

AMERICA 250 2025 CONFERENCE

CONNECTICUT

Shaping a Commemoration Rooted in Belonging

PROGRAM

March 21, 2025

University of Connecticut, Storrs

Schedule of Events

9:30–10:45 AM	Opening Keynote	Room 102
10:55–11:55 AM	Breakout 1	Pages 5–6
12:00–12:45 PM	Lunch	Lobby
12:45–12:50 PM	Advocacy Update	Room 102
1:00–2:00 PM	Breakout 2	Pages 7–8
2:10–3:10 PM	Breakout 3	Pages 9–10
3:20–4:20 PM	Closing Keynote	Room 102
4:30–5:30 PM	Networking Reception	Atrium

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Themes

Doing History

In part, the commission's work will focus on Connecticut's role in the Revolutionary period — its people, sites, and historic context. This conference track will help tie together the ideals of the American Revolution, with an emphasis on Connecticut stories.



For the Common Good

As we reckon with what the nation's 250th means in Connecticut, we will encourage civic engagement in an effort to continue building our communities, state, and nation in alignment with the democratic ideals of the founding documents. This conference track seeks to promote engagement with the democratic process, public service, and community building tied with the 250th.



Power of Place

Connecticut is comprised of 169 towns and cities, five tribes, and countless communities with unique identities and contributions. This conference track seeks to bring together the many people who weave the fabric of our communities and find ways to engage all of Connecticut's residents in this commemoration.



Tell Inclusive Stories

This commemoration is an opportunity to continue the nation's reckoning with the totality of its past. By encouraging the amplification of previously untold, marginalized, and devalued stories, we aim to expand the nation's narrative. This conference track seeks to help identify such stories, locate sources to tell them, and share them with the public.



Conference Tracks

TRACK 1

Theme: Tell Inclusive Stories

Goal: Share previously untold and overlooked stories related to the 250th

TRACK 4

Theme: For the Common Good

Goal: Support those who will connect the 250th to civics, service, and community building

TRACK 2

Theme: Tell Inclusive Stories

Goal: Share educator resources and methods to connect the 250th to students

TRACK 5

Theme: Doing History

Goal: Share current projects in the history sphere that encourage the public to rethink history

TRACK 3

Theme: Tell Inclusive Stories

Goal: Provide examples of methodology for use in uncovering inclusive stories

TRACK 6

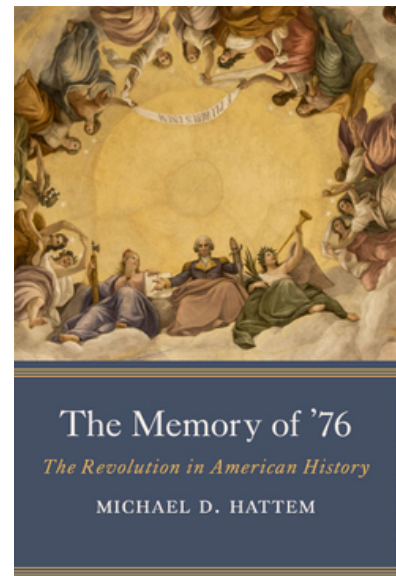
Theme: Power of Place

Goal: Provide ideas for how the 250th can be used for economic development and tourism

Opening Keynote

The Many Lives of the Declaration of Independence

Michael D. Hattem draws on his new book, *The Memory of '76: The Revolution in American History*, to explore both the history and memory of the nation's first founding document. He will discuss how independence and the Declaration came about and the Declaration's important role in American politics and culture. How Americans have understood the meaning and legacy of the Declaration has changed over time in ways shaped by the events and context of the present. Throughout the nation's history, political and social movements have repeatedly used the Declaration to justify their causes to the American public. In this talk, Hattem will show how the Declaration of Independence not only helped create a new nation but has also helped define and redefine what it means to be a citizen of that nation for nearly two hundred and fifty years.



Michael D. Hattem is a historian of the American Revolution and historical memory. He received his PhD in History from Yale University and is the author of *The Memory of '76: The Revolution in American History* (2024) and *Past and Prologue: Politics and Memory in the American Revolution* (2020). He has taught history at Knox College and The New School, and his work has been covered in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *TIME* magazine, and the *Washington Post*. He has also served as a historical consultant, curated historical exhibitions, appeared in television documentaries, and written catalogue essays for some of the most important revolutionary era documents to come to auction in the last decade. He currently serves as Associate Director of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute.

10:55 AM – Breakout Sessions

TRACK 1 Reverence: Refocusing the Lens on the Marginalized

There are many stories across the state representing the life experiences of the enslaved. The subjects of these stories are rarely presented from a place of strength, endurance and agency, eliciting reverence. This session will dive into the narratives of specific individuals, presenting the potential benefits of inclusivity in who is revered.

Room 102

Presenter:
John Mills

TRACK 2 Students as Historians: A Community-Based Approach to History

This session highlights a collaborative model where public and independent schools, a local business, and cultural institutions guide students in exploring their local history. Participants will explore how students can share meaningful narratives that foster belonging, deepen historical understanding, and engage their communities by connecting with primary sources and amplifying marginalized voices.

Room 101

Presenters:
Charlie Champalimaud
Tess Marks
Rhonan Mokriski
Peter Vermilyea
Elinor Wolgemuth

Moderator:
Frank Mitchell

TRACK 3 Recovering North Bolton's History in Declaring & Achieving Independence

This presentation aims to share the methods and resources that The Town of Vernon 250th Committee and Vernon Historical Society have been developing to recapture an inclusive history of North Bolton (future Vernon)'s role in the movement to declare independence and the war to achieve it. The presentation will discuss how those of us in Vernon have used primary sources to reconstruct the revolutionary-era activities of Euro-American men and women, people of color, and their families in a rural community that was not yet the town of Vernon, but a separate religious parish in Bolton.

Room 106

Presenters:
Jean Luddy
Donald Rogers

10:55 AM – Breakout Sessions

TRACK 4 The Role Connecticut Colleges and Universities can Play in the 250th

Connecticut's colleges and universities can play powerful roles in CT 250 through their pedagogical flexibility, community-oriented approach to history, and open-source philosophy. This session will demonstrate how they provide research, event, and publication resources, lead outreach projects and student activities, and create service-learning assignments with a local history focus.

Room 107

Presenters:

Anna Beecher
Jennifer Croughwell
Hamish Lutris
Nicolas P. Simon

TRACK 5 Reconstructing the Social History & Battlefield Archaeology of the Battle of Ridgefield

The April 27, 1777 Battle of Ridgefield was fought between 800 American Colonial Soldiers and State Militia under the command of Benedict Arnold 2,000 British regulars and loyalists. The Ridgefield Historical Society received a grant from the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program (NPS ABPP) in 2024 to research, map, and document the Battle of Ridgefield. The presentation will discuss the results of the first phase of research conducted in 2021, and the goals, objectives, and methods proposed for the fieldwork phase of the project in 2025 and 2026.

Room 108

Presenters:

Stephen Bartkus
Kevin McBride
David Naumec

TRACK 6 Big Ideas, Tiny Budgets: Thinking Like a Non-Profit for America 250

This session will explore the basics of how to host a local level program or event. Participants will get a sense of the types of planning necessary to pull off something quickly while also assessing "low hanging fruit" that can be used to make your program happen. Participants will also get a crash course in how to handle fundraising and asking government officials for support and funding.

Room 202

Presenters:

Shaelyn Amaio
Aaron Marcavitch

12:45 PM - Advocacy Update

After you finish your lunch, join CT Humanities Executive Director Jason Mancini in Room 102 for a quick update on the state and federal funding landscape.

Learn how you can reach out to your legislators, and then encourage them to support funding for arts, culture, and tourism.

1:00 PM - Breakout Sessions

TRACK 1 Expanding the 250th: Connecting Stories Across Time and Culture

This session will bring America 250 from 1776 to the present-day with panelists that bring their projects working with a variety of Connecticut communities into the broader narrative about the 250th. How does this commemoration intersect with topics like the Underground Railroad, veterans, imperialism, the Holocaust, and refugees?

Room 102

Presenters:

Norm Berman
Anne Dropick
Sylvester Salcedo
Thomas Schuch

Moderator:

Catherine Shen

TRACK 2 Teaching Native American Studies in Connecticut

Participants will learn about how educators can use existing resources to best incorporate the history of Connecticut's five recognized Tribes in both school and museum classrooms.

Room 107

Presenters:

Natasha Gambrell
Darlene Kascak
Samantha Tondreau

TRACK 3 Buried Patriots: Identifying & Researching Black Revolutionary War Veterans

This presentation will highlight research into the lives, families, and communities of Black Revolutionary War soldiers. Identifying those soldiers through existing records and building on previous research will be discussed, along with acknowledging the obstacles that must be faced.

Room 106

Presenter:

Pauline C. Merrick

1:00 PM – Breakout Sessions

TRACK 4 For Whose Common Good?

What does it mean to do something For the Common Good? Moments in history like the Revolutionary War, the election of 1860, and the fight for equal school rights in the 1830s. prove that answering this question is not as straight forward as we might hope. Panelists will discuss how their research and projects grappled with the impact of movements that claimed to be For the Common Good.

Room 202

Presenters:

Kathy Craughwell-Varda
Joanie DiMartino
Clare Nelson

Moderator:

Katherine Hermes

TRACK 5 New Infrastructures for Oral History Collecting in Connecticut

Learn about how Connecticut organizations can use TheirStory, a recording and project management platform, to engage the public in co-creating and disseminating relevant, inclusive, and accessible stories. Session will include a hands-on demonstration of how to use the platform to remotely record, transcribe, and develop oral histories for public programming and projects. Learn how other Connecticut organizations are using the platform and pitch your project ideas for digitizing your oral history collections or supplementing or building a new one.

Room 108

Presenters:

Zack Ellis
Fiona Vernal

TRACK 6 Town Greens: Laboratories of Democracy

Staff from Preservation CT and Susan Barlow from the Manchester Historical Society will hold a session that will enable local historians to hold Jane's Walks in their communities with a focus on local greens. If your community doesn't have a town green there are many other options to highlight local history and tie the themes related to our colonial history with today's issues. We will provide guidance and support for locals to create these programs in their own communities.

Room 101

Presenters:

Susan Barlow
Renee Tribert
Stacey Vairo
Chris Wigren

2:10 PM – Breakout Sessions

TRACK 1 Forgotten Voices of the Revolutionary War: Making Black & Indigenous Stories Known and Accessible

This panel will have a presentation and an open Q and A format that will cover both the stories of Black and Indigenous people at the Redding Encampment, a little-known Connecticut winter encampment of the Continental Army in 1778–79. We will also discuss the methodology employed to tell the stories of marginalized and forgotten groups.

Room 108

Presenter:

Anna Fossi
Katherine Hermes
Andy King
Dana Meyer
Peter Moran

TRACK 2 Educating Connecticut's Students on America 250

This session will highlight various ways that America250 themes will be discussed in Connecticut classrooms. Secondary school, university, and museum professionals will all share their perspectives in this roundtable discussion. Curriculum materials will be shared that will be distributed to Connecticut teachers.

Room 102

Presenters:

Stephen Armstrong
Mike Kemezis
Allison Norrie
Tony Roy
Bilal Sekou
Jennifer Vienneau

TRACK 3 Finding Inclusive Stories

Learn about resources that can help historians and organizations research and identify historic stories. This will include the Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project, ConnecticutHistory.org, and Stolen Relations.

Room 107

Presenters:

Mary Clarke
Linford Fisher
Erin Shapland
Emma Wiley

2:10 PM – Breakout Sessions

TRACK 4 Celebrating the 250th in Art Museums: Creating an Innovative Program & a Major Exhibition

This session will provide a close look at an innovative public program at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum and a major art exhibition planned for the Fairfield University Art Museum. At the Aldrich, “National Scrollathon: Uniting America!” will illuminate our community’s hopes and dreams for America in artwork created by the public that will form a multimedia installation serving as Connecticut’s contribution to the National Scrollathon. A major art exhibition will be presented at the Fairfield University Art Museum entitled “For Which it Stands...” focusing on depictions of the American flag by a diverse group of artists, ranging from straightforwardly patriotic to overtly political works challenging and questioning who the American flag represents.

Room 106

Presenters:

Namulen Bayarsaihan
Carey Mack Weber

TRACK 5 Presenting the Expected In an Unexpected Way

How can we use the Semiquincentennial to provide a more inclusive and nuanced view of the Revolutionary War-era than what was presented during the Bicentennial? We’ll discuss solutions including providing the expected in an unexpected way, learning to listen to artifacts, and lifting the veil on the exhibit-making process.

Room 101

Presenters:

Elizabeth Burgess
Jennifer Matos
Elisabeth Nevins
Christine Pittsley

Closing Keynote

The 250 Paradox: Celebrating Freedom, Healing Oppressions, and Embracing Contradictions

Freedom is an absolute term, something envisioned as a static state. Freedom-making is active work. A focus on freedom-making acknowledges that freedom is not an endpoint, but an ongoing set of processes and practices that move us toward liberation. However, there is no liberation when some are left behind. Within the legacies of settler colonialism, racialized slavery, and dispossession, freedom is also a paradox—a contradiction. How do we embrace this contradiction and simultaneously acknowledge the oppressions, trauma, and violence that built the foundation of our freedoms and that continue to be visited upon the marginalized and the Global South? And, how do we acknowledge these oppressions, traumas, and violences while simultaneously celebrating our freedom? The semiquincentennial is a time to pause, reflect, and acknowledge this paradox and decide as a nation—where do we go from here? What do we want to be 10 generations from now...after another 250 years?



Dr. Akeia de Barros Gomes is the Director of the Center for Black History at the Newport Historical Society and is a Visiting Scholar and Adjunct Lecturer at Brown University's Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. She was lead curator for the 2024 Mystic Seaport Museum exhibition, *Entwined: Freedom, Sovereignty and the Sea*, a project that recovers Dawnland Indigenous, African, and African-descended maritime narratives. She works on curatorial projects of race, Indigenous histories, ethnicity, and diversity in New England's Maritime activities. She received her BA in anthropology/archaeology at Salve Regina University and her MA and PhD in anthropology/archaeology at the University of Connecticut. She has done anthropological and archaeological fieldwork on the Mashantucket Pequot reservation, in Newport, RI, in the US Virgin Islands, in Ghana, in Benin, in New Orleans, in Belize, and in Cabo Verde.

In the Atrium: Posters

Discover the Power of PublicArtCT to interpret America250

PublicArtCT.org is a not-for-profit public service website designed to give users a guide to the best of Connecticut's permanent free public art, architecture, and historically significant destinations. The website provides robust search and map capabilities and offers tour suggestions which users customize thematically, chronologically or geographically.

Presenter:

Alden Gordon
Christina Gunderson

Talcott Street Church Commemoration Project

The Liberal Arts Action Lab (Trinity College and CT State Community College) partnered with the Hartford Heritage Project and Faith Congregational Church to research ways to commemorate Hartford's first Black church, Talcott Street Congregational Church.

Presenters:

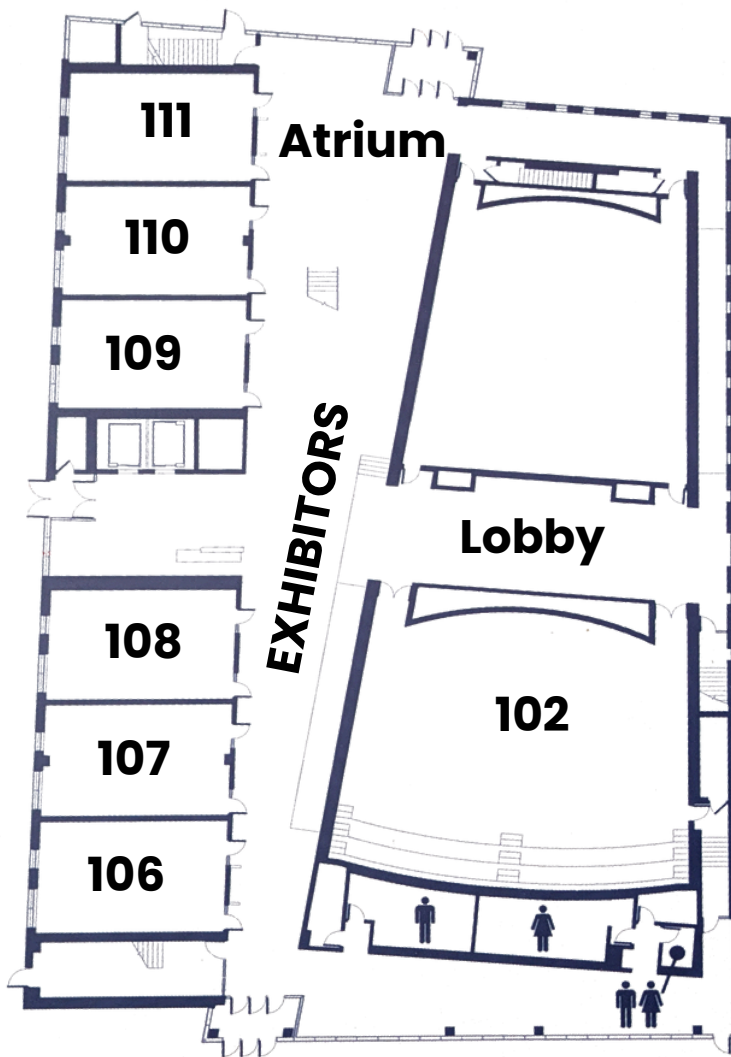
Nicole Ankrah
Katie Cook
Aliyah Freeman-Johnson
Joy Lee

In the Atrium: Exhibitors

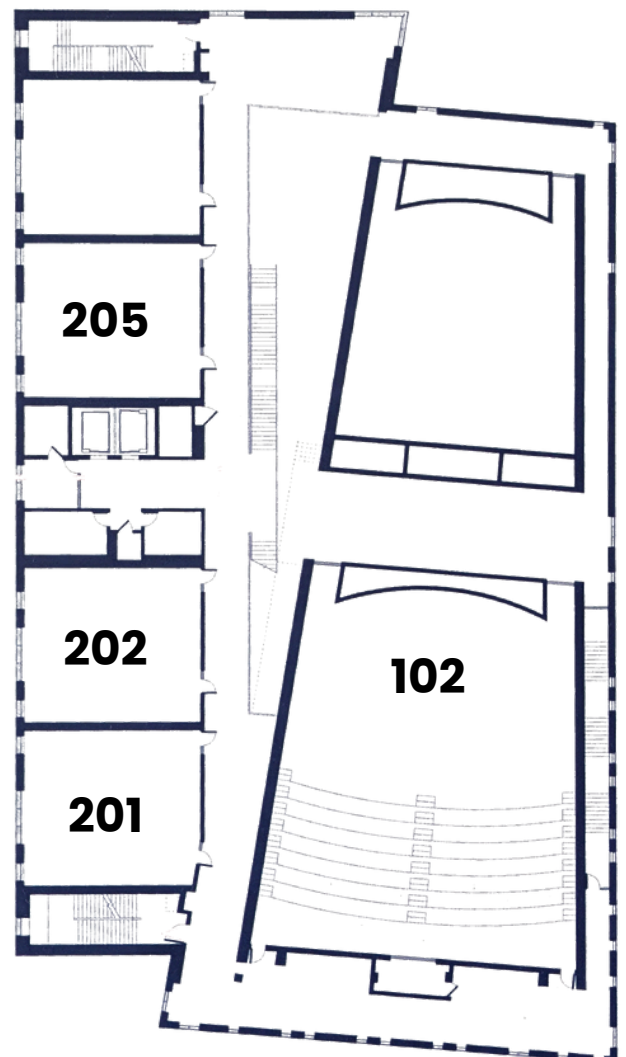


Getting Around

Floor 1



Floor 2



Support the Commission

CT250.org/support

Speakers

Aaron Marcavitch

Aaron Marcavitch is an accomplished organizational leader with extensive experience in community engagement, heritage tourism, and nonprofit management. He led and managed the War of 1812 commemoration for Prince George's County, Maryland. He currently serves as the Director of Economic & Community Development for the Town of Enfield, where he focuses on enhancing the town's economic vitality and community well-being.

Anna Fossi

Anna Fossi is an alum of the CCSU Public History MA program. She is employed at the New Milford Historical Society as their Research and Collections Manager. She has also worked on a number of projects dedicated to researching and promoting LGBTQ+ history across Connecticut.

Andy King

Andy King is the Interpretation Volunteer Coordinator at Mystic Seaport Museum. They received their BA in History with a minor in Public History from CCSU. They received a MA in Public History from CCSU. They utilize their experience with historical societies, house museums, and living history museums to oversee and train interpretation volunteers at Mystic Seaport Museum, as well as serve on its internal America250 committee.

Bilal Sekou

Bilal Sekou is an associate professor of political science at the University of Hartford. He is the co-chair of the education committee of America250. He is well known as an expert on civic engagement, racial and ethnic politics, and radical political economy.

Anna Beecher

Anna Beecher is a sophomore majoring in history at CT State – Quinebaug Valley. She will be entering Eastern Connecticut State University to pursue a BA in history and minor in communications. She seeks to increase knowledge of and appreciation for history's relevance within the community. Anna loves New England history in general and living history museums in particular, and has worked in various capacities with Historic New England, the Prudence Crandall Museum, and Old Sturbridge Village.

Carey Mack Weber

Carey Mack Weber is the Frank and Clara Meditz Executive Director of the Fairfield University Art Museum. She was integral to the creation of the university's art museum in 2010, and was appointed director in 2019. Carey also currently serves as the President of the Connecticut Art Trail, is the CT State Representative for the Association of Academic Art Museums and Galleries, is on the Advisory Board of the Maguire Museum at St. Joseph's University, and serves on the board of the Connecticut League of Museums.

Charlie Champalimaud

Since 2016, Charlie Champalimaud has developed Troutbeck Amenia, NY's cultural programming, fostering partnerships with artists, writers, and historians. She curates enriching experiences for guests through community collaborations and co-founded the Troutbeck Symposium. Previously, she was a Program Officer at The Nordic World Heritage Foundation under UNESCO and worked on cultural heritage preservation in Kosovo.

Dana Meyer

Dana J. Meyer is an MA student in Public History at Central Connecticut State University and the Membership and Digital Projects Manager at the Connecticut League of Museums. He specializes in database architecture, digital collections, and web-based project development. His current research focuses on Connecticut Revolutionary War desertion, with an emphasis on the intersection of digital tools and historical scholarship.

Christine Pittsley

Christine Pittsley is the Special Projects Curator at the Museum of CT History at the CT State Library. She brings her knowledge of the State Archives and expertise in digital initiatives to hands-on educational programming and immersive activities for all ages. Her award-winning place-based Digging Into History program brought international partnership with French collaborators. She is responsible for the collections management system and future data migration to various platforms. She has a BA in Political Science from CCSU.

Dr. David Naumec

Dr. David Naumec is a historian, archaeologist, and museum consultant from eastern Connecticut. He currently works as an Archaeology Field Director for Heritage Consultants and is Historic New England's Revolution 250 Research Scholar where he studies New England's Indigenous and African American Revolutionary War veterans. Dr. Naumec is a graduate of UConn's Individualized Major Program, holds a Master's Degree in History & Museum Studies from Tufts University, and completed his doctorate in Race & Ethnicity in Early America through the Civil War at Clark University.

Clare Nelson

As an exhibit developer at the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History, Clare Nelson is responsible for the development, design, production, installation, and maintenance of on-site, off-site, and traveling exhibitions for the museum. She was most recently lead developer on *The Wide Awakes: Campaigning for Lincoln*. She earned her M.A. in Public History from Northeastern University and her B.A. in History from St. Olaf College.

Donald Rogers

Donald Rogers is Adjunct Instructor in History, Emeritus, from Central Connecticut State University, and is offering this proposal as a member of on behalf of the Town of Vernon 250th Committee and the Vernon Historical Society. He holds a Ph. D. in history from University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1983. He has published three books.

Elinor Wolgemuth

Elinor Wolgemuth is a senior at Housatonic Valley Regional High School and participated in 2023's Symposium.

Elisabeth Nevins

Elisabeth Nevins has worked and consulted in the museum field for over 20 years collaborating with stakeholders to create exhibits and programs that engage, educate, and delight. She has a B.A. in History from Yale University and a M.S.Ed. Museum and Early Adolescent Education from Bank Street Graduate School of Education.

Elizabeth Burgess

Elizabeth Burgess is the Curator of Collections at the Museum of CT History at the CT State Library. She is responsible for overall collections management and care at the Museum of CT History. She previously was Director of Collections & Research and Collections Manager at the Stowe Center for Literary Activism, Hartford, CT. Burgess has over 20 years' experience managing collections documentation, care and public access supervising inventories, migrations, moves and digitization. She has a BA in History from the University of Connecticut.

Fiona Vernal

Fiona Vernal is the Director of Engaged, Public, Oral, and Community Histories (EPOCH), Associate Director of the Africana Studies Institute (ASI) and Associate Professor of History and Africana Studies at the University of Connecticut

Hamish Lutris

Hamish Lutris is an Associate Professor of History at Manchester Community College. He is a well-known speaker and instructor throughout the Connecticut region with extensive experience in Central Europe, having been involved in education, strategic planning, and international agricultural research programs there. He has worked in some of America's premier natural and historical sites, leading naturalist and educational programs in both the United States and Europe.

Jean Luddy

Jean Luddy has a BA in History from Bucknell University, a MLS from the University of Pittsburgh, and 6th year degree in information studies from Southern Connecticut State University. She served as Library Media Specialist at South Windsor High School, and since retiring has volunteered as Museum Director at the Vernon Historical Society. She has co-authored two photographic books on local history, oversaw the revision of a children's local history book and chaired VHS's newspaper digitization committee.

Jennifer Croughwell

Jennifer Croughwell is a student of Sociology and Political Science at Eastern Connecticut State University. She is highly active in developing best practices in OER (Open Educational Resources) and OP (Open Pedagogy) methods. She is a Legislative Aide to State Senator Mae Flexer, who represents the 29th District. She is also a National Council Chair for the College Democrats of America.

Jennifer Matos

Jennifer Matos is the Administrator of the Museum of CT History at the CT State Library. She is responsible for oversight of all matters related to the Museum of CT History. Her prior experience includes a combined 13 years at the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society as Executive Director and Director of Education. Matos has over 20 years' experience in the museum and history field. She has a BA in History and Art History from the University of Saint Joseph and an MA in American Civilization from Brown University.

Joanie DiMartino

Joanie DiMartino is the Museum Curator and Site Superintendent of the Prudence Crandall Museum. She recently installed the exhibition *Canterbury Female Boarding School: Courage, Conscience, & Continuance*, which reinterpreted the site to highlight the agency and legacies of the Black and Brown young women who attended Crandall's school in 1833-1834 and to position the history of the school in a state, national, and global context. DiMartino earned an MA in Public History from Rutgers University.

John Mills

John Mills is a trained genealogist, independent scholar, and descendant of the enslaved. He is the founder of the Alex Breanne Corporation, which focuses on research, interrogation, and presentation of lesser known stories representing the life experiences of the American enslaved, presented from an African American perspective. John focuses on unearthing little known people and stories, then injecting them into the landscape of the communities where they lived and worked through art, monuments and honorary street names.

Katherine Hermes

Katherine Hermes is the publisher and executive director of Connecticut Explored magazine, a non-profit history publication. She is professor emerita of history at CCSU, where she taught Early American history for 25 years. She has created and been involved with several digital public history projects, including Forgotten Voices of the Revolutionary War: People of Color and the Redding Encampment, 1778-1779.

Kathy Craughwell-Varda

Kathy Craughwell-Varda is a museum curator/consultant who has curated numerous exhibitions in Connecticut and New York on topics ranging from women's suffrage, America Impressionism, the Civil War in Connecticut, and more. She most recently curated the exhibition *Greenwich During the Revolutionary War: A Frontier Town on the Front Line* for the Greenwich Historical Society. Kathy is also the director of Conservation ConneCTion and the creator of the Museum Makeover and Collection Assessment grant programs.

Kevin McBride

Kevin McBride is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut and the former Director of Research at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center. He has conducted archaeological and historical research throughout New England, Block Island, Baja Mexico, the Caribbean, and Portugal. His research interests include Indigenous and Colonial cultural and historical landscapes, maritime adaptations, historical archaeology, underwater archaeology, and battlefield archaeology.

Linford Fisher

Linford Fisher is an Associate Professor of History at Brown University.

Mary Clarke

Mary Clarke is a student at Brown University.

Namulen Bayarsaihan

Namulen Bayarsaihan is the Director of Education at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum where she is responsible for developing public programs, organizes artist projects and performances, and leads the team responsible for the Museum's innovative education initiatives. She was previously the Director of Creative Operations at Real Art Ways and has organized hundreds of public programs and over two dozen performances, installations, and exhibitions.

Dr. Nicolas P. Simon

Dr. Nicolas P. Simon is an Associate Professor of at Eastern Connecticut State University. His primary research interests include the sociology of higher education, first-generation college students, community service, Open Educational Resources (OER), open pedagogy, and sociological theories. He serves on the Steering Committee of the Northeast OER Summit, an annual conference dedicated to promoting OER, open pedagogy, and open education. He earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Connecticut and holds a master's degree from Université de Caen in France.

Pauline Merrick

Pauline C. Merrick is an amateur historian and genealogist who concentrates on researching Black Revolutionary War soldiers and telling their stories. She gives live and virtual presentations on this subject both locally and nationally and has published articles and videos that tell these stories. She is currently President of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists.

Peter Moran

Peter Moran is an alum of the CCSU Public History MA program. He currently works at the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History to direct Civics Education for Connecticut Students, a Department of Education grant supporting museum field trips that enhance K-5 civics education. Peter has been involved with various professional and academic projects that use digital media to better connect public audiences with local history through audio, video, and other formats.

Peter Vermilyea

Peter Vermilyea teaches history at Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Falls Village. He is the author of three books about Litchfield County History. He was the 2006 CT Gilder Lehrman History Teacher of the Year.

Rhonan Mokriski

Rhonan Mokriski teaches at his alma mater, Salisbury School. He's passionate about history and helping students discover untold stories. In 2020, Rhonan developed a course called "Coloring Our Past" that centers students as historians by having them research and share the narratives of people and events that have often been overlooked. In 2021, he teamed up with Troutbeck, a historic site in Amenia, NY, to create the annual Troutbeck Symposium.

Stephen Armstrong

Stephen Armstrong is the social studies consultant for the Connecticut State Department of Education. He also is an adjunct instructor at Central Connecticut State University. He is co-chair of the education subcommittee of America250 and is a past-president of the National Council for the Social Studies.

Samantha Tondreau

Sam Tondreau, Mohegan, develops curriculum and provides professional development to organizations across the state of Connecticut with a focus on Indigenous studies. She also leads multiple projects such as the Mohegan Challenge Grant and the Educators Project creating resources to support instruction in K-12 classrooms.

Stephen Bartkus

Stephen Bartkus is the Executive Director of the Ridgefield Historical Society, with over 20 years of experience in museums and archaeology in Connecticut. For 15 years, he served as the Curator of the Gunn Historical Museum in Washington, where he earned acclaim for his innovative approach to community curation. Stephen was involved with the Connecticut League of History Organizations for over a decade, including serving on its board. He currently serves on the boards of the First Ecclesiastical Society of New Preston and Ridgefield CT Pride.

Shaelyn Amaio

Shaelyn Amaio has been a public experience advocate since her days operating rides at Lake Compounce as a teenager. Since then, she has worked at museums and design firms in New England, New York, and Alabama. Currently, she is the Deputy Director of Connecticut Landmarks, a state-wide network of historic house museums. A CCSU alum, she also earned a graduate certificate in museum education from Tufts University and a masters in museum anthropology at Columbia.

Tess Marks

Tess Marks is a senior at Housatonic Valley Regional High School and participated in 2023's Symposium.

Tony Roy

Tony Roy is a social studies teacher at Connecticut Academy for the Arts and presently serves as president of the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies. He has been involved in numerous curriculum projects and directed the project that created the recently-released Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Standards.

Zack Ellis

Zack Ellis is the founder and CEO of TheirStory.