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Many Voices -- One Story?
Public History Narratives of Native American and African American Histories

North Carolina State University, Raleigh, April 17, 2010

A conference hosted by the Department of History at North Carolina State University, Raleigh. Since the emergence of social history in the 1960s and 1970s, public history venues like museums, historic sites and parks, and historical reenactments have wrestled with expanding their narratives to incorporate voices that had been silenced for so long. African Americans and Native Americans had been largely absent from public history narratives, a consequence of insufficient resources and interpretive biases that evidenced the authority of dominant racial and class powers. But publications like James and Lois Horton's Slavery and Public History, programs like Colonial Williamsburg's Revolutionary City, and the opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and plans for a Smithsonian African American Museum herald the new voices being heard in historic interpretation today -- voices empowered by grassroots public history projects and movements that have contributed to a new pluralism of interpretative narratives. This conference seeks to explore interpretive narratives about Native American and African American histories, and the ways in which they have challenged the traditional narrative at America's historic sites, parks, and museums.

Scheduled presentations: From Storefront to Monument: Debating the Nationalization of the Black Museum Movement; The Akwesasne Museum: A Place for Connecting Generations through Traditional Arts Programs; Creoles, Indians, and Sugar Princes: Interpretation of Houma Indian History on Louisiana's River Road; Redefining the "Spirit of Union": Federally Preserved Battlefields and the Integration of Native American and African American Voices into the National Narrative; Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America-An Exhibit; New Voices at North Carolina's Historic Sites; American Indian and African American Voices in Colonial Williamsburg's Revolutionary City; IndiVisible: African-Native Lives in the Americas-An Exhibit; A Tale of Two Cities: Interpreting the Underground Railroad in Niagara Falls and Lewiston, New York; Detached Kitchens, Detached Memories? The Plantation Landscape and the Challenge of Inclusive Museum Narration; The Archaeology of Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest; Revisioning the Legacy of Slavery in Artis Lane's Portrait Bust of Sojourner Truth and Alison Saar's
Swing Low; Many Voices-One Story? A Discussion on Race, Power, and Representation in Public History.

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