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## Indices & Accidents

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James F. Brooks

We in the editorial office have any number of metrics available to us by which we measure the journal's performance—circulation (1,610 NCPH members, 363 libraries, 1,500 NPS interpreters), citation rates, article downloads, impact factors, professional awards—each of which indices are solid, some impressive. But another appeared last month as *TPH*, the founding and flagship publication in the field, wrapped our fortieth year: the blossoming *size* of our annual production. Our publisher, the University of California Press, alerted us that our contract stipulates a “within budget” annual maximum of four issues totaling 576 pages. Over the last four years we've averaged 736 pages. With the current volume at 224 pages, we're 32 percent above our contract allocation.

Don't worry. This is not a sideways announcement of an increase in subscription rates. Fortunately, our colleagues at UCP maintain a Scientific Account Fund to subvent the expense of additional print pages, and in the case of some of our massive special issues—the National Park Service Centennial and our history of African American Museums—we've enjoyed supplemental financial support. Rather, we think these numbers speak to the vitality of our field, as our increasingly robust membership pursues public history in new forms, locations, tools, and media.

Take this edition, for instance. Much to our surprise, as we assembled the final pieces for 40:4, we realized that (without any prior intent) we had an **entirely** international issue in the making. Add to this the fact that our colleagues in the International Federation for Public History (IFPH) just launched their own journal and our international consulting editor Na Li (Zhejiang University) debuted the new Chinese-language journal *Public History*, and we see a marked expansion of people “putting history to work.”

Yet it is also an evolutionary process, one we see in the roundtable coordinated by Jacqueline Nießer and Juliane Tomann under the rubric of “Public and Applied History in International Context.” They caution that the now-waning concept of “applied” emerged early in twentieth-century Germany from the nationalistic and anti-Semitic books of Heinrich Wolf, which even in less-offensive forms came to stand for an “instrumental” approach to history with particular outcomes in mind, rather than the more fluid and collaborative work of “public” historians oriented toward translating the knowledge that “others” outside academia bring to historical understanding. Catalina Muñoz offers comparative insights drawn from her native Colombia, while Steven Lubar orients us toward the distinctions of “Us,” “Them,” and “You” that he employs in Rhode Island to draw distinctions among “the participants in public humanities work, between practitioners, subjects, and audiences.”

Jennifer Dickey indexes past debates within NCPH itself as members sought to highlight the notion of “service” that emerged as a prominent theme in much of our practice. She suggests we might understand our current organizational definition of history “put to work in the world” as work that ought to produce the “flush of excitement” when our publics grasp that they are indeed part of a larger, meaningful, “big tent” story. Thomas Cauvin offers his thoughts from the vantage of his position among the founders (and now president) of the International Federation for Public History. Of particular interest (to me, at least) is Cauvin’s attention to antiquity (as a period) and archaeology (as a method) employed by public historians in Europe—one that we’re only beginning to see evident in North America. Ricardo Santhiago, speaking from Brazil, applauds the “lack of precise definitions” as evidence of the field’s tensile strength, its “vital and ever-changing practice.” Cord Arendes brings us back to Germany and his program at Heidelberg University, where he sees promise for a “united” public and applied history that features “interdisciplinary and cultural-historical inspired field of work at the many crossroads of contemporary history, local history, history education, and citizen science.” Alix Green, writing from the UK where “impact” factors haunt research funding, questions Nießer and Tomann’s distinction between historical practice “that makes money” and historical insight “that makes citizens,” noting that these differences may not be as clear cut as they might seem. Without “constructive skepticism and self-awareness” we cannot fulfill our “duty of discontent in productive and creative ways.”

Exploring the hidden dimensions of power lies at the core of Nadav G. Molchadsky’s inquiry into public “memories” of state-sanctioned kidnapping of children to become adoptees of childless Ashkenazi families shortly after the establishment of Israel in 1948. Molchadsky follows nearly three decades of investigative commissions that dismissed these memories as false and invalid. The public, however, remains fascinated and unconvinced, the “affair” therefore serving to undermine confidence in official historical narratives more broadly.

Two Reports from the Field—Jonathan Dekel-Chen’s investigation of content creation at the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow and Karin Pütt’s meditation on the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ attempt to record and preserve Syria’s endangered cultural resources as civil war erupted in 2013—round out our international coverage. Both forefront the particularities and instabilities of preserving “histories and memories” that may find popular (and state) enthusiasm waxing and waning in the politics of the moment.

Finally, we welcome two new members to the editorial team: Teresa Barnett, head of the Center for Oral History Research at UCLA, has signed on as our Exhibit and Media Reviews Editor, which will allow us a greater reach and critical engagement with these vital sectors in the field, and in New Jersey, we now partner with Nicole Belolan as co-editor in her position at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities (MARCH) at Rutgers University–Camden, who will also serve as digital media editor of *History@Work*. Nicole holds a PhD in history from the University of Delaware and studies the material culture of disability in early America. Join us in welcoming both.