public Historian* 1 (Autumn 1978): 8-9.

Tarr, Kelley, and Johnson narrowly focused discussions about public history on the ways historians could play a more significant role in policymaking. Robert Kelley simply described public history as “the employment of historians and the historical method outside of academia: in government, private corporations, the media, historical societies, and museums, even in private practice.”⁸⁰ Early contributors to the journal argued that historians’ existing skills and expert knowledge could inform public policy questions related to everything from civil rights to water resource management. For example, Richard Hewlett, a historian within the Department of Energy, voiced concerns about historical work already happening within governmental agencies without the support or expertise of trained historians. Government officials required and sought historical perspectives, but they often failed to recognize “the special abilities of the historian or the idea that there is anything unique about what the historian does.”⁸¹ Too often, historians argued, policymakers overlooked historians as experts trained in sociological methods, although by the late 1970s, many of those methods had been absorbed in the new social history.

Tarr, Johnson, and Kelley probably went too far in distancing public and applied history from the job crisis, but the development of new and unique training programs like the Public Historical Studies program at the University of California at Santa Barbara and the program in Applied History at Carnegie Mellon University, suggests that the Public History Movement encompassed broader and deeper reforms of graduate history education and that historians generally avoided conceptualizing public history as a new subfield. Public history offered a new model of interdisciplinarity training for historians. The Carnegie Mellon and Santa Barbara

⁸⁰ Robert Kelley, “Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects,” *Public Historian* 1 (Autumn 1978): 16.

⁸¹ Richard G. Hewlett, “The Practice of History in the Federal Government,” *Public Historian* 1 (Autumn 1978): 36.

programs, which both provided masters- and doctoral-level degrees, emphasized interdisciplinarity by drawing on faculty from history and social science fields and encouraged students to reimagine historical practice as an analytical tool that situated professionals to solve questions about labor, pollution, transportation, and education. Such interdisciplinarity became evident even among new public history programs that did not focus on policymaking.⁸²

Those who lamented the minor contributions made by historians to the field of historic preservation hoped that the Public History Movement would highlight how historians could contribute to local, state, and national preservation programs. At Portland State University in Oregon, the public history program brought together an interdisciplinary faculty with backgrounds in history, architecture, and anthropology. At Jackson State University in Mississippi, the school's historic preservation program drew from oral history and urban planning to educate students on the history and politics of restoring and preserving Black cemeteries. At the Montecito conference, Robert Flanders, a historian with the Center for Ozark Studies at Southwest Missouri State University, described how historians often missed out on rich opportunities to collaborate with anthropologists and archaeologists by devaluing the field of cultural resource management.⁸³

The Montecito conference was the last of five meetings on public history in 1978 and 1979. The first three, held in 1978, focused on cultural resource management, business administration, and "the uses of history." Two months before the Montecito conference, the fourth conference explored "Pluralism, Racism, and Public Policy," cosponsored by the Center

⁸² "Public History in the Academy: An Overview of University and College Offerings," *Public Historian* 2 (Autumn 1979): 84-116.

⁸³ "First National Symposium on Public History," 39-40; Robert Flanders, "The Center for Ozark Studies: Regional Public History" *Public Historian* 1 (Autumn 1979): 42-48.

for Black Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara and the California Council for the Humanities in Public Policy. The gathering questioned how academic programs could train scholars to bring their expertise “to bear on social issues in an attempt both to question the value of existing policy and suggest fundamental structural and institutional changes.”⁸⁴ Participants examined challenges faced by marginalized ethnic groups in California, exploring how historians could promote public debate and dialogue about existing social concerns.⁸⁵ Following this flurry of activity, the Montecito conference, held in April 1979, galvanized participants to create a national organization dedicated to the emerging Public History Movement. Participants met again in Washington DC in the fall and in New York at the American Historical Association annual meeting in January 1980. Their purpose was to develop plans for a national committee on public history. In 1980, they incorporated the National Council on Public History. As initially conceived, the council would connect students with internships, expand employment opportunities for historians, provide a meeting place for historians working outside universities, and evaluate and develop undergraduate and graduate history programs.⁸⁶

The National Council on Public History united a motley group of historians with experience working outside of academia in federal agencies, state historical societies, corporations, and museums. They were unified in advocating for reforms in graduate education

⁸⁴ David A. Clary, “Historic Preservation and Environmental Protection: The Role of the Historian,” April 1978, box 9, folder 18, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003; Business and History Dialogue: Issues for Discussion, agenda, Mary 1978, box 2, folder 6, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002; Jack Bermingham and Edwin Clausen, “Social Issues and Public History: Immigrants and Integration in California,” *The Public Historian* 1 (Spring 1979): 52; “First National Symposium on Public History,” 9.

⁸⁵ Bermingham and Clausen, “Social Issues and Public History,” 52, 57.

⁸⁶ G. Wesley Johnson, “Public Announcement: Formation of the National Council on Public History,” October 1, 1979, box 3, folder 12, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002; “National Symposium on Public History,” 11-12; “First National Symposium on Public History,” 7-83.

and urging a redefinition of historical professionalism and scholarship that challenged entrenched notions of historical expertise and authority, emphasized participatory practices of history, and underscored local contexts.⁸⁷

However, the Public History Movement was anything but a unified effort; neither was it under the directional leadership of the National Council on Public History. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, historians frequently squabbled over the term “public history,” which, in all fairness, had little meaning beyond “applied history” and was becoming more problematic as the Public History Movement became such a big tent. Believing that “public history” insufficiently described the wide-ranging work of professional historians, David Clary, a historian with the Department of Forestry and member of the Organization of American Historians’ Task Force on Professional Opportunities for Historians, remarked in a report to the American Historical Association that, “The beginning professional, just out of school, who hamstrings himself with the label ‘public historian,’ is likely headed for the bread line.”⁸⁸ After surveying its membership in 1979, the Organization of American Historians’ Special Committee on Public Historians recommended against the term “public history” to describe a field or practice, preferring more specificity with “applied history,” “historic preservation,” and “governmental history.” instead⁸⁹

Contributors to *History News*, the American Association for State and Local History newsletter, criticized new public history programs as “naively unrealistic” in regard to the type

⁸⁷ Jerry George, “Take a ‘Public Historian’ to Lunch,” *History News* 34 (May 1979): 120.

⁸⁸ David A. Clary, “Report Submitted to Task Force on Professional Opportunities for Historians Professional Division, American Historical Association,” June 1980, box 12, folder 25, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁸⁹ Larry E. Tise, Carol Groneman, and Richard G. Hewlett, “Report and Recommendations of the Special Committee on Public Historians,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 7 (January 1980): 8-10.

of employment for which they purported to train students.⁹⁰ In 1982, after reviewing the first three volumes of *The Public Historian*, Terrance O'Donnell, a historian working with the Oregon Historical Society, argued that the Public History Movement claimed: "too much for history."⁹¹ His point was substantiated a year later when a robust annotated bibliography, published under the auspices of the National Council on Public History, covered public history training and research, business management, archives, records, information management, genealogy and family history, editing, cultural resource management, media and history, oral history, and policy history, as well as library science, which by the 1980s had developed a substantial body of knowledge of its own.⁹²

The early Public History Movement lacked a unifying definition or vision. Larry Tise, who, by 1979, had become Director of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, expressed concerns that academic historians defined "public history" negatively "as history outside the academy, non-academic history, or the work of historians not engaged in the teaching of the discipline."⁹³ There seemed to be no satisfactory explanation of what, if anything, united museum administrators, research consultants, editors, and archivists under the banner of "public history." Conversations about public policy, historic preservation, oral history, or archives rarely

⁹⁰ Jerry George, "Troubles with Training," *History News* 35 (March 1980): 4.

⁹¹ O'Donnell, "Pitfalls along the Path of Public History," *Public Historian* 4 (Winter 1982): 70.

⁹² Robert W. Pomeroy and David F. Trask, *The Craft of Public History: An Annotated Select Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983). As discussed in previous chapters, academic programs in archival management began to develop as early as the 1930s, see Lester J. Cappon, "The Archival Profession and the Society of American Archivists," *American Archivist* 15 (July 1952): 195-204; Cappon, "The Archival Profession and the Society of American Archivists," *American Archivist* 15 (July 1952): 195-204; Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and Archives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 63-84; Rebecca Conard, "The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States," *Public Historian* 37 (February 2015): 112-14.

⁹³ Larry Tise, "History's New Challenge: A Case for Public Historians," *History News* 34, (May 1979): 146-47.

intersected on the pages of *The Public Historian*, and early conference organizers struggled to manage the concerns of such a sundry group of historians.⁹⁴ For example, state and local historians criticized organizers of the National Council on Public History's second annual conference when they selected "policy history" as the event's theme, arguing that the topic was far too narrow to appeal to the council's constituency.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the Public History Movement that coalesced on the pages of *The Public Historian* was generally indifferent toward non-Americanists whose work did not appear directly related to contemporary social and political problems within the United States, even though conversations in the journal frequently attracted international interest.⁹⁶

For nearly a century, the academic mainstream had recognized a narrow notion of scholarship that excluded the work of historians in policy making and historic preservation. So, when the Public History Movement emerged, one of the first discussions to circulate among its practitioners revolved around how public historians in the academy ought to be evaluated on scholarship and service.⁹⁷ In response to the first issue of *The Public Historian*, one reader, a senior cultural resource planner with the National Parks Service, expressed frustration about the defensive tone of articles, "All work is valuable, and we should concentrate our energies on developing the unique potential of public history—instead of seeking the approbation of generally disapproving academicians."⁹⁸ Jack Holl, a historian with the Department of Energy,

⁹⁴ Clary, "Report Submitted to Task Force on Professional Opportunities for Historians Professional Division."

⁹⁵ Larry E. Tise to Dr. Joel Tarr, November 21, 1979, box 3, folder 14, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002.

⁹⁶ Monday B. Akpan, "Public History Abroad" *Public Historian* 1 (Summer 1979): 11-12.

⁹⁷ David A. Clary to Richard S. Kirkendall, December 21, 1979, box 9, folder 19, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

⁹⁸ "Reaction to 'The Public Historian,'" *Public Historian* 1 (Winter 1979): 7.

wondered why historians struggled with distinctions between teaching and practice, noting that in other fields like law, medicine, and engineering, “the professional arena in these disciplines is so large and domineering that practitioners often do not call themselves ‘professionals,’ but merely lawyers, doctors, engineers, accountants, and architects in contrast to the teaching professionals, or professors.”⁹⁹ In contrast, calling a public historian a historian within the historical discipline—when one did not commit themselves to a life of academic teaching and research—created a professional identity crisis. David Clary frequently voiced frustration with historians over this issue: “The archaeologist faces no such problem; his task-oriented work on the job can very easily be put into form for publication, without altering the purposes or assumptions of his original production.”¹⁰⁰

In 1984, University of South Carolina diplomatic historian Kendrick A. Clements surveyed historians about public history’s philosophy and goals. One of the respondents, John Alexander Williams of the National Endowment for Humanities—which required academic consultants sign onto grant projects even though most universities did not reward scholars for such work—described the challenges that public historians faced when clients set and defined research problems. The process required an enormous amount of collaborative work of public historians, especially compared to the individual research projects most often undertaken by academic historians. Even teaching applied history required more time and skills. Professors of public history courses spent a great deal of time coordinating internships and building relationships with historical societies. Clements argued that if applied historians’ tenure standards should be different than their counterparts, they should not be viewed as any less

⁹⁹ Jack M. Holl, “The Professional Historian,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 7 (January 1980): 10, Organization of American Historians Records, 1906-2003.

¹⁰⁰ Clary to Kirkendall, December 21, 1979.

difficult. Perhaps the production of public historical scholarship looked different, but it was no less meaningful than the scholarship produced by academics. In fact, Williams argued that such collaborative scholarship required a higher level of ingenuity: “*Creativity* thus lies in mobilizing new and existing scholarship and applying it within the contexts of constraints laid down by the nature of the problem at hand.”¹⁰¹

Neither Clements nor Williams conceptualized public history as a separate discipline, framing the field as a path within the broader historical profession. All well-trained historians, according to Clements, “should be able to find information even in fields totally unfamiliar to them, but they will find it more quickly, use it more easily, and make recommendations based on their findings with greater assurance and wisdom when they know the general subject broadly and well.” The applied historian, he continued, uses historical research and understanding “as basic components in formulating advice, making policy, or administering a practical enterprise.”¹⁰²

Part of public history’s difficulty gaining full acceptance in the academy was that, like its intellectual cousin social history, public history drew attention away from the national, refocusing scholarship and work on the local. During the late 1970s and into the 1980s, community studies were the rage among social historians, widely questioning and critiquing the nationally-oriented consensus model that had dominated the discipline since the 1940s. Public historians, pushing for broader participation in the historical process, embraced the local, offering greater visibility to local history projects that demonstrated how individuals or groups

¹⁰¹ Kendrick A. Clements, “Promotion and Tenure Criteria for Faculty in Applied History,” *Public Historian* 6 (Spring 1984): 55.

¹⁰² Clements, “Promotion and Tenure Criteria for Faculty in Applied History,” 52-53.

could use history to solve problems.¹⁰³ The evolving field of social history informed such projects, and the availability of state and federal funding for grassroots humanities projects made such projects viable.¹⁰⁴

One such program was a volunteer-run community oral history project in Caldwell County, Texas, begun in 1976 with the support of a grant from the Texas Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare. The project developed in response to several local concerns, including disproportionately higher school drop-out rates among Black and Mexican-American students, largely attributed to the absence of bilingual and Black studies programs and the deficiencies of a White American-centered historical consciousness that informed the curriculum. The project outcomes included two hundred interviews about family, town, work, religious, political, and ethnic history, and curriculum resources for local schools.¹⁰⁵ Local history projects such as this revealed the democratic potential of historical practice and challenged the historical authority of academics and traditional history museums and societies. Drawing from Black and labor

¹⁰³ Kelley, “Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects,” 21; Shelley Bookspan, “Liberating the Historian: The Promise of Public History,” *Public Historian* 6 (Winter 1984) 59-62; Rebecca Conard, “Complicating Origin Stories: The Making of Public History into an Academic Field in the United States,” in *A Companion to Public History*, ed. David Dean (John Wiley & Sons Ltd.: 2018), 24-25.

¹⁰⁴ *First Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1966* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1966), 3-5; Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2002), 26-28; Lara Leigh Kelland, *Clio’s Foot Soldiers: Twentieth-Century U. S. Social Movements and Collective Memory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018). Social historians elevated the status of local and cultural histories in academia in the 1970s; see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 442. Works that demonstrate the intersections of social, cultural, and local studies include John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

¹⁰⁵ “A Guide to the Caldwell County (Texas) Oral History Collection, 1976-1977,” finding aid, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, accessed July 25, 2021, <https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utcah/01682/cah-01682.html>.

organizing traditions, the Caldwell project approached historical practice as a participatory process and emphasized how history was functional or “usable” to communities.¹⁰⁶ Project organizers emphasized how historians could work with communities to develop a historical consciousness that reflected contemporary community concerns and challenges.¹⁰⁷

In the late 1970s, university history departments began to incorporate local historical studies into their curricula, many adopting the participatory methodology illustrated by the Caldwell project. Most took a more conservative approach, placing academic historians in positions of authority where they could contextualize local history within broader historiographical trends. In 1978, Appalachian State University hosted a conference with the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges that explored how the study of local history strengthened individuals’ understanding of themselves and their communities. Principally, organizers hoped that the conference would prepare local community organizations to challenge myths and misconceptions of Appalachian history through a wave of new local history projects.¹⁰⁸ Organizers invited local historical societies to workshops led by university professors and state Department of Archives and History staff, covering regional and family history, historic preservation, and oral history.¹⁰⁹ That same year, Cornell University created a Historians-in-Residence program with funding from the New York Society Council on the Arts and the New York Council for the Humanities. The residency program encouraged young

¹⁰⁶ Thad Sitton and Claudette Harrell, “The Caldwell County Project: Creating a Usable Past,” *Public Historian* 1 (Spring 1979): 42.

¹⁰⁷ Kelley, “Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects,” 21.

¹⁰⁸ North Carolina Humanities Committee, “Application for Project Grant,” 1978, box 4, folder 8, Department of History Records, University Archives and Records, Special Collections, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC. (Hereafter, “ASU Department of History Records.”)

¹⁰⁹ *Living with History: A Conference on the Role of Local History in Western North Carolina, November 30- December 2, 1978*, 1978, box 4, folder 8, ASU Department of History Records.

historians to reimagine historical scholarship within the context of local history. Over three years, the project supported twenty-eight projects. In Tompkins County, one participant worked with a community center to develop exhibits for local buses and shopping centers. Another traveled with the Labor Theater to introduce plays and lead discussion sessions following performances.¹¹⁰ Although thousands of projects in the late 1970s and 1980s exemplified some level of community focus, the Appalachian State project and Historians-in-Residence programs, which put academic historians into positions as facilitators of local history projects, were more indicative of the default attitude toward public work, an approach reminiscent of the interpretive practices and training programs crafted by historians in the 1940s and 1950s.¹¹¹

Local history projects reflected a major tension within the Public History Movement. During a two-day seminar on public history and local history hosted by the Rockefeller Foundation in Washington, DC in 1983, John Alexander Williams, who, in addition to working for the National Endowment for the Humanities, was a scholar of Appalachian history and professor at West Virginia University, argued that the biggest challenges and defining features of public history practice and local history related to how “historians share control over their scholarly agenda” with individuals and communities motivated by concerns often unrelated to

¹¹⁰ G. David Brumberg, “The Case for Reunion: Academic Historians, Public Historical Agencies, and the New York Historians-in-Residence Program,” *Public Historian* 4 (Spring 1982): 89. A similar project was developed by the Kansas Committee for Humanities and Fort Hays State University; see Lee F. Pendergrass, “Taking History to the Public: The Kansas Historian-in-Residence Program,” *Public Historian* 4 (Winter 1982): 73-87.

¹¹¹ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967); Holman J. Swinney, “Realizing the Intentions: AASLH, 1956-1976,” in Frederick L. Rath et al., *Local History, National Heritage: Reflections on the History of AASLH* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1991), 49-63; Denise D. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012); Rebecca Conard, “The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States,” 105-20.

academic historiography.¹¹² The irony of the Public History Movement—a new professional organization, scholarly journal, and academic programs—was that it underscored the professional authority of historians in public life and preserved the key features of the academy amidst growing efforts to create more accessible and participatory historical practices.

New public history programs became targets of criticism, as many—although not all—were developed by professors with minimal, if any, experience working outside academia.¹¹³ A member of the American Association of State and Local History critiqued the haphazard ways in which academic programs arose, “I’ve encountered professors who are developing graduate programs in public or applied history who themselves have no experience with historical agencies or particular interest in them.”¹¹⁴ Reflecting on the first decade of the Public History Movement, James C. Williams, a California historian and graduate of the Public Historical Studies program at the University of California Santa Barbara, regretted the dominance of academic historians within the National Council on Public History. Recalling a month-long summer seminar created to train professors to teach public history courses, he stated, “The very notion of offering a four-week program to academic historians which would send them back to their institutions to prepare public history courses and programs was insulting to the field.”¹¹⁵

¹¹² Williams, “Public History and Local History,” 13-14; O’Donnell, “Pitfalls along the Path of Public History”; Myron A. Marty, “The Place of Local History in the Training of Public Historians,” *Public Historian* 5 (Autumn 1983): 77-87; Theodore J. Karamanski, “Experience and Experimentation: The Role of Academic Programs in the Public History Movement,” *Public Historian* 9 (Summer 1987): 138-48.

¹¹³ There were some exceptions to this; see “Public History in the Academy”; Jeffrey Paul Brown, Judith Wellman, and Cullom Davis, “Roundtable: Strategies on Learning about Public History: Three Case Examples from the NEH Summer Institute on Teaching Public History,” *Public Historian* 9 (Summer 1987): 149-62; Brit Allan Storey, “Hanging by Four Pine Needles (Or, Confessions of a Public Historian),” *Public Historian* 14 (Summer 1992): 11-22.

¹¹⁴ Jerry George, “Troubles with Training,” *History News* 35 (March 1980): 4.

¹¹⁵ James C. Williams, “Answers from a Charter NCPH Member,” typed questionnaire, December 15, 1988, box 4, folder 3, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002.

Efforts to develop a code of ethics and certification program exemplified the movement's attempt to protect historians' authority in the public and private sectors. In 1982, a constituency of historical consultants, lacking the protections of academic freedom and tenure, began lobbying the National Council on Public History to establish a Code of Ethics ensuring researchers access to source material and expecting academic standards for their work.¹¹⁶ By 1982, the Oral History Association, American Association of Museum, the Society of American Archivists, and the Society of Professional Archaeologists articulated some sort of best practices or code of ethics.¹¹⁷ In April 1985, after establishing a committee to explore the issue, the National Council on Public History formerly adopted a code of ethics but stopped short of certifying individuals as "public historians."¹¹⁸ Although some historians found conversations about ethics in historical work long overdue, relishing an opportunity to discern the shared values of the historical discipline at a time when the profession appeared extremely fragmented, others found the effort antithetical to the Public History Movement's goals.¹¹⁹ Roy Lopata, a historian and planning director for the City of Newark, perceived debates about ethics and calls for a certification program as opportunities to protect the professional status of historians in the public sphere. Still, he interpreted the debate over professional certification as counterintuitive for an emerging field that encouraged a

¹¹⁶ Theodore J. Karamanski, "Ethics and Public History: An Introduction," *Public Historian* 8 (Winter 1986): 7-8; Albert L. Hurtado, "Historians and Their Employers: A Perspective on Professional Ethics" *Public Historian* 8 (Winter 1986): 48.

¹¹⁷ Karamanski, "Ethics and Public History," 6-7.

¹¹⁸ Roy Lopata, "Ethics in Public History: Clio Meets Ulasewicz," *Public Historian* 8 (Winter 1986): 39-45; Arnita A. Jones, "Practicing History without a License," *Public Historian* 10 (Summer 1988): 59-69; Jame C. Williams, Answers from a Charter NCPH Member, December 15, 1988, box 4, folder 3, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002; Theodore J. Karamanski, "Making History Whole: Public Service, Public History, and the Profession," *Public Historian* 12 (Summer 1990): 91-101.

¹¹⁹ Ronald C. Tobey, "The Public Historian as Advocate: Is Special Attention to Professional Ethics Necessary?" *Public Historian* 8 (Winter 1986): 21-30.

“multidisciplinary and multivocational approach.”¹²⁰ He explained that “a movement that encourages the use of history outside the classroom cannot erect barriers to keep other professionals from doing the things historians wish to reserve for themselves.”¹²¹

In contrast, Howard Green, a historian at the New Jersey Historical Commission, cynically viewed public history as “an attempt to recapture for the academy a place in the public arena, a place it forfeited when a generation of historians rejected the social commitments of the Progressive historians.”¹²² Green’s essay appeared in *The Radical History Review*, a journal established in 1973 as one of the first to seriously examine popular historical consciousness in the United States. *The Radical History Review* dedicated an entire issue to the emerging Public History Movement in 1981, critiquing the movement’s limited emphasis on “careerism.” Journal editors argued for a vision of public history that was “non-hierarchical, democratic, and community-based,” angrily conceding that implementing such a vision was doubtful because “the historical profession has rarely transcended its class and cultural origins.”¹²³ In another essay, Michael Frisch, a leader in the oral history field and professor at the University of Buffalo, argued that public historians had focused far too much on “the ‘how’ than to the ‘why’ of public history,” arguing that public historians needed to repair broken relationships between history and memory in American life.¹²⁴ Generally agreeing with Frisch’s assessment, Green hoped that public history would become “an on-going democratic struggle for the redefinition of authority”

¹²⁰ Lopata, “Ethics in Public History,” 41.

¹²¹ Lopata, “Ethics in Public History,” 41.

¹²² Howard Green, “A Critique of the Professional Public History Movement,” *Radical History Review* 25 (1981): 165.

¹²³ Benson, et. al., “Editors’ Introduction,” *Radical History Review* 25 (January 1981): 4, 7.

¹²⁴ Michael H. Frisch, “The Memory of History,” *Radical History Review* 25 (January 1981): 9-10.

in the academy and the broader community. As they existed, he acknowledged, public history programs were nothing more than vocational training, preparing “proficient technicians.”¹²⁵

Ronald Grele, director of Columbia University’s oral history program, felt similarly, expressing in *The Public Historian* that public history stood poised to upend the hierarchical structure of historical professionalism by creating a group of historians whose goal was to encourage and facilitate “a society in which a broad public participates in the construction of its own history.”¹²⁶ He hoped that the movement, particularly in local and community histories, would find opportunities to transform historical interpretation by making it the task of any person, facilitated and encouraged by professional historians who saw themselves as not mere storytellers or educators but community builders. Grele interpreted most public history training programs as unambitious, channeling “public historians into the narrowest of careers: working for those who rule and dominate the instruments of social power.”¹²⁷

Confronted with this criticism, public historians began to speak more explicitly about the theoretical foundations of their work. After historian Terrance O’Donnell described the Public History Movement as “cultural welfarism” that compromised the academic integrity of historians, Darlene Roth, a founder of a private consulting group of historians, responded stating: “What O’Donnell misses is the very essence of the human process of history: the dynamic tension of parties, the dialogue, the student-teacher relationship implicit in all guided discovery, the conversation, the meeting of minds in newly synthesized cultural understanding. We who are involved in the serious application of this process to new situations know there are serious

¹²⁵ Green, “A Critique of the Professional Public History Movement,” 167, 170.

¹²⁶ Ronald J. Grele, “Whose Public? Whose History? What Is the Goal of a Public Historian?” *Public Historian* 3 (Winter 1981): 48; Conard, “Complicating Origin Stories,” 29.

¹²⁷ Grele, “Whose Public? Whose History?” 47.

questions, issues, problems, confrontations and legalities which affect what we do and how well we can do it.”¹²⁸ Considering the many ways that public history deemphasized academic discourse, questioned history as a scientific field, and challenged notions of historical expertise, Henry Rousso, director of research at the French National Centre for Scientific Research and a groundbreaking scholar of memory studies, retorted that the emerging field of public history seemed “More than simply an original experiment, it is the *locus* of a historiographic revival affecting the entire discipline.”¹²⁹ By emphasizing historians’ relationships with lay audiences over historiographical discourse and focusing on how historians framed historical problems, not just for, but in active dialogue with community members, the Public History Movement created spaces to investigate and reflect on tensions between professional authority and public participation in the historical process.¹³⁰

In 1986, editors of *The Radical History Review* published an anthology titled *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, a book about popular historical consciousness and grassroots history projects.¹³¹ The volume divided public history into three categories: popular historical consciousness, the professional Public History Movement, and people’s history. In contrast to other works about public history published in the 1980s, which focused on the professional settings in which public historians worked, *Presenting the Past* explored how the

¹²⁸ O’Donnell, “Pitfalls Along the Path of Public History,” 65-72. The essay was republished as Terrance O’Donnell, “Pitfalls Along the Path of Public History,” in Benson, Brier, and Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past*, 239-244. Darlene Roth, “More on ‘Pitfalls,’” *Public Historian* 5 (Winter 1983): 7.

¹²⁹ Henry Rousso, “Applied History, or the Historian as Miracle-Worker,” *Public Historian* 6 (Autumn 1984): 72.

¹³⁰ Beth Luey, “Teaching for Nonteaching Careers,” *Public Historian* 4 (Spring 1982): 43-56.

¹³¹ Robert A. Padgug, “Alternative Careers (A Continuing Series)” *Radical History Review* 3 (Spring 1976): 66-67; Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig, “Introduction,” in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, ed. Benson, Brier, and Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), xv-xxiv.

field of public history democratized historical narratives and challenged unequal power structures in society. *Presenting the Past* and the flourishing body of scholarship on local and cultural history, memory studies, and oral history that it captured pushed public historians to consider how academic authority thwarted opportunities for a more democratic historical practice.¹³² For example, oral historian Linda Shope's essay on the Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project outlined several challenges to academic and community partnerships, among them, the lack of social obligation that historians displayed to the communities in which they worked and academics' tendency to define research questions and goals without the participation of community members.¹³³ Even as federal funding for local history projects significantly decreased in the 1980s, a growing body of scholarship on local and cultural history, memory studies, and oral history focused and fueled discussions among public historians about the formation of local and grassroots historical interpretations.

Notably, narratives about the Public History Movement missed this development within the field. Observing that a major thread of public history discourse in the 1970s was "private history," historian Peter Novick argued in 1988 that the new field of public history introduced particularistic agendas into the historiography by putting historians in policy-making roles and introducing private funding.¹³⁴ Novick, among others, critiqued how the earliest debates about the Public History Movement revolved around expanding job opportunities for historians without

¹³² Ronald J. Grele, "Useful Discoveries: Oral History, Public History, and the Dialectic of Narrative," *Public Historian* 13 (Spring 1991): 61-84.

¹³³ Linda Shopes, "Oral History and Community Involvement: The Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project," in Benson, Brier, and Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past* 249-263. An earlier version of this essay was published as Linda Shopes, "The Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project: Oral History and Community Involvement" *Radical History Review* 25 (January 1981): 27-44.

¹³⁴ The "private history" that most concerned Novick was for-profit historical research firms that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s; see Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 521.

considering and evaluating the commercial and political contexts within which public historians often found themselves working.¹³⁵ The complaints were valid, of course, but at times, critics overlooked how the earliest issues of *The Public Historian* created a space to investigate and reflect on tensions between professional authority and an impulse for broader public participation in the historical process.¹³⁶ In the inaugural issue of *The Public Historian*, G. Wesley Johnson, a founding member of the National Council on Public History and the first editor of the journal, hoped that the journal would explore ethical issues created by the client-historian relationship and provide a place for peer review and evaluation.¹³⁷ Johnson's partner in forming the program at Santa Barbara, Robert Kelley, often argued that one of the essential features of public history was that an agency or employer, not the individual historian, determined the research question. He suggested that new public history training programs could provide students experience with grappling "with the ethical complexities of being a 'house historian.'"¹³⁸

Novick's critique was misguided and already outdated when it appeared in *That Noble Dream*. Although Novick saw early debates about ethics and objectivity as a weakness of the Public History Movement, in reality, public historians wholeheartedly embraced the messiness of client-employer relationships and encouraged discussions about professional ethics and historical objectivity, just as generations of historians had before them.¹³⁹ Responding to Novick's work,

¹³⁵ Benson, "Editors' Introduction," 6-7; Michael Wallace, "Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States," *Radical History Review* 25 (January 1981): 63-96.

¹³⁶ Wayne D. Rasmussen, "Some Notes on Research and the Public Historian," *Public Historian* 1 (Spring 1979): 68; Roth, "More on 'Pitfalls,'" 5.

¹³⁷ Johnson, "Editor's Preface," 8.

¹³⁸ Kelley, "Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects," 28.

¹³⁹ Roth, "More on 'Pitfalls,'" 7; Otis L. Graham, Jr., et. al., "'The Ideal of Objectivity' and the Profession of History" *Public Historian* 13 (Spring 1991), 11, 14-16; Rebecca Conard, "Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection," *Public Historian* 25 (Fall 2003): 18; Rebecca Conard, "Public History as Reflective Practice: An Introduction" *Public Historian* 28 (Winter 2006): 9-13.

David Glassberg, a public historian at the University of Massachusetts, asked, “But what if we define public history’s uniqueness not in terms of the relationship of historian and patron but rather historian and audience?”¹⁴⁰ In Glassberg’s assessment, the Public History Movement offered the entire discipline an opportunity to reflect on the dynamic relationships between historians and audiences that shaped all interpretive work.

Novick’s interpretation also overlooked what was becoming a growing body of scholarship on public history and memory studies that demanded a deeper examination of historical interpretation and made public history a permanent field of historical study. His omissions might be forgiven since the bulk of scholarship on collective memory and nineteenth- and early twentieth-century preservation movements that arguably transformed public history discourse appeared as he completed his study. In 1989, the *Journal of American History* dedicated an entire issue to memory and the tensions between academic scholarship and individual and collective memory. In the same year, David Thelen, editor of the *Journal of American History*, compiled a collection of essays that argued that memory studies should be accepted as a new foundation for the historical profession.¹⁴¹ In 1991, historian Michael Kammen published *Mystic Chords of Memory* which examined collective memory and national identity across the United States.¹⁴² Such works showed how political leaders, grassroots preservation groups, and even some academics collectively used history to shape public

¹⁴⁰ Otis L. Graham et al., “Roundtable: ‘The Ideal of Objectivity’ and the Profession of History,” *The Public Historian* 13 (Winter 1991): 15-17.

¹⁴¹ Thelen, *Memory and American History*, vii-ix.

¹⁴² Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1991). See also, Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); David Glassberg, “Public History and the Study of Memory,” *Public Historian* 18 (Spring 1996): 7-23; David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

discourse about the meaning of history, whether or not the majority of academic historians chose to participate.

By the 1990s, public historians began to revise and, in some cases, develop new graduate history programs that focused on the methods of historical practice, specifically how personal historical consciousness shaped collective memory and how historians could unravel such layers of history by framing historical questions in local contexts. In 1991 and 1992, *Public and Academic History: A Philosophy and Paradigm* and *Public History Readings* each pulled together essays on intellectual, social, cultural, and public history to reveal “clearly the identical nature of the methodology of both public and academic history, different as they may be in setting and purpose.” The objective of the two-volume work was to offer a new model for public history training. Reflecting on an institute on teaching public history held at Arizona State University in 1984, the volume editors worried that attendees had come to perceive public history as a type of inquiry distinct from traditional historical practice. Historians Phyllis K. Leffler of the University of Virginia and Joseph Brent of the University of the District of Columbia designed an academic program “based on the fundamental historical processes of research, analysis, and presentation” that united public and academic historical training.¹⁴³ Their approach to historical training emphasized local contexts in curricular development and historical research, challenging the idea that public history was its own intellectual field of study. By offering a similar program of study at several different institutions—the historically Black universities of Tennessee State University and the University of the District of Columbia, and at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, which was a predominantly White institution—they

¹⁴³ Brent and Leffler, eds., “Introduction,” in *Public History Readings* (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1992), 1, 4.

demonstrated how historical training could build on the resources and culture of communities with which they collaborated. Leffler and Brent argued that research and analysis were foundational to both academic and public historical study. They explained that public and academic historians diverged not based on where they worked or who they worked for but, more specifically, in how the contexts within which they worked shaped the questions they asked. Whereas academic historians developed questions and set problems based on larger social or historiographical trends, public historians often framed practical questions about individual and community needs.

The flourishing of memory studies and wave of curricular reform coincided, not accidentally, with several high-profile debates about historical interpretation at museums and historic sites that demonstrated the cultural, social, and political power of history beyond the academy. In 1994, Colonial Williamsburg hosted a controversial performance of a slave auction that roused debates among historians, media, and tourists about interpretive practice.¹⁴⁴ That same year, curators at the National Air and Space Museum completed an exhibition exploring the United States' use of atomic weapons at the end of World War II. The exhibit script generated fierce opposition that gained national coverage on media networks, and the museum ultimately canceled the exhibit.¹⁴⁵ By the mid-1990s, tensions between academic scholarship and

¹⁴⁴ Cary Carson, "Colonial Williamsburg and the Practice of Interpretive Planning in American History Museums," *Public Historian* 20 (Spring 1998): 11-51; Stephanie E. Youhl, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Centering the Domestic Slave Trade in American Public History," *Journal of Southern History* 79 (August 2013): 593-624; Jason Stupp, "Slavery and the Theatre of History: Ritual Performance on the Auction Block," *Theatre Journal* 63 (March 2011): 61-84.

¹⁴⁵ David Thelen, "History after the Enola Gay Controversy: An Introduction," *Journal of American History* 82 (December 1995): 1029-35; Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, *History Wars: the Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996); Otto Mayr, "The 'Enola Gay' Fiasco: History, Politics, and the Museum," *Technology and Culture* 39 (July 1998): 462-73; Elizabeth Yakel, "Museums, Management, Media, and

individual and collective memory consumed many Americans and historians, whether they worked as academics or public historians. In his 1994 presidential address to the National Council on Public History, Philip Scarpino, an environmental historian at Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis, argued that “the most exciting and potentially revolutionary aspect of public history” was the field’s focus on how historians negotiated the meaning of the past with others.¹⁴⁶ In her presidential address the following year, Patricia Mooney-Melvin from Loyola University Chicago raised concerns about the fractured “relationship between the history historians make and the history the public receives.”¹⁴⁷ Otis Graham, the editor of *The Public Historian*, echoed these ideas: “One of the core insights of public history is the realization that history is profoundly important to adult people, sometimes as entertainment but more centrally to align their lives.”¹⁴⁸ Spaces between historical scholarship and popular historical consciousness had severe and violent consequences, Graham argued, reminding his readers that the misguided perception of American history, in part, motivated the Oklahoma City Bombing in April 1995.¹⁴⁹

Yet, there was no evidence that universities effectively prepared students for this work, and the landscape of public history training programs was still heavily dominated by skills-based courses in museum studies, historic preservation, archival administration. A collection of public history course syllabi compiled by the National Council on Public History in 1996 revealed that most programs still modeled the career-focused programs developed in the 1960s and 1970s.

Memory: Lessons from the Enola Gay Exhibition,” *Libraries & Culture* 35 (Spring 2000): 278-310.

¹⁴⁶ Philip V. Scarpino, “Common Ground: Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of Public History and the NCPH,” *Public Historian* 16 (Summer 1994): 11-21.

¹⁴⁷ Patricia Mooney-Melvin, “Professional Historians and ‘Destiny’s Gate,’” *Public Historian* 17 (Summer 1995): 9-10.

¹⁴⁸ Otis L. Graham, “Editor’s Corner: The Power of a Story,” *The Public Historian* 17 (Autumn 1995): 7.

¹⁴⁹ Graham, “Editor’s Corner,” 7.

Most also primarily had students practice presenting historical research in novel ways: through exhibits, film, and audio, editing primary source materials, or writing grant applications.¹⁵⁰

A vocal set of historians, most studying oral history and collective memory in the United States, began to seek deeper theoretical foundations for public history training programs. In his *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (1996), Mike Wallace concluded that although museums were becoming more professionalized, they were not necessarily more analytical. He argued that most training programs failed to prepare students effectively for the dialogical nature of historical practice and, therefore, the cultural and political consequences of historical interpretation. These issues did make their way into some introductory public history courses where students studied popular history presentations in news media, literature, museums, movies, and television and examined how cultural politics shaped collective memory. In addition, courses on oral history offered even more profound engagement with ethics, memory, and interpretive practice¹⁵¹

In an essay in *The Public Historian*, David Glassberg argued that the Public History Movement should create spaces to explore the “dialogical nature of public history” through the reflection of practice.¹⁵² Glassberg’s essay sparked the journal’s editors to publish a roundtable discussion on public history and memory in 1997. Edward T. Linenthal, a graduate of the Public Historical Studies Program at the University of California Santa Barbara, believed there was a great need for dialogue and conversation about shared histories. Praising Glassberg’s essay,

¹⁵⁰ National Council on Public History, “Public History Course Syllabus Packet,” 1987, box 4, folder 30, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002.

¹⁵¹ Parker Hubbard Cohen and Robert Vane, eds., “A Collection of Public History Course Syllabi,” 1996, box 4, folder 32, National Council on Public History Records, 1977-2002.

¹⁵² Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 23-26; Glassberg, “Public History and the Study of Memory,” 14.

Linenthal argued that “There is a real need for ‘demilitarized zones’ of public conversation, where people can engage various, perhaps even irreconcilable, interpretations of our past.”¹⁵³

The challenge in such work, he pointed out, was confronting narratives that had not yet been opened for dialogue, particularly those that are sacred or tied up with personal or national identity. In another response to Glassberg, Michael Frisch argued that public historians should study “the vast interdisciplinary globe on which history and memory are deeply implicated and bound up in each other.” He argued that memory studies and, therefore, public history work offered a reality check to traditional historical practice which often was reluctant to embrace interdisciplinarity.¹⁵⁴

Concluding the roundtable discussion, Glassberg suggested that *all* history graduates, whether or not they were pursuing careers in public history, should participate in field trips, practicums, and internships at historic sites and museums and study material culture, memory, and communication. Without hands-on practice outside of academia, scholarship lacked insights into memory practices gained only by working with diverse communities. Such work, Glassberg argued, was “at least as complex and theoretically sophisticated as history traditionally practiced in colleges and universities.”¹⁵⁵ In his presidential address to the National Council on Public History in 1999, chief historian of the National Park Service Dwight T. Pitcahley encouraged historians to pay close attention to “the spaces between.” He suggested that “It is through our better understanding of, and respect for, *the spaces between* that we can create common spaces where differences of opinion can be discussed without shouting, and through that discussion

¹⁵³ Edward T. Linenthal, “Problems and Promise in Public History,” *Public Historian* 19 (Spring 1997): 45-46.

¹⁵⁴ Michael Frisch, “What Public History Offers, and Why It Matters,” *Public Historian* 19 2 (Spring 1997): 41-43.

¹⁵⁵ David Glassberg, “A Sense of History,” *Public Historian* 19 (Spring 1997): 72.

make our society more understanding and tolerant of those differences, more compassionate and respectful for those with different belief systems.”¹⁵⁶

About six years later, historian Rebecca Conard, one of the first public history graduates from the Public Historical Studies program at the University of California Santa Barbara, described this conception of public history as a “reflective practice,” an idea drawn from philosopher Donald Schön’s 1983 work, *The Reflective Practitioner*.¹⁵⁷ Conard argued that the idea of history as a reflective practice helped her to create a framework for teaching public history that “elevates class discussions about discrete lessons from the field” by distinguishing between “the *art* of professional practice from the *act* of professional practice.”¹⁵⁸ She identified “the art of mediation” as a defining feature of public history, remarking that public historians occupy themselves with issues of “*how* the historian interacts with others” when framing and contextualizing questions.¹⁵⁹ Conard explained that the “problem setting” in which public historians engage differs from developing a research question in a traditional academic setting.

Noel Stowe, a professor of public history at Arizona State University, expanded on Conard’s ideas in an essay titled “Public History Curriculum: Illustrating Reflective Practice.” Stowe suggested that the 1990s witnessed an important evolution in public history training—a transformation from “a practice-based curriculum” to a reflexive practice in which “students learn high-order skills of question asking and question framing as they refine their abilities to set

¹⁵⁶ Dwight T. Pitcaithley, “Barbara Kingsolver and the Challenge of Public History,” *Public Historian* 21 (Autumn 1999): 11.

¹⁵⁷ Conard, “Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection,” 9-13. See also Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

¹⁵⁸ Conard, “Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection,” 22.

¹⁵⁹ Conard, “Facepaint History in the Season of Introspection,” 16.

and re-set a problem so that it can be shaped toward ethical ends.”¹⁶⁰ Evoking Pitcaithley’s notion of “spaces between,” Stowe explained:

Arguing that good historical training prepares students equally well for careers in the academy or in public historical practice wrongly frames the discussion. We must recast the point: the approach to historical questions separates how the discipline responds in different settings and sets the course of applying discipline-based ideas, methods, and theories. Public history practice fully engages the definition of history as inquiry in shaping responses to intellectual problems driven in large measure by meeting audience-based needs. It does not matter whether it is an audience of one (e.g., a client or firm) or thousands (an exhibit or major public anniversary event). The engagement of the discipline at that point of contact—at those margins of the discipline where it bumps up against other disciplines, other disciplinary-based theories and practices, audiences of experts or experts from a mix of disciplinary backgrounds, or inexpert audiences—is the distinguishing factor.¹⁶¹

However, despite efforts by Conard and Stowe to establish a theoretical foundation for public history pedagogy that reflected the developments of the 1980s and 1990s, most guidance on developing public history programs, even today, offer only vague recommendations on cultivating community partners, creating practice-based courses, and establishing internship programs.¹⁶² Their work, though, offers a transformative way of approaching historical practice and, therefore, history education that prioritizes the spaces where historians confront the expectations, assumptions, and knowledge of others, whether they are academic colleagues, policymakers, or community organizations.

By the turn of the twenty-first century, the Public History Movement culminated in a broad call for reform of graduate education that stressed interdisciplinarity and the dialogical

¹⁶⁰ Noel J. Stowe, “Public History Curriculum: Illustrating Reflective Practice” 28 (Winter 2006): 45, 50.

¹⁶¹ Stowe, “Public History Curriculum,” 46-47.

¹⁶² NCPH Curriculum and Training Committee, “Best Practices in Public History: Establishing and Developing Public History Program,” October 2015, Resources for Public History Educators at the Graduate and Undergraduate Level, National Council on Public History, accessed September 7, 2021, <https://ncph.org/publications-resources/educators/graduate-and-undergraduate/>.

nature of the historical process. Yet, those reforms never fully manifested within training programs. An abundance of academic programs evidences the broad reach of the Public History Movement, but the influence and legacy of the Public History Movement within history departments remain uncertain. If historians hope to move public history education beyond real-world or practice-based training into a reflective practice that supports a more accessible and inclusive historical practice that challenges the status quo, we must understand local and national contexts in which public historical practice emerged and how the Public History Movement protected historians' authority in the spaces between expert and amateur.

CONCLUSION

Historians have sought the origins of public history for quite some time. Some, including this study, expand the timeline of public history's development to early twentieth-century historical traditions. Others anchor the field among mid-twentieth-century state and local historians and the training programs they created. Both visions ignore the arguments over public history education in the 1970s. Although Rebecca Conard suggested that these debates "recede to the background when we consider a bundle of ideas that inform public history practice," debates over the development of public history programs cannot be overlooked.¹ The Public History Movement—the flourishing of academic programs, journals, and organizations calling for a cohesive identity and refreshed historical curriculum—that emerged in the 1970s built on the work of Progressive historians and government historians, among many other professionals engaged in historical practice throughout the twentieth century. However, the movement also directly responded to shifts within the academy in the 1960s and 1970s, like the rise of social history, the job crisis, and declining department enrollments. Ignoring these more direct influences masks the diversity of the Public History Movement and the extent to which the definitions and goals of public history education have been debated and contested. "To Make History the Living Force" examines public history degree programs as part of a national Public History Movement but recognizes that this movement was not homogeneous and that the unique resources available at the local, state, and regional levels influenced the goals and development of public history programs. Only in viewing public history's origins more comprehensively will we strengthen the landscape of public history education.

¹ Rebecca Conard, "The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States," *Public Historian* 37, (February 2015): 116.

After surveying public history educators and students in 2014, the National Council on Public History's Task Force on Public History Education found shortsightedness to be one of the major problems plaguing public history programs. Daniel Vivian, a member of the task force, remarked that "In recent years, some of the fundamentals developed and articulated by the pioneering generation of public history educators seem to have fallen by the wayside amid the rush to create new programs and enroll students."² Hastily developed programs dismissed the interdisciplinary and interinstitutional collaboration that distinguished the early training programs in public history. As a result, the history of public history, particularly the development of training programs, has been left incomplete and fragmented, leaving public history educators without a foundation upon which to build.

As universities strive to prepare a new generation of historians to confidently navigate the spaces between expert and amateur, research and practice, teaching and collaboration, memory, and history, they face greater challenges than hindsight. Public history is marginalized within our profession. Deficient tenure and promotion guidelines disadvantage public historical scholarship. The uncertain financial security of adjunct professors, disparities in student funding between "traditional" and "public history" students, and surface-level community collaborations threaten the quality of history education. The conceptualization of public history as a subfield of historical study or as a distinct discipline also diminishes the Public History Movement's revolutionary potential. When we adopt a broader notion of historical professionalism and acknowledge public history as part of a story of creativity and ingenuity within history

² Robert R. Weyeneth and Daniel J. Vivian, "Charting the Course: Challenges in Public History Education Guidance for Developing Strong Public History Programs," *The Public Historian* 38 (August 2016): 21.

education, modeled by pioneering historical training programs such as the Meredith Internship, “Historic House Keeping” courses, and the Institute of Applied History, we create a foundation to strengthen graduate history education.

I originally conceived of this dissertation as an examination of the development and curricular innovations within public history programs that emerged in the United States between 1978 and the early 1990s. I hoped to explore the opportunities and challenges that this relatively new field of historical practice created for academic history departments. I quickly found that any attempt to define the parameters of such a study required a dissertation all its own. Considering that public history program curricula vary widely, how would I decide which programs to study? Given even the National Council on Public History seems to avoid any definitive definition of public history, would I examine any course of study with “public history” in its name, the bulk of which would be found in history departments?³ Would this accurately reflect the interdisciplinarity of the field? Could any single or even couple of disciplines sufficiently represent the diverse backgrounds of public history practitioners?⁴ Would I consider similar courses of study housed within departments of design, art history, architecture, or library science? Where would I fit in public historians who hail from anthropology, American studies, Black studies, political science, library science, fine arts, and architecture programs?⁵

As more studies of public history’s evolution examine the magnitude of cultural, intellectual, economic, and social influences on the Public History Movement, we should not

³ “How Do We Define Public History?” About the Field, National Council on Public History, accessed September 7, 2021, <https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/>.

⁴ Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 13.

⁵ Conard, “Public History as Reflective Practice: An Introduction,” *Public Historian* 28 (Winter 2006): 10.

overlook public history's place in the broader story of professionalization and innovation within history education.⁶ The mid-twentieth-century archival, museum studies, and historic preservation programs documented throughout this dissertation grew from the epistemological and hierarchical order of late-nineteenth-century scientific historians, the public-service minded, Progressive historians of the 1920s and 1930s, and the consensus-driven historians of the 1950s.⁷ To separate the Public History Movement from these training programs is to obscure how history training evolved across throughout the twentieth century as historians created and legitimized a more dynamic model of disciplinary education and practice.⁸ As we look toward the future of public history education, I encourage more universities to reflect on the evolution of their history departments since the late nineteenth century as faculty experimented with new models of education that accurately reflected the power historians yield in the "spaces between."⁹ Doing so

⁶ Noel J. Stowe, "Public History Curriculum: Illustrating Reflective Practice" 28 (Winter 2006): 40-43.

⁷ Denise D. Meringolo, "Capturing the Public Imagination: The Social and Professional Place of Public History" *American Studies International* 42 (October 2002): 86-117; Conard, "The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States," 105-120; Conard, "Complicating Origin Stories: The Making of Public History into an Academic Field in the United States," in *A Companion to Public History*, ed. David Dean (John Wiley & Sons Ltd.: 2018), 19-32; Cord Arendes, "Learning, and Understanding of Public History as Part of the Professional Historical Education at German Universities," in *Public History and School: International Perspectives*, Marko Demantowsky, ed., (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 55-68.

⁸ Conard, "The Pragmatic Roots of Public History Education in the United States," *Public Historian* 37, (February 2015): 105-120; Conard, "Complicating Origin Stories: The Making of Public History into an Academic Field in the United States," in *A Companion to Public History*, ed. David Dean (John Wiley & Sons Ltd.: 2018), 31.

⁹ Dwight T. Pitcaithley, "Barbara Kingsolver and the Challenge of Public History," *Public Historian* 21 (Autumn 1999): 11; Benjamin Filene, "Training Public Historians: Academy and Reality," *History News* 61 (Winter 2006): 12-15; Charlotte Bühl-Gramer, "The Future of Public History—What Shall we Teach Prospectively? Remarks and Considerations," in *Public History and School: International Perspectives*, Marko Demantowsky, ed., (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 189-201.

clarifies the power wielded by public history programs, the integrity of their community partnerships, and the authority of the degrees they grant.

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