

Committee Reports

January 2022

250th Coordinating Committee *Chair: Sara Cureton, New Jersey Historical Commission.* Over the past year we have broadened our membership and focused on providing space for a diverse group of organizations to share information and develop strategies for supporting an inclusive commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. Membership expanded to include over thirty organizations. Quarterly meetings allowed for updates on planning from key organizations such as Made By US, the National Park Service, and AASLH. Members also discussed emerging issues of concern, such as the growing number of states adopting or considering legislation restricting the teaching of history in K-12 classrooms, often tied to misinformed ideas about the inclusion of critical race theory in curricula. America250, the national commission charged with planning anniversary events and initiatives, provided planning updates to the Committee as the year progressed.

The work of the Committee was hugely supported by AASLH staff work, most notably by the production of the new Field Guide for the Semiquincentennial, *Making History at 250*. This publication was warmly received by the field and by the Committee. It offers a thoughtful and flexible foundation for planning activities for the anniversary based on current insights from leading scholars and public historians. We also sponsored webinars this year, including the debut of the Field Guide, and a discussion of approaches to viewing the Revolution from multiple, diverse perspectives.

Goals: to pursue avenues for making information and opportunities available to AASLH members to develop engaging, inclusive programming for 2026 and beyond. Sessions at the fall Annual Meeting and additional webinars are two possible programming options for 2022.

2022 Annual Meeting Program Committee *Co-chairs: Jennifer Ortiz, Utah Division of History and Sarah Jencks, Ford's Theatre.* we held a virtual

training for our incoming PC on January 6th. Our committee will meet to review 91 sessions the week of January 24th. Sarah and I have had some fruitful conversations with our Canadian counterparts to ensure we are getting cross-border participation for this year's in person conference in particular. I believe we shared this in the last Council meeting, but Sarah Jenks from Ford's Theatre is officially this year's Program Co-Chair alongside me. She brings a wealth of knowledge of the education and interpretation field and has been a such a powerhouse generating ideas and connections. The theme for the conference is *Right Here, Right Now: The Power of Place* inspired by *Making History at 250: The Field Guide for Semiquincentennial*. The program guide will be released in late May and registration will open in early June.

2022 Annual Meeting Host Committee *Co-chairs: Terry Abrams, Niagara County Historical Society and Melissa Brown, Buffalo History Museum.* The co-chairs of the 2022 Annual Meeting in Buffalo on September 14-17 are working on securing sponsorships and finalizing plans for tours and evening events. At the request of the Museum Association of New York, The New York State Council on the Arts sat aside professional development grant funds especially for our conference which will provide several scholarships to New York history professionals. Bethany Hawkins plans on meeting with the host committee in-person in April during the Museum Association of New York's annual conference.

2023 Program and Host Committees

The planning for the 2023 conferences will be kicking off this winter. The meeting will be September 5-8 in Boise, Idaho. Our program chair is *Noelle Trent* with the *National Civil Rights Museum*, and our host committee is led by *Janet Gallimore* and *Liz Hobson* with the *Idaho State Historical Society*.

Audit Committee *Chair: Cathy Fields, Litchfield Historical Society.* The Audit Committee meets once a year, typically in January or February, to review the financial audit prepared by an auditing firm. The FY2021 audit has not yet been submitted to the committee. For the past several years our outside auditing firm has been Edmondson, Betzler & Dame, PLLC in Brentwood, Tennessee. AASLH's Financial Policies and Procedures Manual states that "The contract with the audit firm shall be reviewed at least every three years or sooner if thought desirable, by the Audit Committee." Two years ago when the committee discussed keeping this firm or finding another, the committee decided that since the firm's partners overseeing the AASLH account had changed a number of times since 2015, as did the firm's staff conducting the various pieces of the audit each year, that this variety was sufficient in meeting the spirit of AASLH's policy, which is to prevent complacency between AASLH's and auditor's staff.

Awards Committee *Chair: Christy Crisp, Georgia Historical Society.*

In 2021, the Awards Committee met online in May to review applications from across the nation. While the overall number of submissions was down considerably over previous years, given the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic the committee was pleased with both the number and quality of the 2021 nominations. In the end, the percentage of awards approved vs. submitted was very similar to years past, even though the total number of awards was roughly half what we've seen in recent years, pre-pandemic. During the in-person Annual Meeting in Little Rock, AASLH experimented with a new format for the award presentations, switching from a more formal dinner program to a late-afternoon reception. This format offered a low price point for attendees, hopefully encouraging more participation from both award winners and other conference participants not specifically tied to award winners. Feedback seemed overwhelmingly positive, with award winners apparently pleased with the experience. While the total number of presentations was considerably less than in years past, the process seemed to work, and we feel

would be worth trying again in Buffalo. An additional consideration might be to plan some sort of award winner recognition for the virtual conference. While we want to encourage winners to attend the conference in Buffalo, it would be ideal to have some sort of recognition during the online conference as well.

January marks the main push for new nominations in 2022. With the March 1 deadline approaching, an informational webinar was held on January 12, 2022, for those interested in learning more about the Awards program. State and regional representatives will meet via webinar on January 19, 2022, for further instruction and discussion about the process of soliciting and developing nominations. Further, the committee is looking forward to an in-person review meeting in St. Louis in May to discuss and review all submitted nominations for this year.

2022 Goals:

- Fill all remaining vacancies in state and regional representative positions
- Increase the number and geographic representation of nominations
- Consider options for award winner recognition during the online conference

Climate and Sustainability Committee *Chair: Debra A. Reid, The Henry Ford.* During 2021 C&S continued meeting every other week and maintains minutes of meetings in Basecamp. 2021 was a rebuilding year as three of four founding members transitioned off so much of 2021 involved inviting attendees to the regular meetings. April 2021 launched Earth-Day features and AASLH resource sharing on the C&S affinity page (thanks to Aubrey Menich and Aja Bain for championing this). C&S member Vicky Kruckeberg compiled a Brown Bag program for the 2021 Virtual AASLH conference. C&S co-chair Reid, with input from the committee, compiled "Sustainability at the AASLH / AMA 2021 Annual Meeting," and thanks Bethany Hawkins and Aubrey Menich for posting: <https://aaslh.org/annualmeeting/2021annualmeeting/> Co-Chair Debra Reid proposed a workshop for the 2022 AASLH Conference in Buffalo.

2022 Goals

- Be an educational resource to help members increase their sustainability and regenerative practices, as well as their public impacts related to sustainability in the larger living culture.
 - Launching informal “Open Mic” conversations with AASLH members to hear member need (first conversation is set for Noon EST January 21, 2022).
 - Follow-up on “Open Mic” Jan 21 with information posts on C&S Affinity page
 - Workshop (if accepted) during 2022 conference and pursuing opportunities for affinity committee conversations during virtual).
 - Information exchange through C&S affinity group forums.
- Stress to AASLH (the organization and its individual and institutional members), the need to catalyze transformative regenerative change to reverse degradation (cultural sustainability; land, water, and resource stewardship, etc.).
 - Test a new workshop model that starts with member/stakeholder engagement via online engagement before the conference and which continues afterward (launched 2022)
 - Practice community engagement broadly and co-creative work (also modeled with case-studies during the 2022 workshop and sustained through how-to information sharing via the affinity page, a Technical Leaflet, and modeled at future conferences).

Diversity and Inclusion Committee *Chair: Richard Josey, Collective Journeys, LLC.*

The committee is analyzing the results of last fall’s DEAI survey of Council, committees, and staff. It also is working on creating an affinity community and discussion space in AASLH’s “Community Center.” Later in 2022 members of the committee will meet with AASLH staff to discuss continuing implementation of the new DEAI Framework document.

Editorial Advisory Committee *Chair: VACANT.*

This twelve- to fifteen-person group works with our staff publications manager, Aja Bain, and Rowman & Littlefield acquisitions editor Charles Harmon. The former series editor, who serves as chair of the committee, resigned last year and we have opened a call for a new one.

Finance Committee *Chair: Rebekah Beaulieu, Florence Griswold Museum.* [The committee meets prior Council meetings and its minutes are included in Council packets. -John Dichtl]

Governance Committee *Chair: Lisa Anderson, Woodbury Art Museum, UVU.* [This committee has been active over the past year and reported at each of the past several Council meetings. I did not ask the committee for a report at this time. -John Dichtl]

Investment Committee *Chair: Ann Toplovich, Tennessee Historical Society.* The AASLH Investment Committee operates within the by-laws of AASLH and under its Investment Policies (IP), which are periodically reviewed and updated by the committee. The purpose of the committee is the stewardship of the AASLH endowment and other funds, which may be temporarily restricted. The IP considers the committee's responsibilities as delegated by Council, its investment objectives, asset mix, asset quality, and asset diversification. The Investment Committee meets in advance of each Council meeting to review the performance of AASLH investments in cash, equities, and bonds for the preceding quarter. Adjustments to the asset mix may be made within the parameters of the IP. The minutes of the committee's meetings and the investment reports it reviews are reviewed by Council.

Leadership Nominating Committee *Chair: Burt Logan, Ohio History Connection.* [LNC began its 2022 nomination process with a meeting on November 18 where it considered the Strategic Priorities document for 2022 provided by Council. -John Dichtl]

Standards and Ethics Committee *Chair: Erin Richardson, Frank and Glory.* The committee published the position paper *Valuing History Collections* in May 2020. The document took into

account recent revisions to the Financial Standard Accounting Board's definition of the term "collection" and new regulations related to proceeds from the sale of deaccessions.

Committee members participated in an AASLH Conversation about that document:

Deaccessioning in a Recession? Why and Why Not in May 2021. Committee members worked in collaboration with the Small Museums Affinity Community and the Field Services Alliance to publish *What's Next? A Guide to Museum Transitions and Closures* position paper, published in March 2021.

Current projects include the *Friends' Group "white paper"* [title in development] in conjunction with members of the State Historical Administrators Meetings. Working with the Public History Research Lab, we developed and released a survey on that topic in Summer 2021. We also submitted a session proposal for the 2022 to share the results of the survey and eventual publication. In 2022 we hope to begin a similar project, with a task force model, to tackle "compensation vs. volunteerism" [title also in development] that will address questions around when labor could or should be compensated, or when it must not be compensated, especially in the "few-or-no staff, many volunteers" model of most history organizations.

2022 goals:

- Complete Friends' Group project for review by AASLH, design for publication (Spring) and host related Annual Meeting/Virtual Conference session (September)
- Begin Compensation vs. Volunteerism project (Summer)
- Nominate at least three new committee members to begin in October

History Leadership Institute Advisory Board

This group consists of the major funders of HLI, the Indiana Historical Society, Conner Prairie, History Nebraska, Minnesota Historical Society, the National Association for Interpretation, and the Missouri Historical Society. It selects the applicants, reviews the curriculum and the work of the HLI Director, Max van Balgooy, and

recommends improvements to the program. This month the board is reviewing the twenty-three applications that arrived for this June's seminar.

AFFINITY GROUP COMMITTEES

Educators and Interpreters Chair: Sarah Jencks, *Ford's Theatre*. Formalized a quarterly "Unwind" program, an informal educators/interpreters virtual gathering. Planned and offered a series of webinars on aspects of indigenous history with committee member Heather Bruegl. Worked with Conference Co-Chair Michelle Moon to create a series of "silo-busting" sessions for the virtual conference, featuring conversations about land conservation, democratic engagement, and civic learning. Set up a transparent and equitable system for recruiting and vetting applicants for the E&I steering committee that dramatically increased applications and ended up with a more ethnically, racially and geographically diverse steering committee than we have had in years. Restructured the steering committee to create three cohorts of five members each, serving three-year terms, so that there is more manageable attrition. Instituted a four-person leadership team, made up of Chair, Chair-Elect, Co-Chair and Leader At-Large, that meet monthly, in addition to the monthly meetings of the steering committee

2022 Goals:

- Continue with quarterly E&I Unwinds and three to four webinars or more formal learning sessions during the year
- Work closely with the Conference Program Committee co-chairs to provide support for conference session development
- Commission or write two to three blog posts that are linked to webinar programming
- Create clearer and more welcoming options for involvement of E&I workers at all stages of their careers to participate in programming and contribute to the field

Emerging History Professionals Chair: Casey Wooster. The Emerging History Professional Affinity community contributed to two AASLH events this year: an interactive webinar, and a happy hour at the

online conference (which they usually partake in). The webinar discussed best practices for presenting and submitting sessions for conferences. Their happy hour produced some great discussion and encouragement. They are hoping to create more content modeled after this year's webinar next year, too, and potentially creating some type of series.

Field Services Alliance *Chair: Amanda Higgins, Kentucky Historical Society.* The Field Services Alliance has been hard at work adapting best practices for field services in the age of COVID. As we continue to perfect zoom, we are also getting back to our roots and updating our core documents. We have submitted proposals for a collections assessment workshop, an FSA Tips session on working with descendant communities, and a "what is FSA" session for the AASLH conferences. We also successfully hosted a virtual spring training in April 2021, focusing on inclusive practices in outreach, especially centered on hearing impaired individuals. We also hosted our annual meeting virtually in October 2021, where we discussed working with Indigenous groups, repatriation, and NAGPRA, among other things.

For 2022: FSA's goals are to fully update the core documents, including the Field Services Manual; host a virtual spring training that will incorporate providing inclusive and accessible services; successfully host a collections assessment training with the Buffalo meeting; and continue to provide high quality, outreach and field services to our colleagues across the country.

Historic House Museums *Chair: Jessica VanLanduyt, Atlanta History Center.* The committee has planned The Historic House Committee hosted a fun Happy Hour during the 2021 Online Conference. The group played trivia and other games and provided a good networking opportunity. They are also working on a Technical Leaflet for an issue of *History News* that will be an update of the "How Sustainable is Your Historic House Museum?" from 2008.

Military History *Chair: Marc Blackburn, National Park Service.* This last year was a transition year and it is my hope that as 2022 moves forward we

can tap the enthusiasm of new blood and create a sound foundation to move on. The previous cohort of leadership dropped out in 2021 to move on. I did not want the committee to wither on the vine, so with staff help and interest shown at the 2020 annual meeting, I have been able to recruit a cadre of core members who are interested in moving the committee forward. In 2021 we took part in both the live and virtual workshops. The results were well received and has resulted in interest in producing an article for *History News* for 2022.

2022 goals:

- Continue to take part in the 2022 workshops
- Continue to recruit and build a new management team so the committee can become a more consistent presence in the AASLH universe.
- Identify members who can take on specific roles within the committee.

Nomenclature Committee *Chair: Jennifer Toelle, Smoky Hill Museum.* The committee, in partnership with the Canadian Heritage Information Network, maintains the online free version of Museum [Nomenclature](#). The online version integrates the latest edition of Robert Chenhall's museum cataloging standard with data from the Parks Canada Visual and Descriptive Dictionary and The Getty's Art & Architecture Thesaurus. The committee routinely reviews and vets new terminology and hierarchical edits submitted from the profession across North America. AASLH's Nomenclature Committee works closely with Canada's Nomenclature Committee to ensure bilingual translation into French. There is room for expansion of this online cataloguing tool. By integrating the Parks Canada Visual Dictionary, many terms have images associated – however there are several terms without an image identified. The committee has created an images sub-committee to work on adding copyright free images to nomenclature.info. There is also a potential expansion to include more language translations. For example, if you reference the word chair, the data expands to see the term in multiple languages including, Spanish and Cree.

2022 Goals:

- An images sub-committee will work on compiling and vetting images for Fashion and Tool terminology.
- Will work on promotion of SPARQL endpoint and APIs. Promotion will be targeted to collections management to software vendors and museums with their own systems.
- In 2021, a complete review of Art terminology and hierarchy was completed by Art sub-committee and reviewed by the Nomenclature committee. It is currently in the translation process and will be added to Nomenclature.info in 2022.
- Work in subcommittees to review terminology in Dolls & Accessories; Religious Objects; Artillery/Military, Vessels, Parts & Components.

Website usage statistics for Nomenclature.info in 2021: United States: 20,111; Canada: 21,147; Global: 48,282.

Religious History Chair: Susan Fletcher, *The Navigators*. Fall 2021: The Religious History Committee held a well-attended session at the in-person AASLH Conference. We talked about how history organizations can utilize religious history to talk about social justice issues, and how to form strong community partnerships. Winter 21-22: The Religious History Committee is delighted to participate in Ken Turino and Max van Balgooy's forthcoming AASLH book *Interpreting Christmas*. They asked our group to craft a list of best practices when interpreting the religious aspects of Christmas. The RHC is honored to be able to provide practical help to our colleagues who may have questions or anxieties about how to talk about this potentially controversial topic in an inclusive and historically-grounded way.

Spring 22 and beyond: My goal as the committee chair is to assess the ways that our committee can provide help and resources to the people working in our field. We are finding a new openness to talking about religion and spirituality as a major factor in personal identity-making and in community building. We are also discovering a lack of religious literacy among our museum colleagues, which can pose challenges for people who are trying to interpret objects such as Torah

scrolls or paintings with Biblical themes. Although our committee was originally created to serve people who work for religious organizations or sites with religious themes, we're broadening our mission by creating best practices and resources for how any public historian can approach religious topics with sensitivity.

Small Museums Chair: Jacqui Ainlay-Conley, Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave

The year started with a facilitated planning meeting. One outcome was adding language about inclusion, equity, and diversity to the Small Museums Committee's home page, encouraging small museums to include all voices and histories in their work. During the year committee members provided feedback on the draft of the Field Guide to the 250th themes for the 250th, including program themes. Committee members supported the launch of the Small Museums Community Center and participated in discussions. At the onsite conference, the committee helped Dr. John Marks plan for "Making History at 250: Small Museums Town Hall," and held a committee meeting for attendees who wanted to learn more about what we do and learn how to become a committee member. Three of the attendees joined the committee following that meeting. The committee awarded two scholarships to the online conference and hosted a brown bag lunch, "Self-Care for Small Museum Workers," which forty-eight people attended, as well as a small but fun and lively Happy Hour for thirteen attendees. In December, committee members collaborated with Council Member Stacy Klinger to establish a way to honor Council Member, and Small Museum Committee Member, Jeff Harris by raising funds to support the professional development for primarily volunteer-run organizations. To date, \$1155 has been raised.

Women's History Co-Chairs: Kathleen Pate.