



SAVING AMERICA'S STORY

How Ideological Capture at the Smithsonian Institution's
National Museum of American History Erases Our Heritage

DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

THE WHITE HOUSE

*Report by the Domestic Policy Council following President Trump's March 27, 2026, Executive Order 14253
("Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History"), and the ongoing review of the Smithsonian Institution.*

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Executive Summary

The Smithsonian Institution is one of the Nation's greatest civic treasures: a place where parents bring their children and tourists from across the country and around the world come to learn about America. At the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History (NMAH), visitors young and old should encounter the story of the United States told with honesty, seriousness, and pride. In particular, it should help the American people understand where America came from, what makes it distinctive, and why it is worth preserving.

In making their case to Congress in 1953, Smithsonian leadership argued that one of the "main reasons" NMAH should be created is "[t]o place before millions who visit the Nation's Capital each year a stimulating permanent exposition that commemorates our heritage of freedom and highlights the basic elements of our way of life."¹

In 1955, then-Smithsonian Secretary Leon Carmichael testified to Congress that, if authorized, the Museum would "tell the story of American national progress" and "cement America's progress for citizen and foreign visitors alike."² As he put it, "The museum we envision... is planned to instill in each citizen a deepened faith in our country's destiny as champion of individual dignity and enterprise. Equally, it is conceived to instill in each foreign visitor admiration and respect for our ever-expanding social and technological horizons."³ Two months later, based on that promise, Congress authorized the Museum's construction and allocated \$36 million to cover the costs.⁴

Then-Director of the U.S. National Museum, Remington Kellogg, noted at the Museum's opening in 1964 that the new museum was intended "to awaken in citizen and foreigner alike a clear understanding of the inspiring story of the United States—its origins, struggles, development, traditions, strength."⁵ One NMAH curator who worked at the Museum for nearly four decades before retiring in 2016 noted that the Museum's founding goal "was more than simply the increase and diffusion of general knowledge"; NMAH was intended to be "proudly patriotic."⁶

Speaking at the Museum's dedication ceremony in January 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson explained his hope and belief that the Museum's "iconic artifacts should be used to foster patriotism."⁷ He stated:

I would hope that there will come to this building the children of the nation. For here is

recorded, as William Faulkner expressed it, the agony and the sweat of the human spirit, the victory of freedom and genius of our country. Here, young children see, with their own eyes, yes, even to touch with their own hands, the ripe fruit of America's historical harvest. Whitney's cotton gin, Singer's sewing machine, McCormick's reaper, Edison's phonograph, Bell's telephone—they are all here, a part of this treasure-house of our inheritance. The more we understand the meaning of the past, the more we appreciate the winning of the future. If this Museum did nothing more than illuminate our heritage so that others could see a little better our legacy, however so small the glimpse, it would fulfill a noble purpose.⁸

This report by the Domestic Policy Council demonstrates that NMAH fails in the basic task of illuminating our heritage. Our central finding is not that the Museum has simply added overlooked stories, corrected perceived errors, or broadened its historical scope. Rather, it is that Museum leadership has explicitly adopted an ideological framework that no longer treats the American story as a shared national inheritance to be taught or celebrated, but as a political instrument to divide, dispirit, and discourage our citizens.

As this report shows, confirmed in the words of Museum leadership, this ideological capture has moved the Museum's mission away from straightforward historical education and scholarship toward an extreme political activism that seeks to transform our country.

That shift from history to activism is clearly documented in this report. Anthea Hartig, NMAH's director since 2019, has explicitly stated that she sees history as a "prime tool of social justice"⁹ and one of her roles as connecting "research and scholarship to activism and advocacy."¹⁰ Hartig has also stated that "we work to reframe the traditional celebratory narrative of U.S. history for visitors."¹¹ She claims to have had a personal head start "propped up as I was and I am by the cushions of whiteness and the pillows of the bourgeoisie."¹² Hartig believes the museum profession has "to figure out" how "we're going to" "problematize" the "250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026,"¹³ that "loving America is very complicated,"¹⁴ and that objects in the Museum's collection should be used to move attention away from an "Anglo-centric" focus on the American Founding.¹⁵ These are not the words of an objective historian, but rather those of an activist advancing an ideological agenda contradictory to the Museum's founding purpose of fostering patriotism.

At the heart of our concern is a simple question: what should a national museum of American history do? Our conviction—like that of Secretary Carmichael, Director Kellogg, and President Johnson—is that such a museum should tell the American story clearly and fairly. It should explain the rise of the original thirteen colonies, the struggle for independence, the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and the role these documents have played in securing Americans' most basic freedoms. It should document and share the achievements and failures of the Nation and the extraordinary men and women of every color and creed who shaped its course. It should tell the truth, including of the Nation's mistakes and injustices, but it should do so within a coherent account of a people striving, often imperfectly but more often nobly, to live up to our founding principles of liberty and equality under a republican form of government. It should especially teach the history of an American nation that is worthy of our affections and worth passing along to future generations.

Any proper telling of American history should—as the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. noted—explain that “the goal of America is freedom” and bring “our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.”¹⁶

According to the findings from our monthslong investigation, that is no longer what visitors encounter. Instead, the Museum confronts visitors with materials intended to undermine faith in American institutions and the longstanding shared ideals of the American people.

As this report shows, the Museum purposely presents America as a problematic country irredeemably conceived, founded by deeply flawed men, and still operating today as an instrument of systemic racism and oppression. In the Museum’s current telling, the country is, above all, defined by white supremacy, slavery, conquest, exclusion, hierarchy, racism, xenophobia, misogyny, and systemic injustice.

The report identifies a broad pattern: the Founders are minimized, if not entirely excluded; traditional patriotic narratives are treated with suspicion, if not outright contempt; and the basic symbols and stories that once helped unify Americans are presented not as reasons for gratitude and inspiration, but as objects to be inherently questioned, dismantled, “problematized,”¹⁷ and reinterpreted to achieve ideological ends.

To the extent that there is a story told at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, it is not one of “the victory of freedom and genius of our country” but one of regret, tragedy, and shame.

Key Findings

1. NMAH Fails to Substantively Present America’s Founders and Founding

One of the most significant findings in this report concerns what is missing. It notes that a visitor to the Museum today will find no major exhibit dedicated to America’s Founding era, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, other Founding Fathers, the Continental Congress, the Pilgrims, the Puritans, or major moments of the American Revolution, such as Washington’s crossing of the Delaware. Instead, visitors will find Founders, such as Benjamin Franklin, introduced chiefly through their connection to slavery while their decisive roles in building the Republic and their anti-slavery efforts are minimized or ignored.¹⁸ George Washington and Abraham Lincoln appear in didactics that say next to nothing about who they are, let alone why they matter.¹⁹ The Pledge of Allegiance is treated as a tool for instilling nationalism without serious engagement with its rich meaning.²⁰ And the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution are quoted selectively in ways that mute their claims about equality, ordered liberty, natural rights, and the divine source of those inalienable rights.²¹ Museum materials repeatedly suggest that Christianity functioned principally as an instrument of conquest, exclusion, or cultural erasure, while the constructive role of Christian belief and Christian institutions in shaping the Nation and its freedoms receives scant, if any, attention.²² White, male, and Christian Americans are regularly denigrated as the alleged embodiment of oppressive power structures.²³ Exhibits frame the

Pilgrims mainly as colonial oppressors,²⁴ Thanksgiving as a “National Day of Mourning,”²⁵ and the European settlement of the continent chiefly as a great “unsettling.”²⁶

2. NMAH Has “Problematized” the 250th Anniversary of America’s Founding

At a time when the Nation is marking the 250th anniversary of its Founding, the report shows that these omissions and inversions are not accidental. It documents how Museum leadership has openly stated that the 250th anniversary should be “problematized”²⁷—invoking a popular term-of-art to “Critical Social Justice” theorists that refers to the process of highlighting alleged “oppressions” within a given subject to “deconstruct,” disqualify, and discredit the prevailing narrative on that subject.²⁸ NMAH’s goal of “problematizing” America’s Founding explains why Museum leadership has also stated that the alleged “gaps” surrounding the Declaration should be emphasized²⁹ and that American history should be reframed away from an “America First mentality”³⁰ and an “Anglo-centric” focus on the American Founding.³¹ It also explains why the Museum’s special *In Pursuit of Life, Liberty, and Happiness* programming for America’s 250th anniversary fails to actually celebrate America’s Founders or Founding, and why Independence Day itself went unmarked by any special programming at NMAH in 2025 and 2026, despite the Museum being open.³² Taken together, these choices reinforce the conclusion that the Museum is not merely neglecting America’s central story. It is intentionally withholding and subverting it.

3. NMAH Removed “American History” from Its Mission Statement to “Get Out of the ‘America First’ Mentality”

The report places special emphasis on the Museum’s change in its mission statement under current leadership, which replaced the phrases “infinite richness” and “American history” with language about empowering people to create “a more just and compassionate future” by exploring “the complexity of our past.”³³ In the words of Director Hartig, this was done in order to “get out of the ‘America First’ mentality” when telling history.³⁴

4. NMAH Has Abandoned Historical Scholarship for Political Activism

The report demonstrates that the Museum has shifted from scholarship to activism, pointing to Museum leadership’s own public statements tying “research and scholarship to activism and advocacy,”³⁵ dismantling inherited narratives,³⁶ using history as a “prime tool of social justice,”³⁷ calling for American history to be “reframed,”³⁸ and describing museum work in terms of “reparations,”³⁹ “restorative history,”⁴⁰ “systemic intervention,”⁴¹ “decolonization,”⁴² and “social justice.”⁴³

NMAH’s Activist “Interpretive Plan”

The report notes that the Museum’s Interpretive Plan directs staff to, “whatever the topic,” tie exhibits back to a set of seven “core issues of our time”—specifically, race/identity, gender/sexuality, climate change, immigration/migrations, economic inequality, technological change, and nationalism/globalism—as part of its “commitment to relevance.”⁴⁴ The result is that visitors encounter the same ideological storyline over and over again, whether the subject is democracy, entertainment, immigration, childhood, women’s labor, sports, or early American

settlement. The complaint is not that these subjects should never be discussed, but that they are increasingly presented through one dominant worldview—one that assumes America’s institutions are chiefly instruments of oppression and that the Museum’s duty is to provoke visitors into activist forms of political resistance to that alleged oppression.

NMAH’s Anti-White Activism

The report also describes a longstanding staff reading group devoted to “Museums as a Site for Social Action Toolkit,” a framework that explicitly treats museums as engines for anti-oppression activism, frames objectivity, individualism, a sense of urgency, and “worship of the written word” as oppressive character traits of “whiteness” and “white supremacy culture,” and calls for institutional anti-white transformation rather than neutral stewardship.⁴⁵ It reveals how Smithsonian and Museum leadership have elevated individuals who view the current portrayal of American history as too “white” to positions of educational leadership, in addition to creating special Smithsonian-wide hiring practices and programming for every major demographic—including “Non-US Residents” and “Non-English Speakers”—except whites, Christians, males, and Americans.⁴⁶

NMAH’s Illegal Alien Activism

The report reveals how the Museum’s Center for Restorative History cast illegal alien political activism in heroic terms,⁴⁷ partnered with and interviewed deported illegal aliens,⁴⁸ and designed official materials that included signs advocating for the abolition of the “287g” program, which allows local law enforcement to partner with federal law enforcement to identify and deport *criminal illegal aliens*.⁴⁹

NMAH’s Transgender Activism

The report also catalogs how moral and biological truths established in reason, faith, and tradition are being set aside in favor of ideological, anti-scientific claims. It cites examples in which Museum exhibits and educational materials present gender as fluid, treat biological males as girls or women, and fold contemporary advocacy for transgenderism into the Museum’s treatment of female childhood development, women’s history, and women’s sports.⁵⁰ The report notes that some of this material is situated in youth-facing exhibits and accompanied by sexually explicit or sexually suggestive content that many parents would find deeply inappropriate for children, who are frequent visitors and a target audience of the Museum.⁵¹

5. The Smithsonian Has Not Met Its Obligations to the American People

Underlying all of this is a larger institutional concern. The Smithsonian is not just another private cultural nonprofit. It is a federally connected trust instrumentality of the United States, overseen by a Board of Regents currently led by the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and supported heavily by taxpayer funding to the tune of over one billion dollars per year. That means the public has a right to expect that it will operate as a faithful steward of the Nation’s historic and cultural heritage, not as a vehicle for ideological campaigns.

Conclusion: Ideological Capture at the Museum

We must be committed to restoring truth and sanity in how American history is presented and taught. President Trump’s Executive Order of March 2025 notes that the Smithsonian’s effort “to rewrite history deepens societal divides and fosters a sense of national shame, disregarding the progress America has made and the ideals that continue to inspire millions around the globe.”⁵² As a result, to restore the truth of America’s story as it regards the Smithsonian Institution, EO 14253 directs the Vice President (as Regent of the Smithsonian) to work with the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy “to remove improper ideology from such properties, and shall recommend to the President any additional actions necessary to fully effectuate such policies” and with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to “prohibit expenditure on exhibits or programs that degrade shared American values, divide Americans based on race, or promote programs or ideologies inconsistent with Federal law and policy.”⁵³

Rather than part of a national trust for the diffusion of knowledge, dedicated to explaining the “infinite richness and complexity of American history,”⁵⁴ the National Museum of American History has become an instrument—a “prime tool,” as Director Hartig has put it—for a radical, activist cohort dedicated to reframing the American story to serve its ideological ends.⁵⁵

In both theory and practice, NMAH is a clear and institutionalized example of intersectional critical theory—an intellectual framework rooted in Marxism that seeks to radically transform society by revealing and challenging alleged “overlapping systems of oppression”—applied to American history. It fails “to provide America’s young people access to what is genuinely inspiring and unifying in our history, as well as to the lessons imparted by the American experience of overcoming great national challenges”—stories and lessons that make “possible the informed and honest patriotism that is essential for a successful republic.”⁵⁶ Its message does not seek to instill an “American education grounded in the principles of our founding that is accurate, honest, unifying, inspiring, and ennobling,” but rather seeks to teach disdain and inspire disgust of our great country.⁵⁷

Today, the Museum fails to “place before millions who visit the Nation’s Capital each year a stimulating permanent exposition that commemorates our heritage of freedom and highlights the basic elements of our way of life.”⁵⁸ It has strayed far from Secretary Carmichael’s original vision of a place that “instill[s] in each citizen a deepened faith in our country’s destiny as champion of individual dignity and enterprise” and “in each foreign visitor admiration and respect for our ever-expanding social and technological horizons.”⁵⁹ It has fallen far short of Director Kellogg’s hope that it would “awaken in citizen and foreigner alike a clear understanding of the inspiring story of the United States—its origins, struggles, development, traditions, strength.”⁶⁰ And it has failed to live up to President Johnson’s dream that it would record “as William Faulkner expressed it, the agony and the sweat of the human spirit, the victory of freedom and genius of our country” and “the ripe fruit of America’s historical harvest” for the children of the Nation.⁶¹ In short, NMAH has failed to maintain the “treasure-house of our inheritance” because it no longer seeks to “illuminate our heritage.”⁶²

As our nation celebrates its 250th anniversary, NMAH has refused to celebrate the Nation and its history. It has not created any exhibit dedicated to presenting a general narrative of American

history or telling the story of any of our Founding Fathers, the Second Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence, the American Revolutionary War, or the achievement of independence and the establishment of the constitutional rule of law—even in the 250th anniversary of the first of those pivotal events.

The serious concerns raised in this report are not about a few exhibits or a few controversial labels. They concern whether America’s premier history museum still presents America as a coherent nation and heritage worth teaching with gratitude and honesty. The Museum can broaden the story without dissolving the story. It can and should acknowledge slavery, injustice, mistreatment of Native peoples, and other grave wrongs without encouraging citizens to view their country mainly through suspicion, resentment, and division. But that is not what the National Museum of American History is doing. As it stands today, it would benefit most Americans, especially parents bringing their children for a tour, if the Smithsonian’s flagship history museum had a label at every entrance that reads: “Warning: the exhibits in this museum were prepared by people who don’t want you to love your country.”

The findings of this report matter beyond the museum world. Not all Americans follow academic theories or curatorial fashions, but they do understand when a revered public institution has traded settled truths and basic history for political activism and division. They do notice when the heroes, principles, and events that formed the country are pushed to the margins. They notice when their children are introduced to inappropriate sexual and ideological content under the guise of civic education. And they object when their children and grandchildren are being indoctrinated to regard their country primarily as a source of oppression and unresolved grievance.

The report concludes that the Smithsonian Institution, and the National Museum of American History in particular, under its current leadership and current interpretive ideology, cannot be trusted to tell America’s story honestly and in a way that is inspiring, unifying, and worthy of our great republic. By the intention and at the direction of current Museum and Smithsonian leadership, NMAH has become subject to institutional capture by a radical, activist ideology that is fundamentally opposed to telling the noble, honest story of the great country we know and love.

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Chapter I. Introduction

1. The Smithsonian's Fiduciary Responsibilities

The Smithsonian Institution was created by an act of Congress on August 10, 1846, to carry out the terms of the will of British scientist James Smithson (1765-1829), who in 1826 bequeathed his entire estate to the United States “to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.”⁶³

Today, the Smithsonian Institution is the world's largest museum and research complex and includes twenty-one museums and galleries, the National Zoo, and research facilities in several states. The Smithsonian Institution is not a private institution or an independent trust but is a “trust instrumentality of the United States” by which it carries out the institutional mission of the trust on behalf of the United States Government.⁶⁴

The charter of the Smithsonian Institution is codified in federal law, and the Federal Government oversees the Institution through a Board of Regents heavily controlled by Congress, which appoints and approves fifteen of its seventeen members.⁶⁵ The Board's membership consists of the Chief Justice of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, three members of the Senate appointed by the Vice President, three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, and nine citizen members appointed by a Joint Resolution of Congress. The head of the Smithsonian is the Secretary, who is appointed by the Board of Regents. The Smithsonian executes no direct government program or policy beyond the regulation of its buildings and property of the United States that has been assigned to it.

The Smithsonian makes an annual budget request to Congress, and the Smithsonian receives an annual budget appropriation that over the past two decades amounts to about two-thirds of its annual expenditures. This amounted to \$1,080,500,000 in appropriations for Fiscal Year 2026. Some of these expenditures pay for the employment of staff, and those staff are considered federal employees; when the government shuts down, so does the Smithsonian Institution. The Smithsonian also has separate funding streams from proceeds received through grants, gifts, bequests, commercial revenue-generating activities, and investments, which the Smithsonian refers to as “trust funds.” Those resources also fund some activities, including employment of nonfederal, “trust employees.” All moneys “recovered by and accruing to” the Smithsonian are paid into the Treasury of the United States, where they are accredited to a Smithsonian account. In addition to annual budget submissions and various periodic reports to Congress, the Smithsonian files an accounting of resources as a tax-exempt educational organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

While the Smithsonian is not an “agency” within the meaning of the Administrative Procedure Act or the Federal Advisory Committee Act, and not a “federal agency” as the term is used in the Privacy Act or the Freedom of Information Act, the Attorney General concluded in 1988 that the Smithsonian is an “independent establishment in the executive branch” and is therefore an “executive agency” for purposes of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act.⁶⁶ The Attorney General also concluded in 1997 that the Smithsonian is “so closely connected to the

Government that the two cannot realistically be viewed as separate entities.”⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the Smithsonian ultimately reports to its Board and to Congress, is organizationally separate from the executive branch, and is not subject to many laws designed strictly for executive branch agencies.⁶⁸ This is why, “[u]nlike most federal agencies, the Smithsonian is authorized to accept gifts and to generate revenue outside of the federal appropriations process.”⁶⁹

In light of its federal status and the fact that it receives over one billion dollars in federal funding from the American taxpayer every year, the President has a duty and obligation to seek reforms of the Smithsonian, and to urge the Chief Justice of the United States, as the Chancellor of the Smithsonian, as well as the Vice President, as a Regent of the Smithsonian and as President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, to take appropriate action to restore the integrity of the National Museum of American History.

On March 27, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14253, “Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History,” which found that “Over the past decade, Americans have witnessed a concerted and widespread effort to rewrite our Nation’s history, replacing objective facts with a distorted narrative driven by ideology rather than truth” and reconstructing “our Nation’s unparalleled legacy of advancing liberty, individual rights, and human happiness” as “inherently racist, sexist, oppressive, or otherwise irredeemably flawed.”⁷⁰

2. The National Museum of American History’s Responsibility to Tell the American Story

The Smithsonian Institution in general, and the National Museum of American History in particular, should be “a symbol of inspiration and American greatness—igniting the imagination of young minds, honoring the richness of American history and innovation, and instilling pride in the hearts of all Americans.”⁷¹ As NMAH noted in its 2018 Master Plan, a *national* museum of *American* history should explore, celebrate, and tell the American national story.⁷²

That story should be a basic consensus view that is not ideological or politicized, but presents the facts of history—what actually happened—as accurately as possible with minimal present-day bias.⁷³ It should explain the circumstances and conditions that gave rise to thirteen self-governing colonies in North America, how those colonies united to oppose British misrule, and came to declare their independence and fight a war before forming a new nation. It should tell the story of how the Founders, inspired largely by the Ancient Greek democracies and republican-era Rome, undertook to create a new form of government that would reflect the will of the people, constrained by civic virtue, the separation of powers, and checks and balances, and supported by religion and morality. It should focus on what makes America distinctive—the ideas that define the Nation, the key individuals that have shaped its course, and the great accomplishments and progress America has made. It should explain the Nation’s guiding principles and institutional form in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, as well as America’s rise, expansion, and growth as a continental nation.

It should tell the *whole* story of a nation, including the good and the bad, so Museum visitors can understand the development that led our nation to where it is today. In doing so, it should tell a story of a people driven to overcome injustice and live up to its promise—a story of imperfection but also extraordinary accomplishment, of tragedies but also great triumphs, and hardship but

also noble heroism. In short, it should focus on “Americanism—the people, principles, and progress that define our nation.”⁷⁴

It should tell the story of how the colonies inherited slavery from both global and European slaving practices, but also how the words, actions, and ideas of America’s Founders helped spark a worldwide movement that ultimately ended slavery. It should tell the story of how at least eight American colonies passed or attempted to pass laws to either tax or severely limit the importation of slaves before the Revolutionary War, only to be forced by the British Crown to continue it. It should tell the story of how 750,000 Americans died in the Civil War. It should tell the story of how Americans came to reject Jim Crow and segregation, backing a colorblind standard derived from America’s founding documents. In short, it should tell the story of the birth of America and how the United States, because of the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and upheld in the Constitution, has done more to advance and secure fundamental rights than any other nation in the world.

It should also tell of the enormous technological, scientific, and economic progress America has bequeathed to the world, from the lightning rod, to the telephone, to the light bulb, to the assembly-line-produced car, the airplane, the moon landing, the cell phone, the personal computer, the internet, and much more.

It should tell the story of America’s contributions to global freedom, from saving Europe from multiple tyrannies, to illustrating the virtues of a market economy and a free people—leading nations around the world to continue to attempt to emulate the United States and enjoy a comparably high standard of living.

Walking through the Museum today, you will find no exhibits dedicated to presenting a general narrative of American history or telling the story of any of our Founding Fathers, the Second Continental Congress, the Mayflower, the Pilgrims, the Puritans, or Washington crossing the Delaware. In early 2026, seventy-five percent of the advertising boards placed on sidewalks around the museum showcased exhibits dedicated to peoples and cultural traditions foreign to the United States.⁷⁵

3. Key Findings

Our ongoing review of the Smithsonian has revealed numerous areas that demonstrate how current Museum leadership has failed to tell America’s story and adheres to a radical, activist ideology:

1. The leadership of the Smithsonian’s NMAH has made it a stated goal to “reframe the traditional celebratory narrative of U.S. history” (pg. 21) and “transform[] the national historical narrative” (pg. 27) away from America’s Founding and the Founders and towards a narrative of a deeply flawed creation of the country and an ongoing oppression of peoples by systemically racist governing institutions.

The Smithsonian is approaching its task of reframing American history in several ways, including by:

- a. Failing to dedicate a single (new or current) exhibit on display at NMAH to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, other Founders, or pivotal events of the American Revolution, including Washington’s crossing of the Delaware, during the 250th anniversary of these events (pg. 11). Instead, in two of its major exhibits, the Museum only includes the following minor acknowledgements:
 - i. A didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy* exhibit entitled “Abraham Lincoln in the Classroom,” which provides no information about the accomplishments of the two great American heroes it cites—Lincoln and Washington—noting only that both were presidents and that Americans have used images of them in an attempt to “instill patriotic values and reinforce the idea of a shared national heritage” (pg. 100);
 - ii. A didactic in *American Democracy* entitled, “What are the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens?” which fails to mention the Founders by name or even refer to them by their traditional collective title (“Founders” or “Founding Fathers”), simply highlighting that a “founding generation of American political leaders asserted that the independent nation would be based on the ideal that its citizens had the right to ‘Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness,’ and that the government under the Constitution was designed to ‘promote the general Welfare and secure the Blessings of Liberty’”—failing to include the Preamble’s essential context proving that our Founders truly did believe that there are “self-evident,” objective truths about human beings, that one of those truths is that “*all men are created equal*,” and that those universal rights of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” are *endowed by our Creator*, not men (pgs. 100-101); and
 - iii. One reference to Benjamin Franklin in the entirety of NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit, not as one of our most important Founding Fathers, but simply as a “Philadelphian,” an alleged racist, and someone who allegedly had an “ambivalent view” of immigrants and “worried that they introduced an ‘alien’ element to the colony” (pg. 48).
- b. Highlighting that some Founders, like Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin, owned slaves while downplaying or completely excluding information about their abolitionist efforts (or their pivotal roles in American history) in NMAH exhibits—including:
 - i. A didactic about the Broadway musical *Hamilton* in NMAH’s *Entertainment Nation* exhibit that simply called Alexander Hamilton an “influential and flawed founding father” likely, in part, because he owned slaves while providing no information about his key roles in America’s Founding and early development. It failed to mention that he was a vocal critic of slavery and helped found the anti-slavery New York

Manumission Society in 1785, which worked to end the slave trade, supported and lobbied for the “ultimate extermination” of slavery, “connected black people with resources such as legal representation, helped protect them from kidnapping from slave dealers, put on anti-slavery lectures and readings,” and founded seven African Free Schools that “educat[ed] more than 1,400 students by the time they started becoming part of the New York City public school system in the 1830s” (pg. 102); and

- ii. An exhibit dedicated to “the women, indentured servants, and enslaved people” whose “labor enabled” Benjamin Franklin’s electrical research that baselessly asked museum visitors to ponder whether Franklin’s scientific experiments, including those related to “electric shocks,” ever involved “an indentured servant or an enslaved person,” despite admitting that there is no evidence that they did (pg. 103).
- c. Stating that America’s 250th anniversary should be “problematize[d]” and the “gaps” surrounding the Declaration of Independence magnified (pg. 126);
- d. Failing to celebrate America’s Founders in its special *In Pursuit of Life, Liberty, and Happiness* programming allegedly “celebrating” the 250th anniversary of America’s Founding (pg. 114);
- e. Failing to hold any Independence Day programming on July 4, 2025, despite the museum being open, and failing to schedule or hold any special Independence Day events celebrating America’s 250th anniversary on July 4, 2026 (pgs. 125-126);
- f. No longer holding patriotic Star-Spangled Banner flag-folding ceremonies celebrating America’s flag, or any other special programming, to celebrate Flag Day (pgs. 124-125);
- g. Stating that “loving America is very complicated” (pg. 38) and showcasing the statement of a Smithsonian employee who stated that it will be nice when the U.S. “exists in hindsight” in its 2023 annual DEI report (pg. 127);
- h. Directing NMAH staff to remove the phrases “infinite richness” and “American history” from the mission statement of the *National Museum of American History*—rewriting it to only focus on “the complexity of our past” (pgs. 22, 24);
- i. Working to “get out of the ‘America First’ mentality” and focus on “the entirety of the Americas, not just our part of North America,” which it views as a “big challenge, especially going into 2026, which will be the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence” (pg. 22);

- j. Stating that a particular object in NMAH’s collections is a “favorite thing” because the object powerfully served to reframe history away from an “Anglo-centric narrative” that would focus the world’s attention on the American Revolution and “especially...the United States’ founding” (pg. 23);
- k. Framing America’s Founding in an exhibit as a fundamentally oppressive and genocidal effort to take Native Americans’ land and oppress their culture and peoples (pg. 108-110);
- l. Framing Christopher Columbus’s landing and exploration of the New World as a murderous genocide and “unsettling” of the continent to be lamented, not celebrated, including:
 - i. Calling Christopher Columbus a “murderer,” “slaver,” “killer,” and “thief,” urging the abolition of Columbus Day (pg. 104); and
 - ii. Creating NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit, which portrays the European settling of America as a “profound unsettling of the continent” with a section entitled “Unsettling the Continent, 1492-1776” that states that “Our world today grows out of that unsettling history” (pg. 104).
- m. Creating an *Upending 1620* exhibit that explicitly reframes the Christian Pilgrims as colonizers, *not* “founders of the U.S. nation,” seeks to “demonstrate that not every passenger aboard the Mayflower was fleeing religious persecution,” reframes Thanksgiving as a “National Day of Mourning,” and “urges audiences to reexamine these stories” and challenge their “preconceptions” because Plymouth “is cemented in many minds as the birthplace of the United States and central to its founding events,” and therefore contradicts the narrative of America that NMAH seeks to tell (pgs. 109-110);
- n. Insisting that the Smithsonian “legitimize” and “support the *New York Times*’ 1619 Project” which, “in the words of the *Times*, set out to ‘reframe the country’s history, understanding 1619 as our true founding’” (pg. 104);
- o. Claiming that America is not an enormous force for good but is rather an oppressive, imperialist nation that was “founded on the backs of African and...Indian slavery and genocide” (pg. 104), built on stolen land (pg. 105), and is irredeemably infected with “systemic racism” (pgs. 55, 113);
- p. Endorsing the American Association for State and Local History’s *Reframing History* project, which notes that “historical narratives that center white men as the ‘neutral,’ depoliticized American history that should be taught in schools (for example, learning about the Founding Fathers)” are “a way of perpetuating dominant groups’ power” and “reinforce white supremacist logic,” with NMAH’s Director calling the project’s final report a “blueprint for us to expand the power of our own engagement to then ignite civic engagement” (pgs. 106-107);

- q. Including in NMAH's *American Democracy* exhibit a wall featuring large lettering with the words "PRIVILEGE," "SLAVERY," and "RIGHTS OF WOMAN" while terms like "FREE PRESS," "CITIZENSHIP," and "RIGHTS OF MAN" are much smaller, and a didactic asking visitors "if there were to be common beliefs and a national narrative that expressed the values of the nation, what should be included?" without providing an answer (pg. 97).
2. The Smithsonian's NMAH leadership has made it a stated goal to make history "a prime tool of social justice" (pgs. 21-22), "be an agent of social change" (pgs. 64, 70), and connect "research and scholarship to activism and advocacy" (pg. 21), including by:
 - a. Creating an Interpretive Plan whose prime directive is to, "whatever the topic," tie everything to "the core issues of our time," namely, "race and identity," "gender and sexuality," "environmental change," "immigration and migrations," "economic inequality," "technological change," and "nationalism and globalism," stating that "To do anything less is to shirk our commitment to relevance" (pg. 80, cleaned up);
 - b. Launching a *Center for Restorative History* to "encourage systemic change" within the Smithsonian for the purpose of "transforming the national historical narrative, restructuring institutional priorities, and privileging knowledge production in the communities that have been silenced or overlooked by museums and other educational institutions," which include "BIPOC people (Black, Indigenous, and other people of color); LGBTQ+ people (who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and more)," and "people who have intersecting identities within these communities"—that is, "privileging," "partnering with," and "spotlight[ing] the people and stories" of virtually every group but straight, white Americans (pg. 27);
 - c. Commissioning the drafting of a museum-wide "Decolonization/Restorative History Plan" (pgs. 25-27);
 - d. Holding regular meetings "for NMAH staff members to meet, discuss and read" the "Museums as a Site for Social Action" Toolkit, a 200+ page, three-year roadmap (co-authored by half a dozen current/former Smithsonian employees) on how to "truly transform the museum space" that "privileges dominant Western ideals of race, class, and gender" and is linked "with white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, abuse of labor, colonization, imperialist theft of art and artifacts, destruction or absencing of alternative ways of interpreting or representing art and artifacts, structural racism and other oppressions" (pgs. 64-65);
 - e. Utilizing its National Youth Summits on issues ranging from "Teen Resistance to Racism, and Gender Equity" to "Elections and Politics" to invite Democratic Party operatives to speak about, "How can young people engage in political action and influence elections?" (pg. 56);

- f. Creating exhibits and educational materials asserting that there are more than two genders, biological males can become “girls” and “women,” and men should be allowed to compete in women’s sports, including:
- i. Describing a biological male as “a girl trapped inside a boy’s body” in a youth-oriented exhibit (pg. 82);
 - ii. Stating “girls can be assigned male at birth” in a youth-oriented exhibit (pg. 82);
 - iii. Defining and discussing the terms “gender fluidity,” “[g]ender-fluid children,” “gender identity,” “gender nonconforming,” “gender normative,” and “gender role” in its Glossary of Terms for its *Becoming US* educational curriculum, including:
 1. Stating that “a child may feel they are a girl some days and a boy on others, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately” so it “is best to ask people who are gender fluid which pronouns they prefer” (pg. 81);
 2. Defining “gender identity” as “[o]ne’s internal, deeply held sense of one’s gender” that “does not [always] fit neatly into” the male or female categories (pg. 81);
 3. Instructing educators to “avoid” the “[o]utdated” term “Gender Identity Disorder” (pg. 81);
 4. Noting that “[p]eople who step out of their socially assigned gender roles are sometimes referred to as transgender” but that “[s]imply being transgender does not make someone gender nonconforming,” and therefore it “is best to ask gender nonconforming people which pronouns they prefer” (pg. 81); and
 5. Claiming that “[o]ur culture recognizes two basic gender roles: masculine (having the qualities attributed to males) and feminine (having the qualities attributed to females)” but “[o]ther cultures have three or more gender roles” (pg. 81).
 - iv. Alleging that “transgender, nonbinary, and cisgender female athletes” continue to struggle for and “demand equality” in sports (pg. 86).
- g. Putting inappropriate material in a *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit designed for young children, including the pages of a 6-year-old girl’s diary where she expresses fear about “getting boobs” and wishes for her nonexistent “penis to grow” (pg. 89);

- h. Putting sexually suggestive materials inappropriate for young children in its exhibits, including drag queens, magazine covers featuring photos of nude young women, and a two-piece chrome and rubber crotch harness designed for sadomasochism (S&M) sexual activity (pg. 90);
 - i. Creating an *All Work, No Pay* exhibit portraying homemaking as oppressive to all women, but particularly to “African Americans, Latinas and other women of color” (pg. 78);
 - j. Taking a firm stance in favor of abortion, publicly criticizing the Supreme Court’s *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision, and encouraging Museum visitors to do the same (pg. 91);
 - k. Incorporating anti-gun activism into youth-oriented exhibits (pgs. 92-95);
 - l. Creating exhibits and educational materials designed to convince America’s children to defy authority, including teachers, parents, and religion (pg. 63); and
 - m. Lionizing Angela Davis, a prominent Marxist and former vice-presidential candidate of the U.S. Communist Party who has called for the abolition of police, jails, prisons, and immigrant enforcement (pg. 78).
3. The Smithsonian’s NMAH has extensively advocated for millions of illegal aliens to be granted U.S. citizenship and voting rights, including by:
- a. Creating a *Becoming US* educational curriculum that instructs high school teachers to avoid using the terms “illegal alien,” “illegal immigrant,” “illegal, illegals” (pgs. 41-42) and teach the next generation of American voters that illegal aliens are essential to America’s culture, economy, and society, and therefore should become U.S. citizens—stating, (a) “There is no single American culture, language, or narrative”; (b) “Migrants have both been active citizens and have been denied access to the benefits and responsibilities of citizenship throughout American history”; and (c) “Xenophobia, forced migration, and deportation have affected individuals’ participation in democracy” (pgs. 40-41);
 - b. Creating an *Undocumented Organizing Collecting Initiative* where NMAH’s Center for Restorative History staff traveled across the country and Mexico to celebrate, interview, and partner with *deported illegal aliens* and other illegal alien activists who worked to “swing an election” to oust a North Carolina sheriff from office because he helped Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deport nearly 300 criminal illegal aliens (including drunk drivers, rapists, heroin traffickers, and pedophiles) in 2017 (pgs. 29-31);
 - c. Creating *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like*, “a digital space” where middle and high school students can “meet five undocumented organizers and learn what

democracy looks like from their perspectives,” and an accompanying video that repeatedly highlighted illegal alien activists who demanded that ICE be abolished and illegal aliens be granted U.S. citizenship (pgs. 32-33); and

- d. Stating that “contextualizing” the “modern debate” over whether illegal aliens should be granted U.S. citizenship “through history’s lens is one of the key things that we do” at NMAH (pg. 24).
4. The Smithsonian’s NMAH and leadership have consistently denigrated and displaced whites, males, Christians, and Americans in educational materials and programming, failing to highlight how Christians and Christian principles also have contributed to America’s Founding and flourishing, and focusing on race in areas where it has little to no historical relevance. Examples include:
 - a. Studying a “White Supremacy Culture” document that alleges that “objectivity,” “individualism,” a “sense of urgency,” “worship of the written word,” and other traits are characteristics of “white supremacy” (pgs. 73-78).
 - b. Prioritizing hiring and special programming for “Non-US Residents” and “Non-English Speakers” across the Smithsonian Institution (pgs. 68);
 - c. Complaining that “the whole construct [of history taught in K-12 schools] was primarily white” and that teaching a single narrative that centers white people stunts “our imaginations” and is “dangerous” (pg. 55);
 - d. Alleging that “white audiences” have an “empathy gap” which “makes it difficult for [them] to relate to and subsequently want to see stories that center Black people,” and that closing that gap must be part of its educational programming (pg. 56);
 - e. Promoting materials from the anti-white Southern Poverty Law Center in its “educational” programming for high school students and teachers (pgs. 55-56); and
 - f. Supporting the transfer of American land and power back to Indigenous peoples and recommending that individuals read an article by an author who advocates for such changes on the basis that “the museum [is] an imperial structure that is intimately tied to systemic whiteness” (pg. 53); and
 5. The Smithsonian’s NMAH has developed and promoted a national education curriculum that presents a radical view of American history and elevated individuals to positions of leadership to advance that radical view through educational programming that has reached tens of millions of individuals (and up to 80% of history teachers) in recent years. Examples include:

- a. Creating a *Becoming US* educational curriculum that—in addition to pushing for citizenship for illegal aliens—fails to focus on the Founding Fathers or the American Founding, but rather on the peoples, cultures, and languages that were present “long before the founding of the United States” despite being centered around the question “How did we become US?” (pg. 48);
- b. Promoting an individual to the position of “Head of PreK-12 Learning” at NMAH after he (i) warned of the “Danger of A Single Story in Storytelling Today” that focuses on white people; (ii) argued that white people have an “empathy gap” preventing them from wanting to “see stories that center black people”; (iii) criticized America’s “system of law” because it involves a neutral judge presiding over an adversarial process that “makes one party the ‘bad guy’” and includes “coercion or punishment” and “force” as “a consideration” rather than focus on “problem-solving”; (iv) criticized the “logic” of western civilization because it “privileges order, organization, and taxonomy” and “situates non-white and non-western as inferior”; (v) argued that the U.S. should go further than “decolonization” and “move towards reMaorification or reindigenosation” (which involves “the repatriation of...*all* of the land” to Indigenous Peoples and “a full-scale re-ordering of the world through political, economic, and social processes”); (vi) noted that he made his ninth-grade classroom a place that was “informed by thinking that confronts coloniality”; and (vii) co-led NMAH’s “Decolonization Working Group” (pgs. 51-54); and
- c. Partnering with the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), including recommending that high school teachers prepare to teach the *Becoming US* curriculum by exploring the website of SPLC’s *Teaching Tolerance* program and using SPLC’s *Let’s Talk* guide, which (i) frames classroom discussion around themes of “injustice,” “identity and power,” and systems that “privilege some at the expense of others,” (ii) discusses how to “not reinforce hierarchies, but to correct for them,” and (iii) highlights a toolkit entitled “Confronting White Nationalism in Schools” (pgs. 54-55).

Our interim findings also reveal that both the Smithsonian and NMAH, much like the broader museum profession,⁷⁶ engage in discriminatory and likely illegal behaviors and practices, and are funded in part by large endowments that advocate for discriminatory practices, such as the Mellon Foundation, America’s largest funder of the humanities,⁷⁷ and others.⁷⁸

Chapter II. The National Museum of American History and Its Radical Ideology

NMAH was created in 1957 and opened in 1964 as the Museum of History and Technology within the United States National Museum.⁷⁹ It became the National Museum of History and Technology in 1969, and in 1980 its “name was changed to the National Museum of American History to better represent its basic mission—the collection, care, and study of objects that reflect the experience of the American people.”⁸⁰

As a Blue Ribbon Commission on the National Museum of American History noted in 2002, “NMAH enjoys one of the most desirable locations in America. It is at the heart of the national mall, in dramatic proximity to the Washington Monument, with direct views of the Smithsonian castle and the Lincoln Memorial.”⁸¹ Each year, millions of visitors from across the country and around the world visit NMAH and participate in its public programs, educational activities, collections, and research facilities on its approximately 750,000 square foot property, which includes “a basement, three main exhibition levels, two office collection levels, and a mechanical penthouse on the roof.”⁸² And each year, “Millions more make virtual visits to the museum’s website.”⁸³

In fact, the Smithsonian recently described NMAH in its official budget request to Congress as “the Smithsonian’s flagship history museum.”⁸⁴ NMAH is “America’s only *national* museum of American history” and “America’s largest history museum,” with “about 200,000 square feet of exhibition floor space” and “more than three million objects” in its collections, “which occupy an additional 265,000 square feet of storage space” and “amount to a unique and irreplaceable representation of America’s social, cultural, scientific and technological history.”⁸⁵ It is rightly described as a “national treasure.”⁸⁶

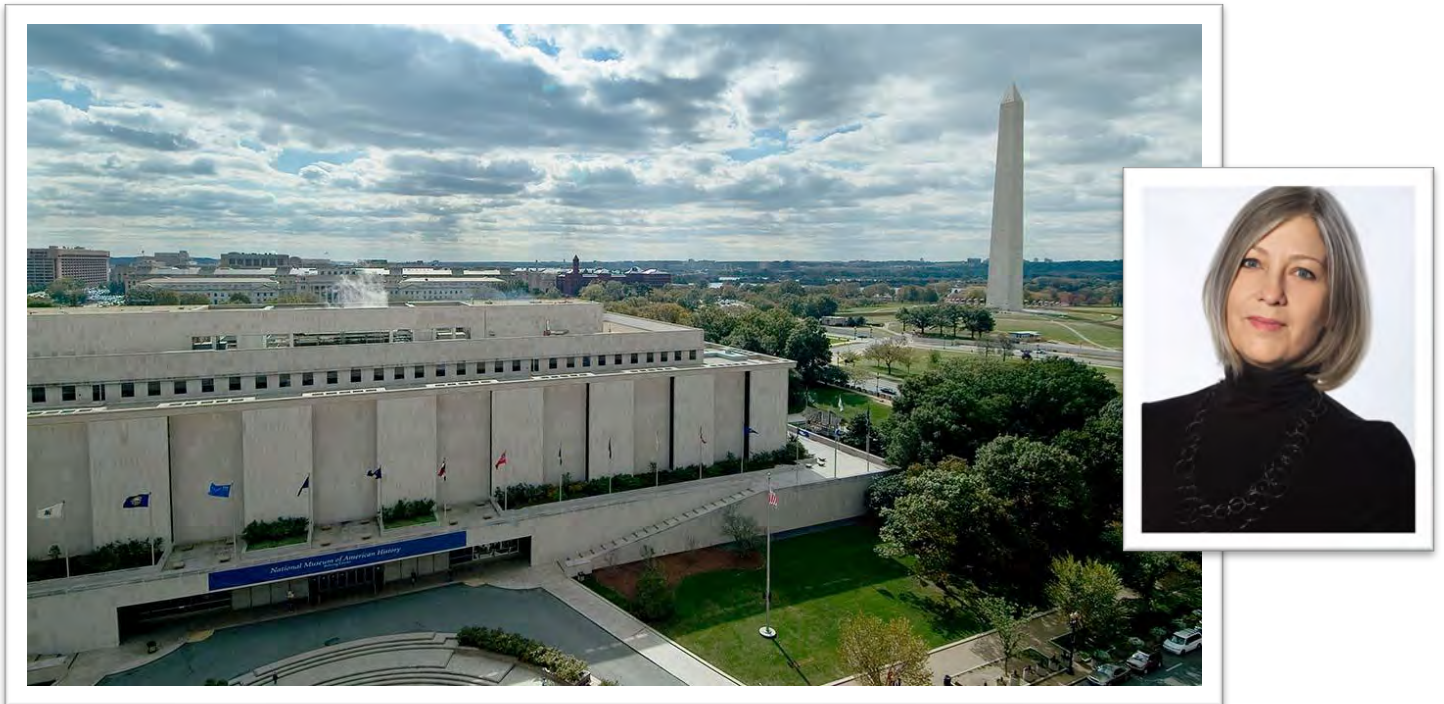


Photo of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History (<https://americanhistory.si.edu/visit>) and Director Anthea M. Hartig (<https://www.si.edu/about/bios/anthea-m-hartig>).

1. NMAH's Self-Proclaimed Activist Leadership

The Director of NMAH is appointed by the Secretary of the Smithsonian, in consultation with the Board of Regents, which serves as the governing body of the Institution. The current Director, Anthea M. Hartig, was appointed in December 2018 and took over the position in February 2019 with a starting salary of \$300,000.⁸⁷ The Director reports to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Lonnie Bunch, who is appointed by the Board of Regents. In this role, he is responsible for the operations of all Smithsonian Institution entities, and receives over \$989,000 in annual compensation.⁸⁸

There have long been indications that Dr. Hartig is more interested in political activism than historical scholarship. Dr. Hartig explained her self-understanding early in her tenure at NMAH: “I will always be in a state of becoming an historian, and I know what a head start I had propped up as I was and I am by the cushions of whiteness and the pillows of the bourgeoisie. Throughout my career, one of my roles, as I now understand it, is to address the often lack of continuity and discourse between academic scholarship and research and public interpretation, commemoration, and not to mention connecting that research and scholarship to activism and advocacy.”⁸⁹

Dr. Hartig’s objective as Director of NMAH was also made clear in a statement she published on the Museum’s website in 2020, within a week of George Floyd’s death: “The nation was founded on the great paradox of a dynamic form of republican democracy based on the supremacy of white, landed men and the institution of chattel slavery. What then is our task? . . . At the National Museum of American History, we work to reframe the traditional celebratory narrative of U.S. history for visitors to our museum and digital spaces. Hosting and facilitating dynamic public programming and national reckonings is critical for us to help all Americans make sense of these tragically difficult times.”⁹⁰

In a 2022 presentation entitled, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future at the Smithsonian*, Hartig explained that under her leadership, NMAH is working with other Smithsonian museums to “dismantle” the “narrative lockdown that many of us have inherited.”⁹¹ In June 2024, Hartig put it simply: “History as a practice...is for me a prime tool of social justice.”⁹²

2. NMAH's New Mission of Social and Political Activism

Shortly after becoming Director, Hartig also gave NMAH a new goal: become “the most accessible, inclusive, relevant, and sustainable public history museum in the nation.”⁹³ To achieve this goal, Director Hartig and Smithsonian leadership directed NMAH staff to write a new mission statement and Strategic Plan for the museum.

Previously, NMAH’s mission had been the following: “Through incomparable collections, rigorous research, and dynamic public outreach, we explore the infinite richness and complexity of American history. We help people understand the past in order to make sense of the present and shape a more humane future.”⁹⁴ However, after Hartig became Director, NMAH rewrote its

mission to simply read: “Empowering people to create a more just and compassionate future by exploring, preserving, and sharing the complexity of our past.”⁹⁵

As “the infinite richness” of American history was dropped to leave only “complexity,” and “American history” was replaced by “our past,” the new objective became empowerment for the sake of social and political activism, not learning for the sake of understanding. Rather than presenting American history to understand the past, NMAH now seeks to use the complexities of history to encourage societal change,⁹⁶ aligning with Hartig’s goal of making history “a prime tool of social justice.”⁹⁷



Screenshot of Director Hartig outlining NMAH’s new mission, available at <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=2578>.

3. NMAH’s Attempt to Push Museum Visitors Away from an “America First Mentality”

In a June 2024 presentation to undergraduate and graduate history students, Hartig explained that NMAH made this change in order to help people “get out of the ‘America First’ mentality,” adding that “it’s a big challenge, especially going into 2026, which will be the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.”⁹⁸ She stated:

It’s hard to get out of the ‘America First’ mentality, and that’s—we didn’t talk much about that, but we wrestle—I wrestle—with that all the time. It’s just that, and why we changed our mission when I first came, you know, to be very future-facing but also to really think, you know, kind of what does it mean to show that full and rich complexity of the past. I think it’s a big challenge, especially going into 2026, which will be the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the 25th year since 9/11, the fifth year since January 6th.⁹⁹

As part of getting “out of the ‘America First’ mentality,” Hartig explained that she believes that “the scope of U.S. history” and the term “America” should really include “the entirety of the Americas, not just our part of North America.”¹⁰⁰

In a 2022 presentation entitled *Doing Our Work in a Time of Multiple Pandemics and Cascading Crises*, Hartig put this belief into practice, sharing a list of her “favorite things” from NMAH’s national collection of 1.8 million objects, which in many cases explicitly directed attention away from America, Americans, and American history towards non-American individuals, countries, and ethnic groups.¹⁰¹ Hartig noted that the selected items “encapsulate” her “learning path as a historian” and “the importance of conserving and sharing the materiality of our past as a useful tool to create a more just and informed and compassionate future,” reflecting NMAH’s new mission statement.¹⁰²

One of the first objects Hartig highlighted was a cane belonging to Toussaint L’Ouverture, a military and political leader in the 1804 Haitian Revolution, because it “disrupts and complicates and re-centers global revolutions and kind of moves it away from a relatively ethno- and Anglo-centric narrative, especially of the United States’ founding.”¹⁰³ In other words, Hartig stated that she liked the Haitian cane because it reframed history away from America, particularly America’s “Anglo” (white) Founding Fathers, which is the Museum’s intent under its current leadership.

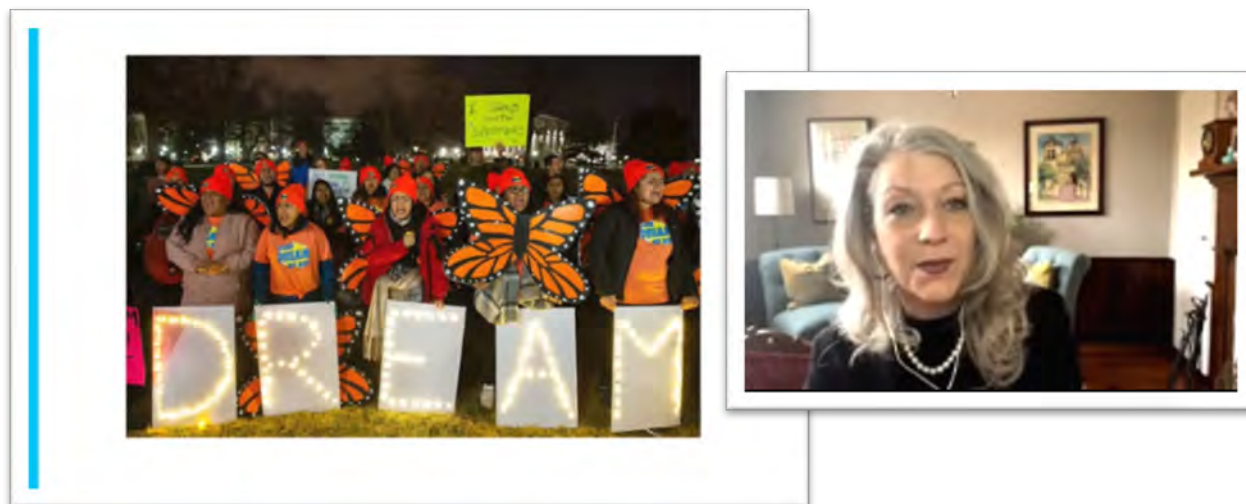
Other items on Hartig’s list of “favorite things” within NMAH’s collections include:

1. The “outfits worn by childbearing servants in Hulu’s adaptation of Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*” because the “costumes have been worn by activists in several high-profile demonstrations, including those for women’s reproductive rights”,¹⁰⁴
2. The “homemade and hand-painted butterfly wings...collected from a young Nebraskan activist who was marching on Capitol Hill in 2018” because “Monarch wings are an important symbol to undocumented organizers as their annual journey across the North American continent speaks to the migration, survival, and transformation of many immigrants”;¹⁰⁵
3. Billie Jean King’s tennis outfit because she was a “social justice pioneer” who defeated a man in “the battle of the sexes tennis match”;¹⁰⁶ and
4. A statue created by “agricultural activists” depicting Lady Liberty as a Hispanic immigrant worker carrying a basket of tomatoes.¹⁰⁷



Screenshot of Hartig highlighting NMAH’s “DACA Wings” as one of her favorite things because she says they “are an important symbol to undocumented organizers,” https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1816.

After singling out the “DACA Wings” as one of her favorite objects in NMAH’s collections, Hartig explained that NMAH decided to feature them in a new exhibit dedicated to “Girlhood,” because “DACA is part of an ongoing debate that’s lasted now for centuries over who gets to be a citizen, who gets to be educated. Contextualizing that modern debate through history’s lens is one of the key things that we do [at NMAH] and especially that we do in *Girlhood*.”¹⁰⁸



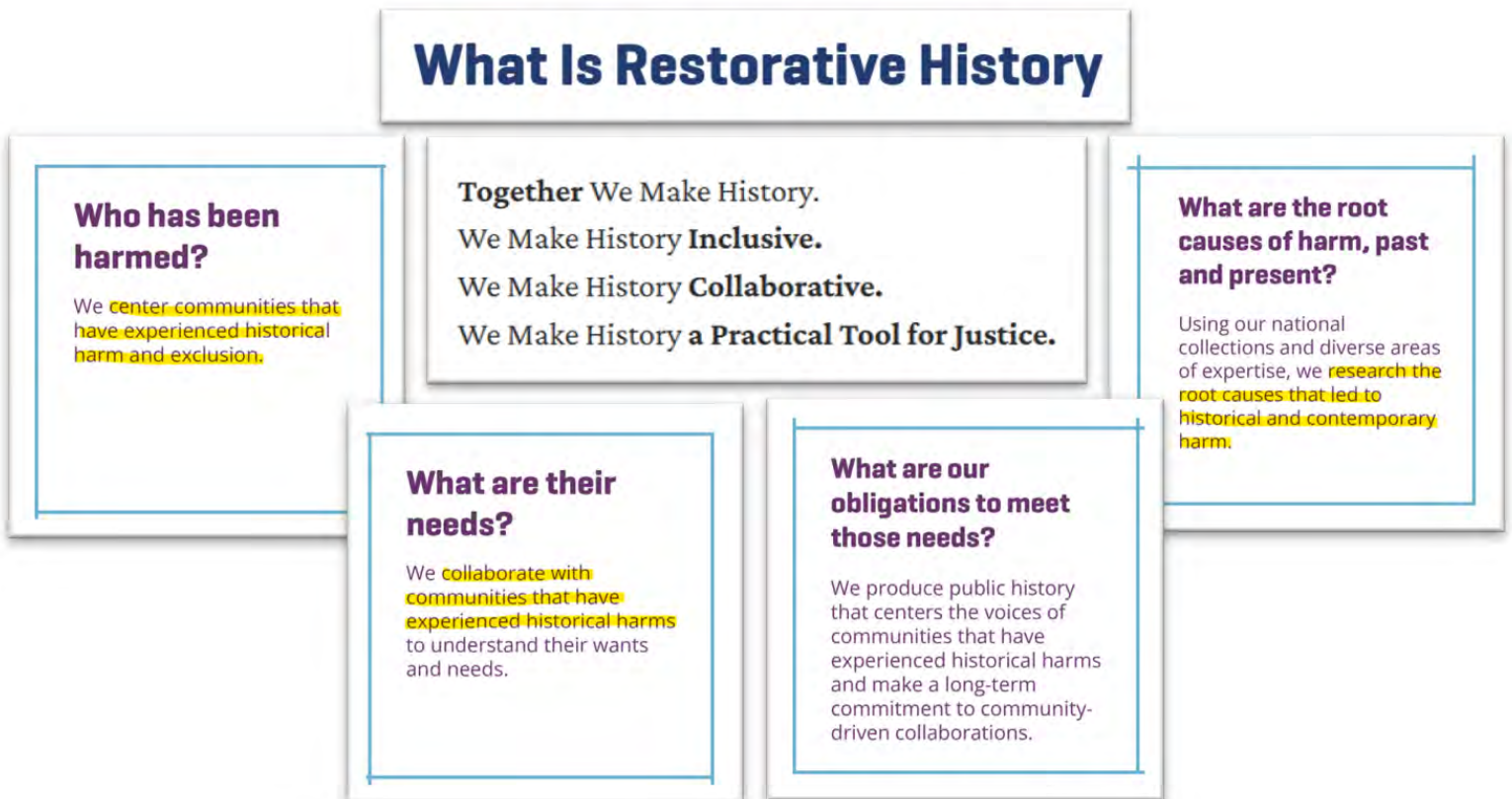
Screenshots of Director Hartig explaining that NMAH has incorporated the DACA Wings into its “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit to push for citizenship for illegal aliens, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1892.

NMAH’s Interpretative Plan explains how NMAH’s new mission, Strategic Plan, and “contextualiz[ation]” of “modern debate” works in practice, stating that the focus on “the complexity of our past” creates an opportunity for a new collective community: “We share the complexity of the past for a purpose: our statement looks to the future and envisions empowerment, justice, and compassion.”¹⁰⁹ By focusing on “cross-cultural encounters,

revolutions and resistances, turning points and points that failed to turn,” the Museum will create new experiences so that visitors “will recognize themselves as change-makers and connect to each other as a public. They will be empowered to pursue a ‘just and compassionate future.’”¹¹⁰ In other words, Hartig made it clear from the beginning that her leadership of NMAH would be social justice activism under the guise of historical commemoration. And, on that promise, she has been delivering.

4. NMAH’s Center for Restorative History

The institutionalization of this stated purpose can be seen in the establishment of NMAH’s Center for Restorative History (CRH), which Dr. Hartig launched the same year she became NMAH Director with the stated goal of fundamentally changing how the Smithsonian taught history. In 2021, Hartig noted, “We’re launching the Center for Restorative History, which aims to...address the harm that we’ve done as the Smithsonian.”¹¹¹



Screenshots available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/centers/restorative-history>. Highlights added.

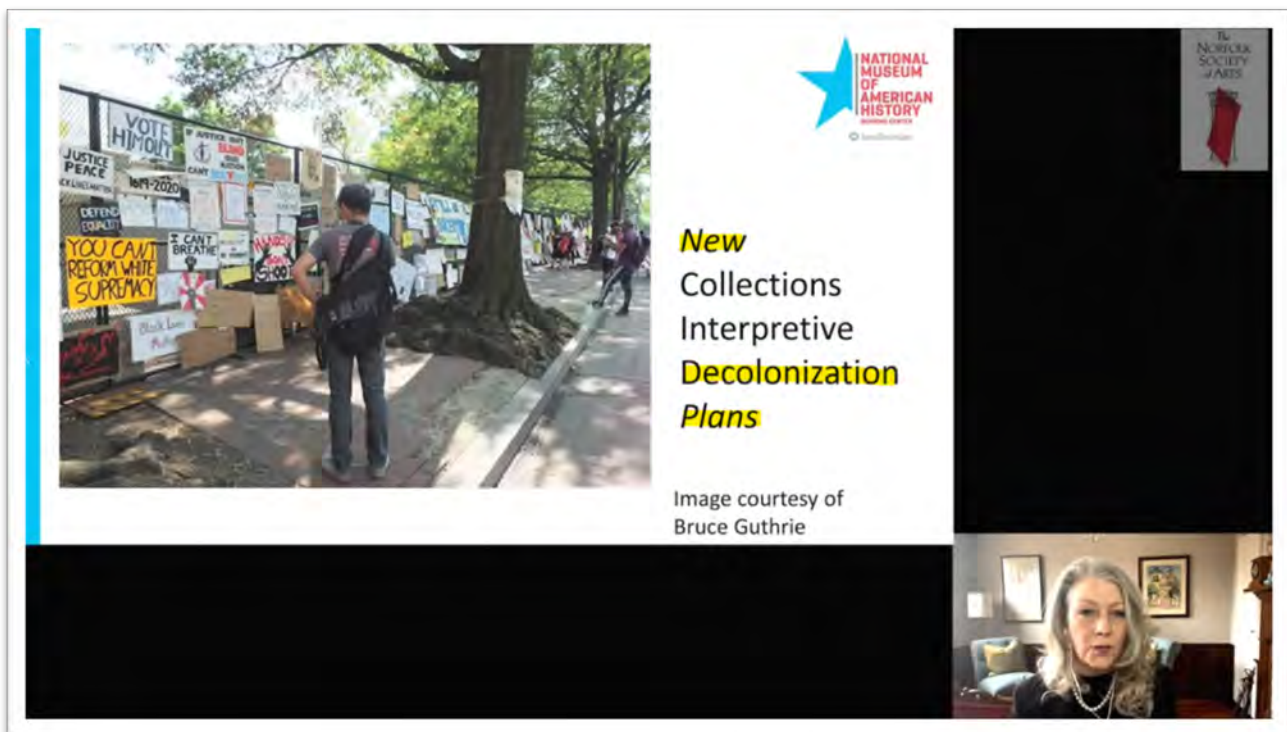
To ensure that the Center would be deeply integrated into the Museum’s broader work, Director Hartig also commissioned the drafting of a museum-wide “Decolonization/Restorative History Plan,”¹¹² which the Smithsonian now states does not exist¹¹³—even though NMAH’s Collections Plan refers to the Decolonization Plan as if it exists and Director Hartig gave a presentation in 2022, which included a slide devoted to explaining NMAH’s “New Collections,” “Interpretive,” and “Decolonization Plans.”¹¹⁴

That “why” is central to making real the promise of the institution’s driving aspirations as expressed in our Strategic Plan:

We can’t achieve the ambitions of the Strategic Plan without addressing our collections. As we pursue accessibility, inclusivity, relevance, and sustainability, we must recognize that our collections carry legacies on each of these fronts, inheritances that we must confront to move forward. As well, our collections carry extraordinary potential to advance our distinctiveness and impact in the ways that the Strategic Plan envisions.

Likewise, collections are central to the Interpretive Plan’s call to explore intersections, crossroads, and encounters in history and to the Decolonization Plan’s pursuit of **restorative justice through history**. Collections, then, do far more than drive “best practices” duties and generate resource claims: they become tools that reveal the full potential and power of NMAH.

Screenshots of the NMAH Collections Plan, available at https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Collections_Plan.pdf, at 5. Highlights added.



Screenshot of a 2022 video in which Director Hartig presents a slide explaining how NMAH developed a new “decolonization” plan, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HERz54an_-c&t=3023s. Highlights added.

In 2022, Hartig explained that the “hopes that we had to create a true Decolonization Plan have grown” and “beautifully come into another being...in the form of the emergent Center for Restorative History,” co-founded by NMAH’s Tsione Wolde-Michael and Nancy Bercaw.¹¹⁵

Restorative History

- Examines root causes
- Confronts the legacies of injustice
- Amplifies the practice of community engagement
- Calls for a reassessment of our collections

Restorative History in Practice:

- Co-curation
- Critical Convenings
- New Approaches to Scholarship

Modupe Labode, NMAH

anthea hartig

Patty Arteaga (she/her/ella)

MLN

Modupe Labode, NMAH

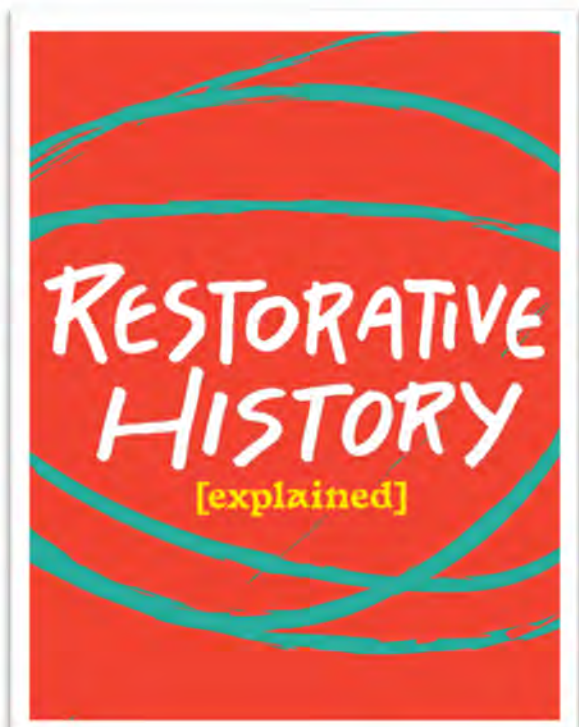
Orlando

Screenshot of NMAH Director Hartig giving a talk entitled, “Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future at the Smithsonian,” highlighting how CRH seeks to “DECOLONIZE THIS MUSEUM,” available at <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=988>. <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=988>.

According to the Center’s explanatory document, Restorative History draws “on the principles of restorative justice [and] addresses the needs of historically harmed communities by examining the past to understand the root causes of historical harms.”¹¹⁶ The document explains: “Examples of historically harmed communities in the United States are BIPOC people (Black, Indigenous, and other people of color); LGBTQ+ people (who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and more); people with disabilities; working-class people; people from regions without equal access to education and museums; and people who have intersecting identities within these communities.”¹¹⁷ According to NMAH, the root cause of these harms is “systemic oppression.”¹¹⁸

Restorative History, therefore, “encourages systemic change within an organization” and is a “systemic intervention” for the purpose of “transforming the national historical narrative, restructuring institutional priorities, and privileging knowledge production in the communities that have been silenced or overlooked by museums and other educational institutions.”¹¹⁹

And, as the Center’s explanatory document notes, the key to “transforming the national historical narrative” was systemic change at NMAH: “Working out of a national museum was an important intervention, as the museum is an institution that has perpetuated harm through its histories of collecting and display.”¹²⁰



1 What Is Restorative History?

RESTORATIVE HISTORY *is a theory, a method, and a practice.* Drawing on the principles of restorative justice, Restorative History addresses the needs of historically harmed communities* by examining the past to understand the root causes of historical harms. It turns to community-based knowledge to define the best path forward, and it spotlights communities across the country that continue to resist historical exclusions. Restorative History works with these diverse voices to make public history a practical tool for justice that confronts the past and ongoing impacts of systemic harm.

* A historically harmed community is a group of people who have experienced one harm or multiple harms repeatedly over a long period of time. This harm usually arises because of systemic oppression. Examples of historically harmed communities in the United States are BIPOC people (Black, Indigenous, and other people of color); LGBTQ+ people (who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and more); people with disabilities; working-class people; people from regions without equal access to education and museums; and people who have intersecting identities within these communities.

Screenshots of CRH's explanatory document "RESTORATIVE HISTORY [explained]" on NMAH's website, available at https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf.

As CRH explains on NMAH's website, to redress that harm, the Center "spotlight[s] the people and stories that have been excluded from our national narrative using the principles of restorative justice. We do this by partnering with communities across the country that continue to resist these exclusions."¹²¹

Chapter III. Examples of Ideological Purpose at the National Museum of American History

1. NMAH's Extensive Partnerships with, and Advocacy for Extending Citizenship to, Illegal Aliens

One such partnership came via CRH's Undocumented Organizing Collective Initiative (UOCI)—now scrubbed from NMAH's website—which framed illegal alien activists lobbying the U.S. Government, on behalf of the 11 million+ illegal aliens nationwide who legally should not be in the country, as heirs to the emancipation of American slaves and the Civil Rights Movement.¹²²



Screenshot of the message visitors receive when they attempt to visit NMAH's Undocumented Organizing Collecting Initiative website, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/centers/restorative-history/projects/uoci>. See archived link below.

“There are only a handful of moments in our nation’s history when people without citizenship or voting rights have changed government policy. It happened during emancipation, woman suffrage, and civil rights, and it’s happening again right now with undocumented immigrant organizing,” reads the opening lines of UOCI’s since-deleted page on NMAH’s website.¹²³

Under the banner of UOCI, NMAH staff (Nancy Bercaw, Patricia Arteaga, and José Centeno-Meléndez) traveled to six different locations across the country and locations in Mexico to interview illegal alien “activists” who were demanding U.S. citizenship.¹²⁴ This included traveling to Mexico City to interview *deported* illegal aliens, and to North Carolina to interview illegal alien activists who *worked to “swing an election”* against a local sheriff because he worked with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to deport almost 300 criminal illegal aliens, including drunk drivers, rapists, heroin traffickers, and pedophiles, in 2017.¹²⁵

Undocumented Organizing Collecting Initiative

There are only a handful of moments in our nation's history when people without citizenship or voting rights have changed government policy. It happened during emancipation, woman suffrage, and civil rights, and it's happening again right now with undocumented immigrant organizing.

"Citizenship for all . . . legalizing . . . 11 million undocumented . . . it's the vision of a more collective, more inclusive community."

—Jung Woo Kim, Organizing Director, National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)



Debates around undocumented youth populations have attracted mass media attention since the early 2000s, with images of mostly young, high achieving students advocating for passage of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act or pushing for creation of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) through civil disobedience to stop deportations. But **undocumented organizing is much larger, more diverse, and more complex than the headlines suggest.**

What does it mean to be undocumented?

Immigrants who lack legal residency status in the form of citizenship or visas are considered "undocumented." Being undocumented prohibits or severely limits access to higher education, housing, medical care, social services, labor protections, and legal services, among other resources. Without access to citizenship, undocumented individuals are subject to surveillance and deportation.



Screenshots from an archived version of NMAH's since-deleted webpage highlighting CRH's UOCI, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20240724012024/https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/centers/restorative-history/projects/uoci>. Notice the posters showing Monarch butterflies and the words "HERE TO STAY."

2. NMAH's Partnership with Illegal Alien Activists Who Campaigned to Oust a North Carolina Sheriff from Office

After traveling across the continent to document the stories and efforts of these illegal alien activists, including some who ousted a sheriff for helping ICE deport some of the worst criminals, CRH staff sat down for an interview with the *Smithsonian magazine* to recount their efforts.¹²⁶ The article noted:

Mayra Stefania Arteaga of Charlotte, North Carolina, spoke with Centeno-Meléndez [a Smithsonian Latino Museum Studies Program fellow, who was then leading the oral history effort to record interviews] for nearly four hours, touching on what brought her

family to the United States from El Salvador, her experience as a Temporary Protected Status holder and how she became a community organizer. Her oral history documents the campaign against the re-election of Sheriff Irwin Carmichael in Mecklenburg County. Carmichael's department participated in a program run by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement that deported almost 300 [criminal illegal] immigrants in 2017. Immigrant activists including Mayra Stefania Arteaga worked to frame the 2018 sheriff's election as a referendum on the policy. Working in solidarity with other organizations, like the Southeast Asian Coalition and Charlotte Uprising, attending steering committee meetings, putting pressure on Carmichael through social media, among other tactics, made their campaign successful. Carmichael's loss demonstrated the persuasion of activists who lacked the power to vote.¹²⁷

In a 2020 article entitled *Redefining 'American,'* UOCI co-leads Nancy Bercaw and Patricia Arteaga describe the initiative as way to “give voice to undocumented immigrant activism,” “collaborat[e] with at-risk communities whose members are facing deportation,” and help create “a new recognition of what citizenship can look like.”¹²⁸

These political efforts from the museum and its staff glorify illegal aliens who violated U.S. law and continue to do so by remaining in the U.S. These products are written and structured to convince the American public that illegal aliens should be simply given amnesty and U.S. citizenship.

In their article, the two NMAH curators also refer to UOCI by another title: “Transformative Politics: Undocumented Immigrant Activism 2000 to Present” and describe how they “were witnessing civically engaged activists who—without citizenship or the power to vote—were successfully engaging in politics on many levels. They were influencing national policy, shaping public opinion, challenging local governments, and galvanizing Congress to act on their behalf.”¹²⁹

Bercaw and Arteaga conclude their article by posing a series of “key questions” revealing that UOCI's true goal was to prompt societal change and, as their article's title suggests, redefine “what it means to be an ‘American,’” adding that these questions guide the work that they do “every day” at NMAH “and with this project”:

Through this project, we hope to record not just a moment in time or how a new political voice emerged, but also how this movement asks key questions:

- How can we civically engage within our own communities to address policies that are detrimental to people's livelihoods?
- How can we change our future when lives are inextricably rooted in systems of oppression?
- Who gets to define what it means to be an ‘American’?
- Who belongs?

Those are the questions we are posing every day in our work at the National Museum of American History and with this project.¹³⁰

The existence of NMAH's CRH and UOCI demonstrate that the Museum is creating programming centered on *non-American groups* that it believes have been oppressed by Americans and their representatives in government.

For example, in their *Redefining 'American'* article, Bercaw and Arteaga ask: "How can the people we work with in their communities trust us as a federal institution? How do we build trust in order to redress past Smithsonian practices? Or how do we introduce the museum to those who are unfamiliar with the Smithsonian or with museum-going more generally? A key component is the partnerships we have with undocumented organizers. They are trusted figures within the sites where we are working, and they consult with us."¹³¹

3. NMAH's Efforts to Indoctrinate Middle and High School Students into Opposing the Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law

Through NMAH's UOCI, NMAH also created *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like*, "a digital space" where middle and high school students can "meet five undocumented organizers and learn what democracy looks like from their perspectives," an initiative which Director Hartig boasted about to donors in the Museum's annual *Highlights Report* in 2021.¹³²

As with UOCI, NMAH deleted the page on its website devoted to this initiative.¹³³ However, an archived version reveals that it was divided into multiple sections with headings ranging from the "Problem of Citizenship" and "Intersectional Organizing" to "Criminalizing Immigration" and "History in Real Time: Undocumented Organizing."¹³⁴

The official graphic NMAH created for *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like* depicts illegal aliens wearing shirts with phrases like:

- "Immigration is a BLACK issue";
- NO "287g" (referring to the primary program that allows local law enforcement to partner with ICE to identify and deport criminal illegal aliens);
- "UNDOCUMENTED AND UNAFRAID";
- "DEFEND DACA"; and
- "CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL"¹³⁵



Screenshot of NMAH's "Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like" graphic, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20240701064456/https://www.americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like>.

UOCI staff also created a page on the Smithsonian Learning Lab's website entitled, *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like: Learning from Undocumented Organizers*, which reads: "Welcome to Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like—a digital space where you can meet undocumented organizers and learn firsthand what democracy looks like to them. Through their stories, these organizers invite us to look beyond the headlines and the issues often associated with undocumented immigrants, from DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) to the DREAMers. In the process, they stretch our imagination by offering fresh approaches to familiar topics such as community, citizenship, belonging, and even identity itself."¹³⁶

4. NMAH Created a Video Highlighting Protestors Demanding to "Abolish ICE"

In its since-deleted *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like* page on its website, NMAH created a video highlighting how Jung Woo Kim, an "undocumented organizer" in the Washington, DC area who runs the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC), is engaged in "organizing through mutual aid."¹³⁷ One text box invited visitors to "discover how issues impacting undocumented communities have deep roots in the nation's history."¹³⁸

Smithsonian Search DONATE English

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY BEHRING CENTER EXPLORE HISTORY VISIT ABOUT

Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like

Why now?

Mutual Aid

Aftermath of 9-11

Problem of Citizenship

Intersectional Organizing

Criminalizing Immigration

History in Real Time: Undocumented Organizing

Survival, Compassion, and Connection: Jung Woo Kim on Organizing through Mutual Aid

Survival, Compassion, and Connection | Jung Woo ...

JUNG WOO KIM

"If the government don't take care of them, then we'll take care of them."

Watch later Share



Learning Lab: Organizing Through Mutual Aid >

How can the past help us understand the present? Connect past and present through the Learning Lab to discover how issues impacting **undocumented communities have deep roots in the nation's history**. In *Organizing through Mutual Aid*, we explore the Smithsonian's collections to understand how people have organized within their communities to help one another throughout history. These objects provide the opportunity to consider democracy at the local level.



Chinese study guide, 1930s

Screenshots available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20230201233112/https://americanhistory.si.edu/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like/jung-woo-kim>. The YouTube video has since been made private. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkT-NKqF3-8>.

The *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like* video itself repeatedly showed NAKASEC activists holding banners and wearing shirts calling for “CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL” and to “ABOLISH ICE.”¹³⁹

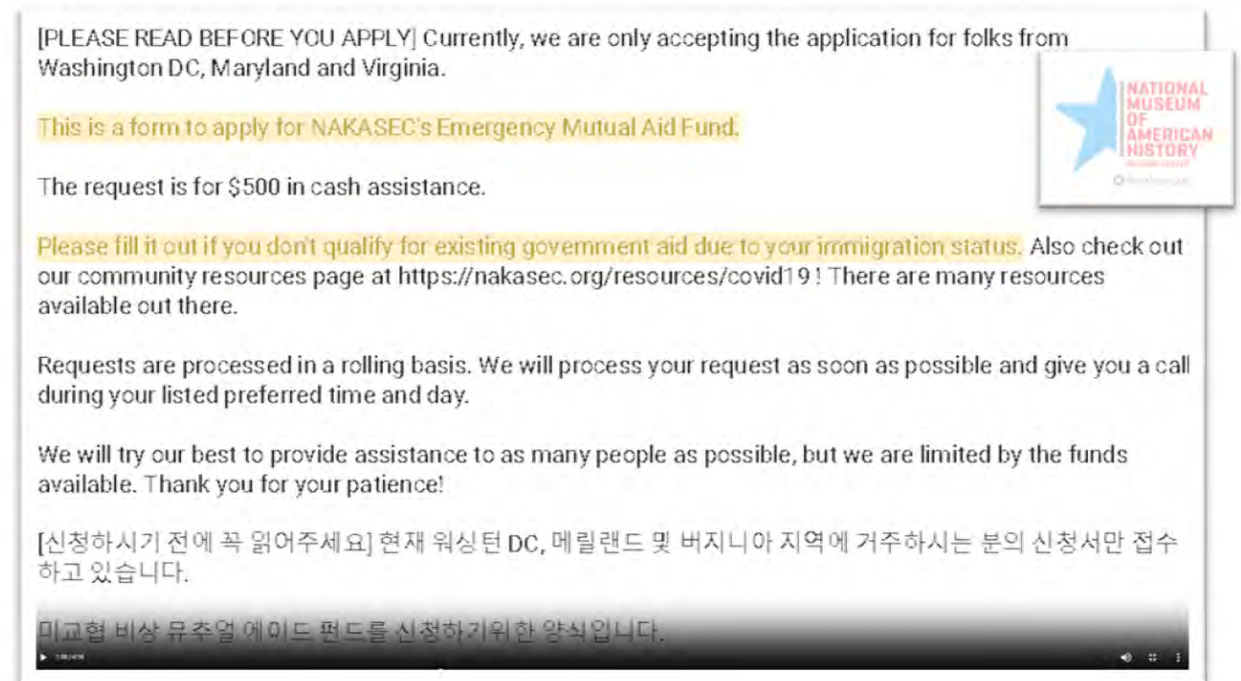


Screenshots available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20230201233112/https://americanhistory.si.edu/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like/jung-woo-kim>.



Screenshots available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20230201233112/https://americanhistory.si.edu/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like/jung-woo-kim>.

The video also highlighted how Jung Woo Kim’s NAKASEC, an illegal alien activist group, set up an “Emergency Mutual Aid Fund” to give “\$500 in cash assistance” to those who “don’t qualify for existing government aid due to [their] immigration status” in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia during COVID-19.¹⁴⁰



Screenshots available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20230201233112/https://americanhistory.si.edu/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like/jung-woo-kim>. Highlights in original video.

5. *The Smithsonian’s Belief that America Is Unjust and Therefore Its Story Must Be Challenged*

NMAH engaged in all these efforts with the explicit goal of challenging the traditional telling of America’s story. NMAH’s current Collections Plan makes this clear, stating that NMAH’s “strategic plan compels and inspires us to collect from underrepresented communities (so as to challenge traditionally exclusionary historical narratives)” and to “do so in a spirit of collaboration, building relationships and trust.”¹⁴¹

Indeed, these initiatives fit within the current Smithsonian leadership’s broader view that “the American story” needs to be challenged, questioned, and undermined because it believes America was founded on, and remains rooted in, “injustice.”

In Hartig’s 2022 slideshow presentation entitled, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future at the Smithsonian*, one slide presents NMAH’s UOCI as a way to bring about “narrative change” and then depicts precisely what the Smithsonian believes that narrative change should be.¹⁴²

Like NMAH’s *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like* graphic, the slide is covered with illegal alien activists wearing shirts with the same pro-illegal alien slogans: “Immigration is a BLACK issue,” NO “287g” (again, referring to the primary program that allows local law enforcement to partner with ICE to identify and deport criminal illegal aliens), “UNDOCUMENTED AND UNAFRAID,” “DEFEND DACA,” and “CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL.”¹⁴³



Screenshot of a slide in NMAH Director Hartig’s presentation entitled, “Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future at the Smithsonian,” noting that CRH seeks “narrative change.” See <https://youtu.be/CVpbjZnBNu4?t=1315>.

This is what the Smithsonian believes, and it is why Anthea Hartig, the Director of America’s History Museum, openly admitted that she finds it difficult to love America, stating in a 2022 presentation that “loving America is very complicated.”¹⁴⁴



Screenshot of the opening slide NMAH Director Anthea Hartig used for an NMAH presentation in September 2022, where she stated “loving America is very complicated,” available at <https://youtu.be/CVpbjZnNu4?t=411>.

6. NMAH’s Role in the Smithsonian’s “Pan-Institutional” Effort to Reframe American History “Through the Lens of Migration and Immigration”

NMAH’s CRH, UOCI, and *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like* are simply three manifestations of NMAH’s core values, which include pro-illegal alien activism. Indeed, in a 2022 presentation, Hartig explained the four core values that NMAH seeks to embody “daily” as a museum: Accountability, Care, Collaboration, and Courage.¹⁴⁵ In a slide outlining those four values, Hartig revealed their common theme by including a picture of a Monarch butterfly, which, as explained above, is one of Hartig’s “favorite things” at NMAH¹⁴⁶ and a well-known symbol in the illegal alien activist community, symbolizing illegal aliens crossing the border from Mexico into the U.S. (mirroring the migration patterns of Monarch butterflies across North America), the fight to grant illegal aliens U.S. citizenship, and President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program—which was designed to protect millions of illegal aliens from deportation.¹⁴⁷



Screenshot of NMAH Director Hartig’s presentation entitled, “Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future at the Smithsonian,” available at <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=572>.

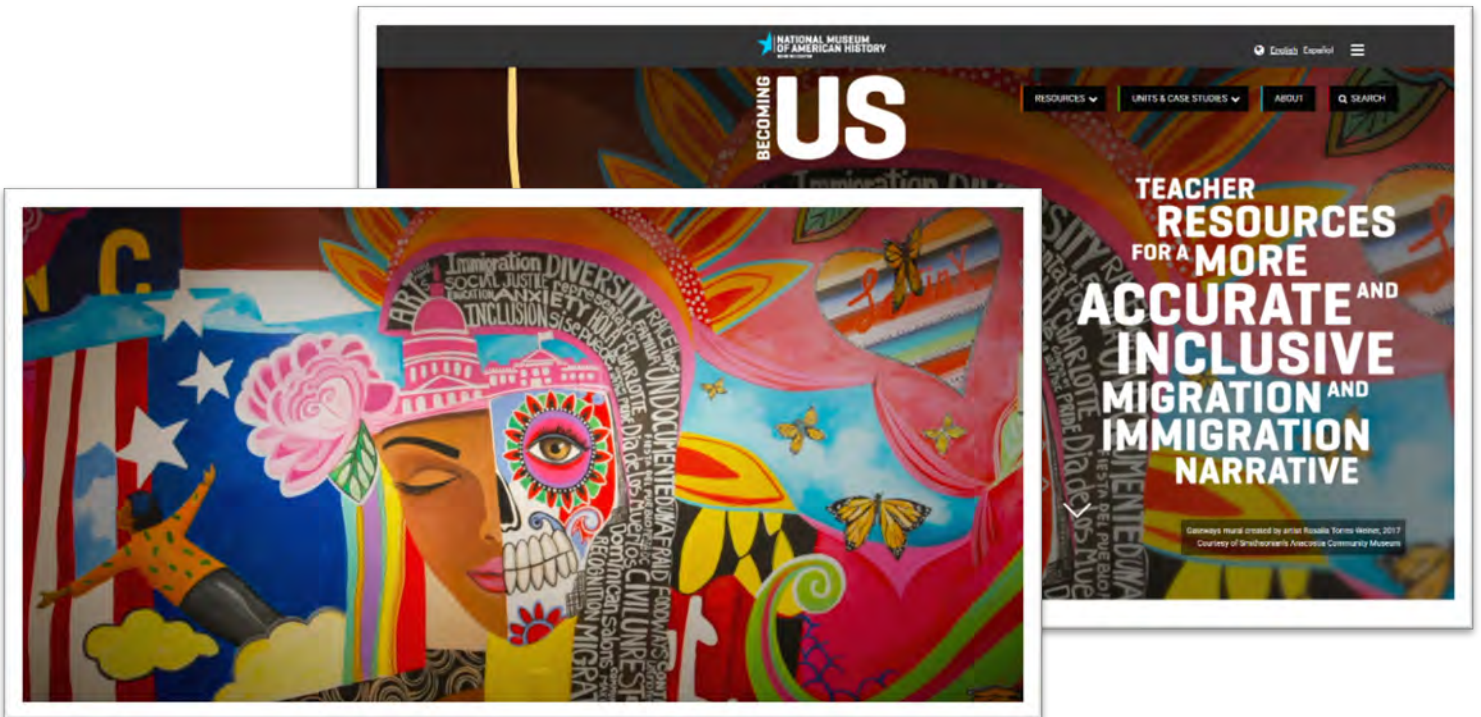
In line with these core values, in November 2019, under Director Hartig’s leadership, NMAH launched the *Becoming US: Teaching Immigration and Migration History in the 21st Century* “educational framework” to “change how migration and immigration are learned” in high schools across America and focus people’s attention on the peoples, cultures, and languages that were present “long before the founding of the United States[.]”¹⁴⁸ NMAH’s website explains how the framework was developed by NMAH staff and curators and represents the Smithsonian’s half-decade “pan-institutional” effort to reframe American history “through the lens of migration and immigration,” stating:

In 2014 the museum embarked on a pan-institutional journey to research, document, interpret, and present the history of the United States through the lens of migration and immigration. This effort resulted in an exhibition in the museum’s The Nation We Build Together wing called *Many Voices, One Nation*; the scholarly book *Many Voices, One Nation: Material Culture Reflections on Race and Migration in the United States*; and *Becoming US*, the national education curricula.¹⁴⁹

When NMAH uses its educational reach to advance a particular political ideology, it undermines its core mission of historical education and erodes the public’s trust in the institution. NMAH’s *Becoming US* “educational” framework instructs hundreds of thousands of high school teachers across America to teach the next generation of American voters that illegal aliens are essential to America’s culture, economy, and society. Therefore, the curriculum implies all aliens, legal or illegal, should be granted U.S. citizenship and allowed to vote. In fact, according to NMAH, it would be *unjust* to do otherwise.

The framework’s *Essential Understandings* section instructs teachers to “include experiences” for their students that (a) “provide for the study of how people living in the land that is now the United States create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance”

and (b) “provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in relationship to migrants and migrant policy,” noting that “[u]nderstanding migration plays a central role in understanding enslavement and liberation.”¹⁵⁰



Screenshots of image on the “Becoming US” homepage, depicting multiple monarch butterflies symbolizing illegal aliens’ fight for U.S. citizenship, and phrases like “UNDOCUMENTED AND UNAFRAID” and “SOCIAL JUSTICE,” available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/> and <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/about>.

7. NMAH’s Claim That “There Is No Single American Culture, Language, or Narrative”

NMAH’s *Becoming US* framework also directs America’s teachers to instruct students that:

- “There is no single American culture, language, or narrative”;
- “The U.S. economy depends on an influx of migrants to augment the workforce in a number of industries”;
- “Understanding the connections forged between science, technology, and society over time in the United States requires a migrant perspective”;
- “Since Europeans arrived on what we now consider U.S. land, people—whether forcibly or freely—have arrived from different places in the world”;
- “The U.S.-Mexico border was created as a result of a war by which the United States acquired extensive land and incorporated the people who lived on that land. Those circumstances have contemporary relevance”;

- “Migrants have both been active citizens and have been denied access to the benefits and responsibilities of citizenship throughout American history.”¹⁵¹

One *Key Concepts* section encourages students to “resist anti-democratic practices” and implies that deporting illegal aliens harms their “participation in democracy” and is oppressive, exclusive, and unequal:

- “Changes in immigration policy have affected who is considered a citizen and how and when migrants could exercise their rights and civic responsibilities.”
- “American history has been propelled by the power of individuals and groups who have resisted anti-democratic practices.”
- “Xenophobia, forced migration, and deportation have affected individuals’ participation in democracy.”

“Americans have grappled with questions of freedom, inclusion, and equality since the nation’s founding. They have struggled to answer these questions in the face of differing, sometimes competing, visions for the country.”¹⁵²

8. NMAH’s Attempt to Manipulate Language to Downplay the Illegality of Illegal Immigration

NMAH’s *Becoming US* educational curriculum also instructs high school teachers to avoid using the terms “illegal alien,” “illegal immigrant,” “illegal, illegals” when teaching students.¹⁵³

Instead, NMAH tells high school teachers to use the terms “undocumented worker” or “undocumented immigrant,” alleging that the other terms “criminalize[] the person rather than the actual act of illegally entering or residing in the United States” and carry “psychological baggage.”¹⁵⁴

illegal alien

Avoid. Alternative terms are undocumented worker or undocumented immigrant. The pertinent federal agencies use this term for individuals who do not have documents to show they can legally visit, work, or live here. Many find the term offensive and dehumanizing because it criminalizes the person rather than the actual act of illegally entering or residing in the United States. The term does not give an accurate description of a person's conditional U.S. status, but rather demeans an individual by describing them as an alien.

illegal immigrant

Avoid. Illegal immigrant is a term used to describe the immigration status of people who do not have the federal documentation to show they are legally entitled to work, visit, or live here. People who are undocumented according to federal authorities do not have the proper visas to be in the United States legally. Many enter the country illegally, but a large number of this group initially had valid visas, but did not return to their native countries when their visas expired. Some former students fall into the latter category. The term criminalizes the person rather than the actual act of illegally entering or residing in the United States without federal documents. Terms such as illegal alien or illegal immigrant can often be used pejoratively in common parlance and can pack a powerful emotional wallop for those on the receiving end. Instead, use undocumented immigrant or undocumented worker, both of which are terms that convey the same descriptive information without carrying the psychological baggage. Avoid using illegal(s) as a noun.

illegal, illegals

Avoid. Alternative terms are undocumented immigrant or undocumented worker. This term has been used to describe the immigration status of people who do not have the federal documentation to show they are legally entitled to work, visit, or live here. The term criminalizes the person rather than the actual act of illegally entering or residing in the United States without documents.

Screenshot of NMAH's "Becoming US" illegal immigration-related Glossary of Terms, available at https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/sites/default/files/downloads/NMAH_Becoming%20Us_Glossary.pdf.

In reality, for decades, both Republican and Democratic presidents have used the term "illegal alien" to describe an individual's legal status before the law.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, since at least the 1980s, "illegal alien" has been a foundational term in U.S. federal law to describe any person who is not a citizen or national of the United States that is present or entered the country without legal authorization.¹⁵⁶ In fact, 100 years ago, the *New York Times* used the term "illegal alien" to describe the arrest of a man from Ireland who rode a bicycle across the U.S. border in 1926.¹⁵⁷

9. NMAH's Efforts to Turn American High Schools into Law Clinics for Illegal Aliens

In advancing its pro-illegal alien agenda, NMAH regularly employs sophisticated framing techniques that selectively highlight or omit information, bypass deliberate, analytical thinking, and tap into rapid, emotion-driven decision-making to lead its audiences to preferred conclusions.

A "case study" for teachers using NMAH's *Becoming US* educational framework entitled, *A Dream Deferred*, seeks to build empathy for illegal aliens, framing President Obama's DACA

policy as an ideal pathway for illegal aliens to eventually become citizens and recommends that educators teach students “about DREAMers” and “the long-fought battle to preserve those protections.”¹⁵⁸

The lesson “Warm Up” encourages students to emotionally put themselves into the shoes of illegal aliens, asking: “What are some of your dreams? What could prevent your dreams from coming true? What are three things that cause people’s dreams to be deferred?”¹⁵⁹ Teachers are encouraged to instruct students “that executive actions, including executive orders are not permanent and can be undone by future presidents” and “Ask students if they’ve heard of the DREAM Act or DACA.”¹⁶⁰

After hearing the students’ responses to the “Warm Up” lesson, NMAH instructs teachers to “provide students with the following background”:

The terms DACA and ‘dreamers’ are often used interchangeably. DREAMers got their name from the DREAM Act, a bill first proposed in 2001 and then again in 2009, 2010, and 2011. The bill, which never passed, would allow the children of undocumented immigrants to remain in the United States as temporary residents and, after meeting a series of requirements, as permanent residents who could ultimately earn U.S. citizenship. However, after Congress failed to pass the DREAM Act three times, President Obama used his power of executive action to protect this group of immigrants by allowing DREAMers to remain in the country temporarily. That executive action is known as DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals).¹⁶¹

After providing this background, NMAH encourages teachers to go further and “[h]elp students learn more about the policy details of DACA, the chronology of its evolution, and the political context that surrounds it. Begin by distributing copies of this [infographic](#) for students to reference.”¹⁶² It is apparent that NMAH’s true goal is not education or even advocacy, but facilitating illegal aliens’ enrollment in the DACA program.

The infographic that NMAH directs teachers to distribute to students (shown below) notes that it was created by “Immigrant Law Group PC,” a for-profit law firm founded by Stephen Manning,¹⁶³ and explains how students “might qualify for DACA,” instructs students how to apply, and even provides the names of, and deadlines for submitting, necessary forms. The infographic then promises prospective DACA applicants that if they enroll, they can get a “2 year deferment period,” “work permit,” “apply for student loans and driver’s license,” and a Social Security number.¹⁶⁴

DACA *Renewing deferred action for childhood arrivals*
 For more information: http://www.ilgrp.com/renewing_daca

WHO? You might qualify for DACA if you:

- Arrived in the US before age **16**
- Born on or after **JUNE 15 1981**
- Have lived in the US since **JUNE 15 2007**
- Are currently in school
- OR have a high school diploma or GED
- OR served in the US Military

check with an attorney if you've:

- departed the US
- had juvenile problems
- had police or ICE contact
- had problems in school
- or are worried you might not be eligible

HOW?

Apply at least **120 DAYS** before your DACA status expires. The expiration date is on the front of your work permit.

A COMPLETE APPLICATION INCLUDES:

New! Form I-821 D
 +
 Form I-765
 +
 I-765 worksheet

Application fee **\$465**

File completed applications at **USCIS lockbox**
 Find the address online at: <http://www.uscis.gov/i-821d-addresses>

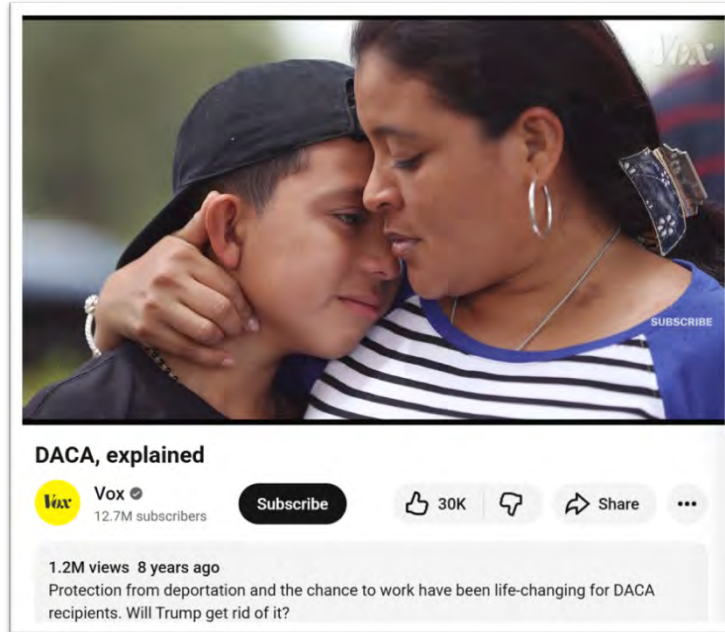
Why?

- 2 YEAR DEFERMENT PERIOD
- WORK PERMIT
- APPLY FOR STUDENT LOANS & DRIVER'S LICENSE
- SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

IMMIGRANT LAW GROUP PC 503.241.0035 www.ilgrp.com design by Kaiya Gordon

Created by "Immigrant Law Group PC," NMAH encourage high school teachers to pass out this infographic explaining how students "might qualify for DACA" and how they can apply to maximize their chances of staying in the U.S. See <https://web.archive.org/web/20240727121953/https://www.riohondo.edu/dreamers/wp-content/uploads/sites/71/2016/11/DACA-infographic-copy-4-low-low-res-1024x791.jpg>.

NMAH then recommends that teachers "show and discuss this short 'DACA, Explained' [video](#)" created by Vox.¹⁶⁵ The video begins with an emotional story of a child learning for the first time that he is "undocumented" and could be deported at any time and then proceeds to discuss how President Obama heroically created DACA in 2012, how President Trump rescinded it, and how DACA has helped "young undocumented immigrants" get a job with better pay, open their first bank account, buy their first car, and pursue educational opportunities they previously could not.¹⁶⁶ There is zero discussion about how DACA affects Americans, their economics, educational opportunities, or why this should be considered core "American history."¹⁶⁷



Screenshot of the pro-DACA YouTube video that NMAH recommends high school teachers across America play for their students in the classroom, available at <https://youtu.be/UzYDqQDNFzc?t=297>.

After showing students the pro-DACA video, NMAH instructs teachers to “project and talk through this [interactive timeline](#),” which catalogs how the DREAM Act was first introduced in Congress in 2001 with “bipartisan support,” how President Obama issued an executive order creating DACA in 2012, how Obama expanded DACA in 2014 to include the “undocumented parents of children who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents,” how a federal district and appellate court ruled against Obama’s 2014 actions, how the Supreme Court’s 2016 ruling left in place the lower court’s ruling, and how that ruling harmed “5 million undocumented immigrants.”¹⁶⁸ The timeline also features an interview with an illegal alien who “crossed illegally into the United States” in 2003 and is now a “DACA recipient.”¹⁶⁹



Photo from the interactive timeline NMAH instructs high school teachers across America to share with students, available at <https://www.kqed.org/lowdown/28184/how-we-got-here-the-rise-and-demise-of-daca-with-lesson-plan>.

NMAH then instructs teachers to “assign students to read and take notes on this ‘DACA Time Bomb’ [article](#) about the fate of 800,000 DREAMers after President Trump rescinded DACA in September of 2017.”¹⁷⁰ The article, also published by Vox, prominently features a photo of a woman crying and states that President Trump’s action “marks the beginning of six months of existential anxiety, as hundreds of thousands of immigrants struggle to go on with their lives without knowing whether they’ll be accepted as inhabitants of the United States by April — or whether the only certainty they’ll get at the end of six months is knowing the date on which they’ll lose their ability to work in the US legally and gain the constant threat of deportation.”¹⁷¹

As if this was not enough, NMAH further instructs teachers that, “Once students have a working understanding of DACA as policy, [they should] spend time learning about the very real and personal impact it has on its recipients, the DREAMers, [using] multimedia narratives to provide students with more than a single story about DREAMers”:

- [“What Dreamers Gained from DACA, and Stand to Lose”](#)
- [“Living Undocumented”](#)
- [“Interview with Dalia Nava”](#)
- [“10 Dreamers You Should Know”](#)
- [“Student Activism”](#)¹⁷²

NMAH then encourages teachers to enter into discussion “by providing students with readings that illustrate a range of ideological positions on the issue of undocumented immigrants.”

- [“Right and Left on Trump’s DACA Decision”](#)
- [“The Conservative Case Against the DREAM Act”](#)
- [“The Case for Keeping DACA”](#)
- [“10 Reasons We Need The DREAM Act”](#)¹⁷³

NMAH then directs teachers to have students “synthesize their reading and analyze the debate in an essay that addresses one of these three questions (adapted from the unit’s essential questions)”:

- *“How does the debate over DACA reflect ideas about belonging and citizenship?”*
- *“Are claims made in the debate over the DREAMers that favor the protection of some groups over others?”*
- *“How do the positions held reflect or contradict American values and liberal traditions?”*¹⁷⁴

All of this is done to instill a clear political message within the next generation of American voters: Unless DACA is defended and illegal aliens are allowed to stay, America’s reputation as a welcoming, loving country is at stake. This is not only a corruption of NMAH’s intended purpose, but a factually false dichotomy. NMAH advances it regardless.

10. NMAH's Pro-Illegal Alien Activism Shaped a Flagship Exhibit About America

According to NMAH, the Museum's *Becoming US* "educational" framework "resulted in an exhibition . . . called *Many Voices, One Nation*."¹⁷⁵ NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit is a physical manifestation of its *Becoming US* framework. For example, the exhibit includes in its didactics many of the same statements included in the framework.¹⁷⁶

Given that the framework underpinning the exhibit states that "[t]here is no single American culture, language, or narrative,"¹⁷⁷ it should not come as a surprise to learn that NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit provides no coherent narrative of American history. Instead, it pieces together alleged examples of Americans oppressing immigrants and other groups while claiming to "take visitors on a chronological and thematic journey that maps the cultural geography of the unique and complex stories that animate the Latin emblem on the country's Great Seal and the national ideal: *E pluribus unum*, Out of many, one."¹⁷⁸

While NMAH claims that our "national ideal" is unity when it serves its divisive, activist purposes, it refuses to present, and states that there is not, a single, unified American culture, language, or narrative, likely because doing so would not serve its activist purposes.

Like the *Becoming US* framework, the ultimate goal of *Many Voices, One Nation* is to convince visitors that illegal aliens are entitled to citizenship, voting rights, and "belonging" in America. This explains why America's motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, is criticized throughout the exhibit for lacking inclusivity. One didactic reads: "In a desire to unify the colonies, the first U.S. Congress chose the motto *E Pluribus Unum*—Out of Many, One. It took generations for those ineligible for citizenship in the new nation—including Native Americans, people of African descent, and women—to negotiate their place as part of the 'One.'"¹⁷⁹

There are several problems with this didactic. First, it is factually wrong about who chose the motto and why it was chosen. "E Pluribus Unum" was first proposed by a committee that included Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams as part of an early national seal design.¹⁸⁰ It was the Continental Congress—not "the first U.S. Congress"—that formally adopted the motto on June 20, 1782, as part of the Great Seal of the United States.¹⁸¹ According to Charles Thomson, who presented the design, the motto served as "a textual representation" of the states united under a central Congress—a reference to the union of states, not an aspirational promise of civic inclusion.¹⁸²

Second, at the time of America's Founding, women were not "ineligible for citizenship"; they simply lacked the full rights of citizenship, along with a massive portion of the male population—many of whom were white. In fact, in the early republic, up to half of all white men were unable to vote because they did not meet the strict property-ownership or tax-paying requirements in their states—a system the American colonies inherited from Great Britain and which was "widely used in many nations around the world until the 1800s."¹⁸³ But NMAH intentionally leaves these facts out.

Third, framing these groups as outside the "One" for generations erases their foundational presence in America. Enslaved people, Native Americans, and women were not absent from

America's formation, but were active agents within it. To declare these groups outside the "One" is not just historically inaccurate; it retroactively strips them of the belonging they had always claimed and exercised, recasting their identity as contingent on legal recognition rather than rooted in the land, labor, and culture they had long shaped.

Unfortunately, these inaccuracies, distortions, and omissions are par for the course for NMAH. When one understands NMAH's activist goal of pushing for citizenship for illegal aliens, it makes sense why the only reference to Benjamin Franklin in the entire *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit is about his "ambivalent view" of immigrants, seeking to paint him as racist or exclusionary: "Philadelphian Benjamin Franklin expressed an ambivalent view of these immigrants. He admired their industry but worried that they introduced an 'alien' element to the colony."¹⁸⁴ Notice the only descriptor for Benjamin Franklin is where he was from, not the pivotal role he played in American history or the fact that he was the only founder to sign all four of America's key founding documents: the Declaration of Independence, Treaty of Alliance with France, Treaty of Paris, and U.S. Constitution.

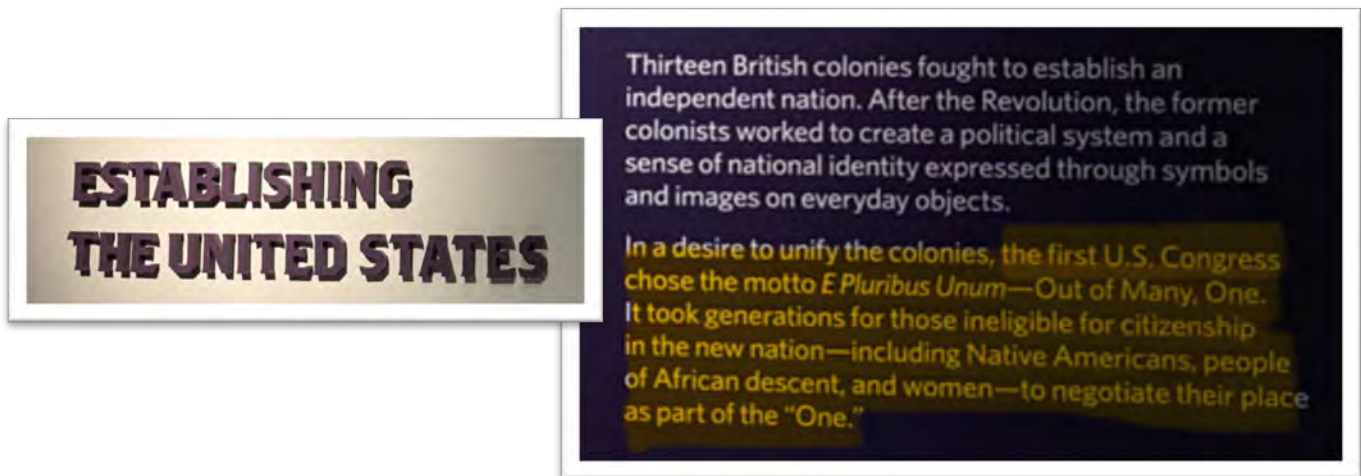


Photo of "Establishing the United States?" didactic in NMAH's "Many Voices, One Nation" exhibit. Highlights added.

NMAH's pro-illegal immigration activism is also why the first display greeting visitors reframes American history to be largely about the peoples and groups oppressed by Americans, with four statements answering the question, "How did we become US?": "Some of Us Were Already Here"—referring to Native Americans; "Some of Us Came Here Voluntarily"—referring to the American colonists; "Some of Us Were Forcibly Brought Here"—referring to African slaves; and "Some of Us Remained In Place as the United States Expanded to Our Land"—referring to Native Americans and implicitly alleging that the U.S. stole their land. This sets the tone that visitors should understand that, according to NMAH, America has a long history of being an oppressive country.

The exhibit then invites visitors to "Discover How Diverse Peoples Built A Nation Together"—seeking to reframe America's story from being focused on (a) Christopher Columbus, who discovered America, (b) the Pilgrims who founded the first self-governing American colony in 1620, and (c) the Founding Fathers who fought to create the nation in 1776 and designed its enduring constitutional structure in 1787 (e.g., George Washington, John Adams, Thomas

Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay) and towards political activism and modern-day grievances.¹⁸⁵

Understanding NMAH’s ultimate activist goal—citizenship for millions of illegal aliens—also explains why the exhibit repeatedly emphasizes that non-Americans “from many cultures” and “different languages” used to live in the land now called the United States “long before the founding of the United States, even before European contact” and why it frames being American as a “negotiation [that] continues,” implying that some individuals that should be Americans are not yet.¹⁸⁶

Recognizing NMAH’s true motives also reveals why the introductory didactic in the exhibit argues that, “In creating the new nation, early leaders envisioned a country that promised opportunity and freedom—but only for some” and that “the people who lived in the United States” had to “negotiate, or work out, what it means to be American,” a “negotiation” that “continues” today—implying that what it means to be American is unsettled and still needs to be changed or “work[ed] out.”¹⁸⁷

In fact, throughout the entire *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit, the only time that NMAH mentions the term “founders” is in reference to their alleged “acceptance” of slavery.¹⁸⁸ In a didactic entitled, “Negotiating Freedom,” the exhibit states that, “[t]he importation of enslaved African peoples and slavery’s acceptance by founders of the new nation bound the country to an institution at odds with its ideals of equality, liberty, and freedom.”¹⁸⁹



Photos of the adult-sized renderings of the Statue of Liberty (and its Greco-Roman-inspired forerunner, Columbia) in NMAH’s “Many Voices, One Nation” exhibit, including one depicting an immigrant worker as Lady Liberty.¹⁹⁰

Never mind the fact that Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator himself, asserted in 1858 that, “a vast portion of the American people” and “the framers of the Constitution itself” viewed slavery as “a vast moral evil” and “have rested in the belief that slavery was in course of ultimate extinction.”¹⁹¹ As Lincoln put it, “Why did those old men, about the time of the adoption of the Constitution, decree that Slavery should not go into the new territory, where it had not already gone? Why declare that within twenty years the African Slave Trade, by which slaves are

supplied, might be cut off by Congress? Why were all these acts? I might enumerate more of these acts—but enough. What were they but a clear indication that the framers of the Constitution intended and expected the ultimate extinction of that institution[?]”¹⁹²

Like other inconvenient truths, NMAH ignores this history because it completely undercuts its core narrative and instead attempts to instill within visitors its belief that migration and immigration, including the granting of citizenship to illegal aliens, is a defining modern-day civil rights and human liberty issue. This is why the exhibit features *three* different sculpted renderings of the Statue of Liberty (or its Greco-Roman-inspired forerunner, Columbia) in *three* separate locations through the exhibit, including one depicting Lady Liberty as an immigrant farm worker.

Despite the fact that NMAH’s *Becoming US* “educational” curriculum fails to include any information about George Washington,¹⁹³ Thomas Jefferson,¹⁹⁴ the other Founding Fathers,¹⁹⁵ the Declaration of Independence¹⁹⁶ or the U.S. Constitution,¹⁹⁷ NMAH chose to highlight the curriculum in a video highlighting its efforts to “mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.”¹⁹⁸

Celebrate the Nation’s 250th in 2026

Join the National Museum of American History for a story so big we need the entire museum to tell it! Starting in the spring of 2026 we’ll mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Come discover how Americans have worked together to realize the ideals expressed in this iconic document. Be a part of this momentous occasion to commemorate, celebrate, and reflect on our shared history through a year of dynamic exhibitions, insightful programs, and engaging educational outreach. Plan for your unforgettable visit today!



Screenshot of NMAH’s “Celebrate the Nation’s 250th in 2026” page on its website, where a video highlights its “*Becoming US*” curriculum as one way the Museum will “mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence,” available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/celebrate-the-nations-250th-in-2026>.

11. NMAH’s Head of PreK-12 Learning Helped Develop Its “Educational” Curriculum Advocating for Citizenship for Illegal Aliens

According to official Smithsonian data, the Smithsonian’s educational programs and publications have reached tens of millions of individuals in recent years, with NMAH’s educational efforts alone reaching over 8 million since FY 2022.¹⁹⁹ In fact, it is estimated that, “More than 80% of history teachers use materials from federal museums such as the Smithsonian.”²⁰⁰ Given the

Smithsonian and NMAH’s significant influence over American classrooms, it is important to understand the beliefs of the individuals responsible for developing its educational materials.

Dr. Orlando R. Serrano, Jr. is the current “Head of PreK-12 Learning” at NMAH, where he has led the development of the Museum’s educational programs, teacher professional development, and curriculum content since May 2024.²⁰¹ Prior to serving as Head of PreK-12 Learning,

Serrano was NMAH’s Manager of PreK-12 Learning and before that NMAH’s Manager of Youth and Teacher Programs (his first role at NMAH after joining in July 2017), where he “manage[d] the museum’s programs and resources for PK-12 audiences” and “support[ed] and develop[ed] informal educational and leadership experiences for students, professional development workshops for educators, and curriculum content.”²⁰²

In those capacities, Dr. Serrano stated that he has developed “original public programming for local and national K-12 teacher and student audiences” with the goal of shifting “pedagogic focus from object-based learning to civic education and engagement, direct democratic practice.”²⁰³ In a 2022 article published in the *Smithsonian magazine* entitled, “To Reimagine the Future, Start by Expanding the Stories of Our Past,” Dr. Serrano and Megan Linehan, another NMAH educational staffer, explained that historical education should be used to “open up imaginative possibilities for what the U.S. could be and become.”²⁰⁴

Dr. Serrano’s stated goal of using history to drive “anti-racist” societal change mirrors Director Hartig’s statement in 2024 that history should be all about “redress” and “reparations.” As she put it, “Redress, in the form of reparations, goes beyond acknowledgment of wrongdoing; it should involve taking responsibility and considering acts of correction as we pursue restorative justice—what, for us, is restorative justice through history.”²⁰⁵

Like Director Hartig, Dr. Serrano has delivered on his promise of activism. On his LinkedIn page, Serrano notes that he was behind NMAH’s pro-illegal alien *Becoming US* “educational” curriculum,²⁰⁶ which instructs high school teachers to teach American students that illegal aliens are entitled to U.S. citizenship and that “deportation [has] affected individuals’ participation in democracy,”²⁰⁷ despite the fact that they do not have a right to be here.

Dr. Serrano similarly describes how he led NMAH’s “Decolonization Working Group under the direction of the Center for Restorative History (CRH)” and sat “on CRH leadership team as Facilitator of Learning and Practice as well as member of the Research Committee.”²⁰⁸

NMAH leadership has repeatedly empowered Dr. Serrano, allowing him to serve as key manager of the Museum’s educational initiatives *for over eight years*, placing him on the Center for Restorative History’s “leadership team,” making him a “Co-Lead” of its “Decolonization Working Group,” and elevating him as the “Head” of NMAH’s educational programming for American elementary, middle, and high school students—all based on his interpretative vision of American history.

But what exactly is that vision? It is, in short, as you will read below, the vision of abolishing America’s criminal justice system, “the state,” and the “logic” of western civilization itself.

12. NMAH's Head of PreK-12 Learning's Disdain for America's "System of Law"

In a 2023 article published in the *Journal of Museum Education*, Dr. Serrano noted that NMAH's CRH was explicitly created for the purpose of activism, or as he put it, "predicated on the idea that historical inquiry, research, and practice could be leveraged for justice" and "resolution, repair, and/or redress."²⁰⁹ But he also explained how CRH and Restorative Justice, while great, were not the ultimate goal, but merely "a beginning," writing: "It must be stated at the outset that the thinking, writing, and practice in [Restorative Justice] RJ is rich and deep. The four themes outlined below are not the totality of thinking on [Restorative Justice] RJ, but a beginning."²¹⁰

In a footnote to that sentence, Serrano reveals what the ending to that "beginning" is.²¹¹ The footnote reads: "A closely related community of thinking and practice [to Restorative Justice], transformative justice (TJ), is growing."²¹² Likewise, CRH's recommended reading list includes a piece entitled, "Center for Restorative History Convening 2: Transformative Justice."²¹³

NMAH's ultimate goal for CRH is therefore not merely restorative justice, but transformative justice. But what does transformative justice mean? In short, it means that the Museum seeks not just the abolition of ICE (as shown in its *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like* programming²¹⁴) but abolition of the entire U.S. criminal justice system, including prisons and all forms of incarceration, and "the state" itself.

Serrano's footnote concludes, "For a primer on TJ [Transformative Justice] visit the Barnard Center for the Study of Women for a series of videos titled *Building Accountable Communities* that introduces TJ principles and practices."²¹⁵

Upon visiting that website, one will learn about how the Barnard Center for the Study of Women works to "advance intersectional social justice feminist analyses and generate steps toward social transformation" and how transformative justice seeks "to end policing and develop real strategies for keeping each other safe" while moving "towards an abolitionist horizon."²¹⁶

As Mia Mingus, a prominent transformative justice advocate (honored by the Obama White House as a "Champion of Change,"²¹⁷ cited in a recent *Smithsonian magazine* article,²¹⁸ and featured on the website Serrano directs readers to visit²¹⁹) explained, transformative justice "is an abolitionist framework that understands systems such as prisons, police and I.C.E. as sites where enormous amounts of violence take place and as systems that were created to be inherently violent in order to maintain social control. TJ works to build alternatives to our current systems which often position themselves as protectors, while simultaneously enacting the very forms of violence they claim to condemn."²²⁰ In short, "transformative justice" envisions a country without a justice system at all.

This ideological foundation that Museum leadership references helps explain why NMAH continually denigrates ICE, police, and the rule of law and why Director Hartig argued that the "modern-day police force" arose out of "slave patrols."²²¹

It also explains why Dr. Serrano went on to criticize “the U.S. system of law” in the same article because it involves a neutral judge presiding over an adversarial process that “makes one party the ‘bad guy’” and includes “coercion or punishment” and “force” as “a consideration” rather than focus on “problem-solving.”²²² He explained that:

In the U.S. system of law, problem-solving is rarely foregrounded. A judge presides over a case and

... makes one party the ‘bad guy’ and the other ‘the good guy;’ one of them is ‘wrong’ and the other is ‘right.’ The vertical justice system is so concerned with winning and losing that when the parties come to the end of the case, little or nothing is done to solve the underlying problems which caused the dispute in the first place. For centuries, the focus of English and American law has been punishment by the ‘state.’

In contrast, Navajo justice is driven by problem-solving, ‘peacemaking,’ a process of talking things out. Yazzie explains, ‘[t]he absence of coercion or punishment is important in Navajo justice concept because there are differences in the way people are treated when force is a consideration.’²²³

13. NMAH’s Head of PreK-12 Learning Criticized Western Civilization Because it “Privileges Order” and White People; Wants to Give U.S. Land Back to Indigenous Peoples

NMAH does not seek to merely eradicate America’s criminal justice system; it seeks to uproot the foundational “logic” of western civilization itself on the grounds that it allegedly elevates white people and western culture to the exclusion of others.²²⁴

In the same article, Dr. Serrano explained that, “We do not feel free, because we are still in the same place that centers” “western liberal humanism,” “a western liberal logic that privileges order, organization, and taxonomy,” “[t]hat is to say, metrics that it creates and can understand,” and “situates non-white and non-western as inferior.”²²⁵ This claim, however, confuses historical prejudices with the foundational principles of the West—e.g., rule of law, rationalism, free inquiry, and individual liberty—which have lifted people of every color, culture, and creed out of poverty precisely because they are rooted in the timeless truth that all men are made in the Image of God and therefore endowed with God-given human dignity and equality.

Dr. Serrano also discussed how before coming to the Smithsonian, he made his ninth-grade classroom a place that was “informed by thinking that confronts coloniality”²²⁶ and how he believes that museums like NMAH should go further than “decolonization” and “move towards reMaorification or reindigenosation,” which involves giving land and power back to Indigenous peoples, viewing “the museum as an imperial structure that is intimately tied to systemic whiteness,” as prominent Decolonization advocate Puawai Cairns put it.²²⁷

In fact, NMAH’s CRH featured an article authored by Puawai Cairns making that exact argument in its *Restorative History [explained]* explanatory document.²²⁸

Read & Listen

Cairns, Puawai. "Decolonise or indigenise: moving towards sovereign spaces and the Māorification of New Zealand museology." *Te Papa Museum (blog)*. February 10, 2020. blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2020/02/10/decolonise-or-indigenise-moving-towards-sovereign-spaces-and-the-maorification-of-new-zealand-museology.

Screenshot of the Recommended Reading and Listening section of CRH's explanatory document, available at https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative_History-explained_2.pdf.

Dr. Serrano concluded his 2023 article with several recommendations to his readers, including one about “be[ing] sincere” that noted, “If one is going to claim to do RH [Restorative History] work, one needs to do RH work.”²²⁹ Citing two academics, Dr. Serrano noted that, “in the U.S. settler colonial context, decolonization ‘must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is *all* of the land and not just symbolically.”²³⁰ Serrano concluded, “Decolonization is incommensurable with civil rights, social justice, and/or DEIA [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility] because it requires a full-scale re-ordering of the world through political, economic, and social processes that have material expressions. If one is not doing RH, one should not say they are doing RH.”²³¹

It is evident that Director Hartig, who regularly begins her official speeches with a land acknowledgement, and Dr. Serrano both seek a “full-scale re-ordering of the world” under the guise of “restorative history.”

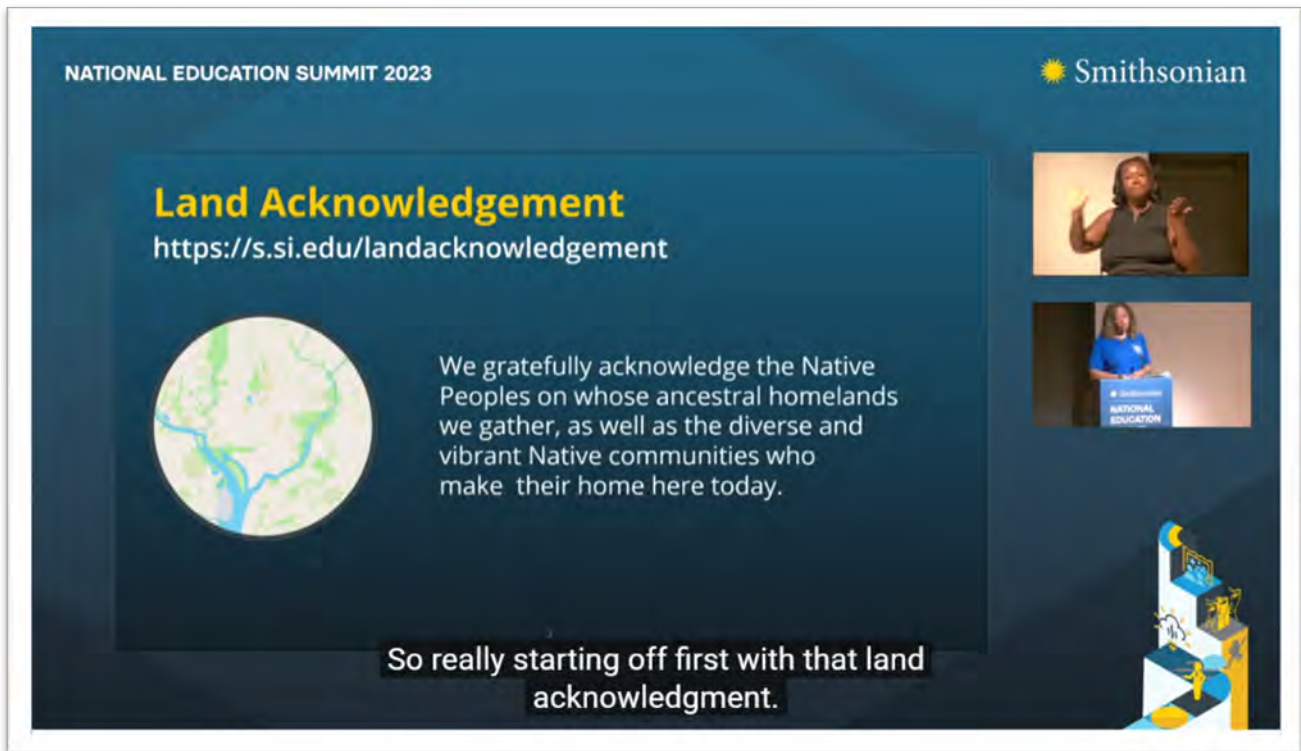
14. NMAH Promoted Materials from the Anti-White Southern Poverty Law Center in Its “Educational” Curriculum and Programming for High School Students

In achieving this “full-scale re-ordering of the world,” NMAH chose to partner with the SPLC, which was recently criminally indicted by a grand jury for funneling more than \$3 million in a “massive fraud operation” that involved paying “the leaders” of “extremist groups” “including the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, and National Socialist Party of America” to engage in racist acts, including “state and federal crimes,” and then fundraising off of those crimes to advance an anti-white agenda.²³² In other words, the SPLC—a self-proclaimed “anti-hate group”—was found to be “manufacturing racism to justify its existence.”²³³

For example, in its *Becoming US: Teacher Resources for a More Accurate & Inclusive Migration & Immigration Narrative*, which Dr. Serrano and other NMAH staff members helped develop, NMAH recommends²³⁴ that high school teachers prepare to teach the curriculum by exploring the website of SPLC’s *Teaching Tolerance* program²³⁵ and using SPLC’s *Let’s Talk* guide, which (a) frames classroom discussion around themes of “injustice,” “identity and power,” and systems that “privilege some at the expense of others,” (b) discusses how to “not reinforce hierarchies, but to correct for them,” and (c) highlights a toolkit entitled “Confronting White Nationalism in Schools.”²³⁶

15. How the Smithsonian Works to Indoctrinate Thousands of American Teachers

In addition to NMAH, the Smithsonian’s educational leadership has also embraced the SPLC’s anti-white agenda and pushed an anti-American ideology that claims our country rests on stolen land. For example, Smithsonian Under Secretary for Education Monique Chism, the individual responsible for establishing the Smithsonian’s educational priorities and overseeing its collective initiatives, opened the Smithsonian’s 2023 National Education Summit with two separate “land acknowledgement[s]” (one at the beginning of each of the summit’s first two days of programming).²³⁷ To get an understanding of the reach of these summits, the Smithsonian’s 2024 National Education Summit was attended by over 5,400 educators, librarians, and policymakers from all 50 states and 87 countries.²³⁸



Screenshot of Smithsonian Under Secretary for Education Monique Chism delivering a land acknowledgement at the beginning of the Smithsonian’s 2023 National Education Summit, available at <https://www.si.edu/educators/national-education-summit-2023#rworp>.

Under Secretary Chism then went on to discuss the importance of focusing on “systemic racism,” complained that “the whole construct [of history taught in K-12 schools] was primarily white,”²³⁹ and promoted the SPLC’s *Teaching Tolerance* program, which, as one family-oriented non-profit noted, seeks to force an “endorsement of the [LGBTQ] community” among children as young as preschoolers and kindergarteners.²⁴⁰ By devoting institutional energy into promoting these ideological frameworks, the Smithsonian has demonstrably and improperly deviated from scholarship into activism, especially attempting to target the youth with their radical ideology.

16. NMAH’s Head of PreK-12 Learning Warned of the “Danger of A Single Story in Storytelling Today” that Focuses on White People

Incorporating SPLC’s divisive materials into its “educational” curriculum for high school students also fits within NMAH Director Hartig and Dr. Serrano’s broader effort to avoid any suggestion of an “Anglo-centric” narrative of American history,²⁴¹ which includes using the Museum’s annual National Youth Summit programming to divide and dispirit young Americans.²⁴²

In their 2022 article entitled “To Reimagine the Future, Start by Expanding the Stories of Our Past,” Dr. Serrano and his NMAH colleague Megan Linehan discuss “The ‘Danger of a Single Story’ in Storytelling Today.”²⁴³ They stated:

Each year, the National Museum of American History (NMAH) brings together young people for a conversation on a topic of their choosing, a [National Youth Summit](#) (NYS). We meet with young people and ask them what they are interested in learning about and discussing together. Recent summits have centered [Woman Suffrage](#), [Teen Resistance to Racism](#), and [Gender Equity](#). This year, we are discussing [Democracy](#). Our driving question is, ‘How do the stories we tell about the past shape our democracy?’ In particular, we are interested in how these stories, the perspectives they hold, and people they center impact how we imagine what democracy is and can be. Diverse and inclusive protagonists, authors, and narratives are vital to cultivating imagination, creativity, and empathy. As educators, we should be creating learning environments that provide our students windows and mirrors: points of entry into experiences different from their own, as well as opportunities to reflect on their lives and histories *in relationship with others*. The alternative, one narrative and perspective, is myopic, even dangerous.²⁴⁴

17. NMAH’s Head of PreK-12 Learning Believes That White People Have an “Empathy Gap” Preventing Them from Wanting to “See Stories That Center Black People”

Serrano and Linehan then explain that white people are to blame for all this, noting that “white audiences” have an “empathy gap” which “makes it difficult for [them] to relate to and subsequently want to see stories that center Black people.”²⁴⁵ Serrano and Linehan emphasize that it is important to “clos[e] the empathy gap” in “our popular culture” but even more so “in our classrooms” and through NMAH programming to “open up imaginative possibilities for what the U.S. could be and become.”²⁴⁶

This is where NMAH’s annual National Youth Summits, which have reached tens of thousands of Americans,²⁴⁷ come in. Rather than tell America’s story, NMAH seeks to use its youth-oriented programming to turn America’s children into activists and “reimagine the story of democracy in the U.S.,” specifically, a “non-white” story that does not tell a cohesive narrative of American history.²⁴⁸

This is why NMAH’s Youth Summits on “Woman Suffrage, Teen Resistance to Racism, and Gender Equity” have consistently focused on elevating the stories of non-white males,²⁴⁹ and why NMAH’s 2024 National Youth Summit asked the question, “How can young people engage

in political action and influence elections?,” explored “questions of representation, power, and accountability to examine how young people have boldly driven change in our democracy,” and “offer[ed] ideas for students to consider how they will develop their civic identities to inspire our shared future.”²⁵⁰

To understand what kind of “political action and influence [over] elections” NMAH was seeking to advance through its 2024 Summit, consider a few of the featured speakers it chose to invite:

- “Gen-Z Historian” Kahlil Greene, who has argued that “ICE enforcement has chilling parallels to the slave patrols of the 19th Century, designed to hunt human beings for profit and power”;²⁵¹
- Jahnvi Rao, who was the former Youth Head of Youth Engagement and Millennial Voter Participation for the Democratic National Committee, where she “[w]orked with College Democrats of America Chapters to implement voter registration events at college graduations,” then Deputy Campaign Manager for a Democratic candidate in Pennsylvania, then an intern in the Biden White House where she “discuss[ed] youth priorities and collaboration opportunities with the Second Gentleman and various cabinet officials”;²⁵² and
- Sydney Fahn, a former Director of Outreach for Women High Schoolers for Biden, former Outreach Director for Colorado High Schoolers for Biden, former field intern for a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Congress, former intern for then-Democratic candidate Jon Ossoff’s U.S. Senate campaign, former President and Founder of the Boulder Chapter of High School Democrats of Colorado, former co-founding President of a Chapter of New York High School Democrats, former intern for a Democratic Member of the New York City Council, and most recently, former intern for Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, prior to her current role running New Voters Research Network with Jahnvi Rao, according to her LinkedIn profile.²⁵³

Rather than spend time highlighting America’s rich history, NMAH utilizes its youth-focused “educational” programming as an opportunity to invite Democratic Party operatives to turn American teenagers into political activists. And NMAH leaves no doubt as to what it believes that activism should be.

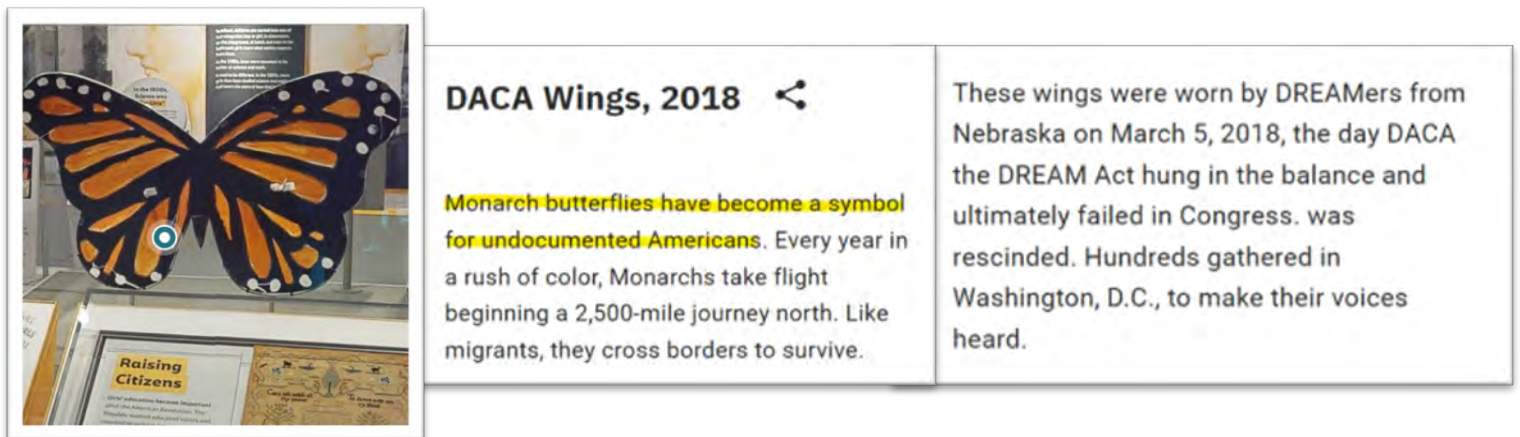


Screenshot of the promotional graphic NMAH created for its 2024 National Youth Summit, encouraging teenagers to become political activists, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/releases/youth-summit-2024>.

18. NMAH’s Pro-Illegal Alien Activism and Its Role Informing Other Major Exhibits

In their *Redefining ‘American’* article, NMAH’s UOCI curators Bercaw and Arteaga explain how they worked to integrate “undocumented organizing” materials collected through UOCI into multiple exhibits across the Smithsonian, including NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* and the National Museum of the American Latino’s (NMAL) flagship exhibit, *¡Presente! A Latino History of the United States*.²⁵⁴

Within *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)*, NMAH included a display case featuring “DACA Wings” with the phrases “#Here to Fight” and “Undocumented & UNAFRAID” written on the back.²⁵⁵ Surrounding the “DACA Wings” case, NMAH placed four panels featuring various didactics; all four talk about citizenship and include didactics with titles like “Raising Citizens,” “Claiming Citizenship,” and “Making Citizens.”²⁵⁶



Photos of the “DACA Wings” display and didactic in NMAH’s “*Girlhood (It’s Complicated)*” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.²⁵⁷

The first didactic directly in front of the “DACA Wings” display, “Raising Citizens,” states that America denied women “their personhood” for 140+ years because they were ineligible to vote, noting: “Girls’ education became important after the American Revolution. The Republic wanted educated voters and counted on girls (as future mothers) to teach their children well. While the United States valued women as mothers, it denied them their personhood. Nationally, women had a voice but no vote until 1920.”²⁵⁸

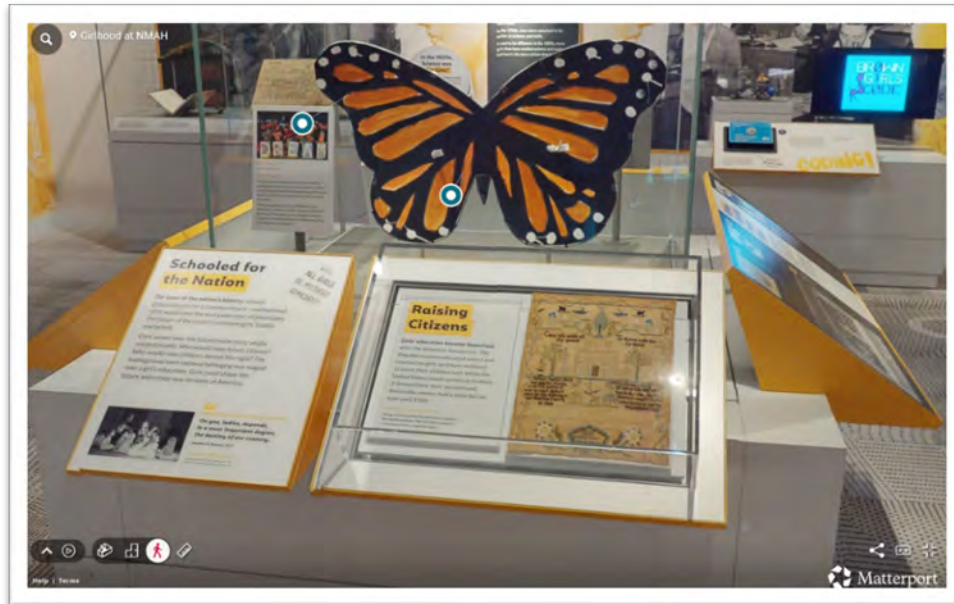


Photo of the “Raising Citizens” didactic in front of the “DACA Wings” display in NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

The second didactic on the same panel, entitled “Schooled for the Nation,” frames motherhood as something to be escaped from or questioned and alleges that “Girls’ power over the future made many adults uncomfortable. Who would raise future citizens? Who would raise children denied this right? The battleground over national belonging was waged over a girl’s education. Girls could shape the future and create new versions of America.”²⁵⁹

Notice how this first panel frames women’s voting rights, citizenship, and education as just a few examples of America’s enduring “battleground[s] over national belonging.”²⁶⁰ With the DACA butterfly in the background, the exhibit’s implication is clear: illegal aliens’ citizenship is another “battleground over national belonging.”²⁶¹

Like the first, the second panel focuses the visitor’s attention on citizenship, with a didactic entitled “Claiming Citizenship: Freedom Schools” discussing how “slavery, segregation, and racism denied African Americans access to full citizenship”—implying that similar injustices are behind America’s refusal to grant citizenship to millions of illegal aliens.²⁶²



Photo of the “Claiming Citizenship” didactic facing toward the “DACA Wings” display in NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.²⁶³

Likewise, the third panel includes a didactic entitled, “Making Citizens: Indian Boarding Schools,” which says: “American citizenship is not always desired. As members of sovereign, independent nations, American Indian families raised girls to pass on their languages, values, and traditions. In response, U.S. educators physically removed girls and boys from their homes and communities. These educators wanted to erase Indian cultures. And, yet again, the key target was girls because Anglo educators also believed girls would raise the next generation.”

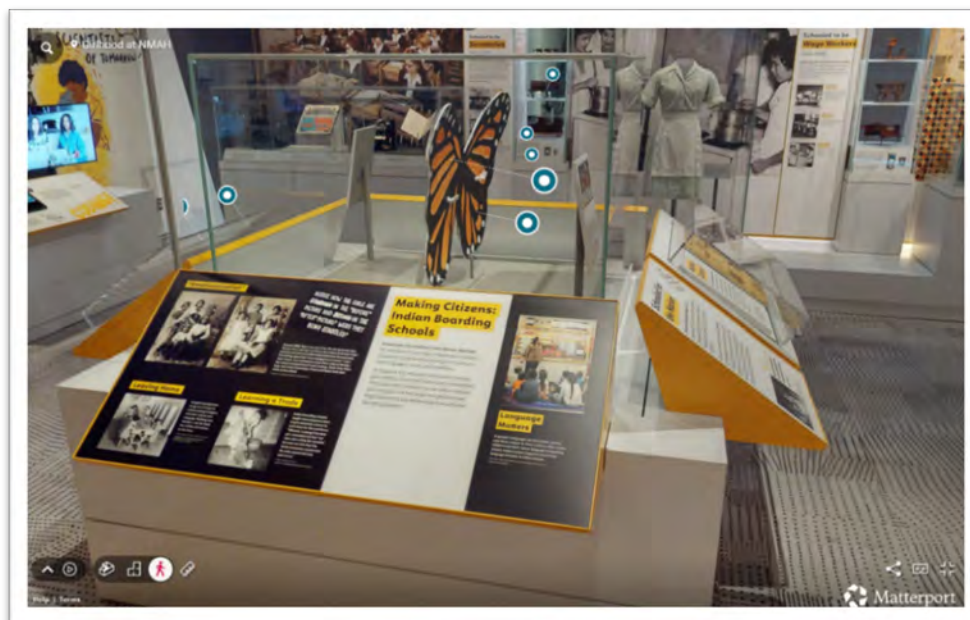


Photo of the “Making Citizens” didactic facing toward the “DACA Wings” display in NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

Ironically, while instructing American teachers in its educational resources that “[t]here is no single American culture, language, or narrative,”²⁶⁴ the one place NMAH admits a native country’s language matters is in reference to Indians losing their native language in American boarding schools. A didactic on the same panel entitled “Language Matters” reads: “A people’s language carries names, words, and ideas unique to their culture. After many children lost their native language in boarding school, Indian nations began to teach their language formally in tribal schools.”²⁶⁵

The fourth and final panel surrounding the DACA Butterfly Wings features a didactic entitled “Demanding Inclusion: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals,” which states: “Schoolgirls have been on the front line of change, demanding inclusion. Undocumented girls raised in the United States see themselves as Americans. The nation disagrees. In 2012 the Obama administration issued Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Under DACA, youths could stay in the country if they could document having lived in the United States for five years. But DACA made it clear that citizenship would not be granted. DACA offers only temporary protection from deportation, a fact driven home when President Donald Trump rescinded DACA in 2017—only to be blocked by the Supreme Court in 2020.”²⁶⁶

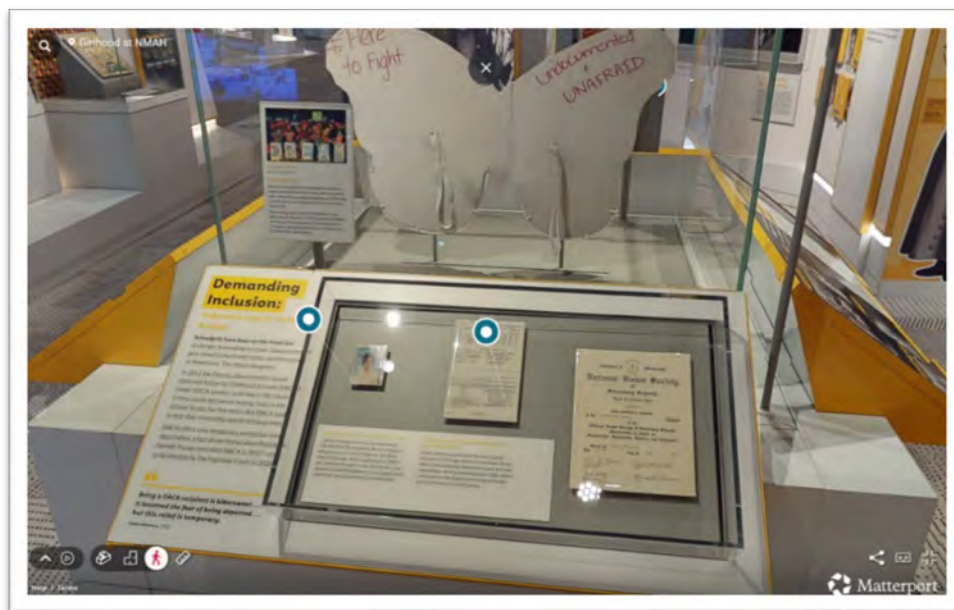


Photo of the “Demanding Inclusion” didactic facing toward the “DACA Wings” display in NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

The didactic also includes several artifacts belonging to a Mexican illegal alien (e.g., her first-grade picture, high school report card, national honor society certificate), and a quote, stating: “Being a DACA recipient is bittersweet. . . . It lessened the fear of being deported . . . but this relief is temporary.”²⁶⁷

In its *American Democracy* exhibit, NMAH recently added an umbrella and t-shirt depicting a monarch butterfly covered in American stars and stripes and the word “VOTE” underneath, implying that illegal aliens should be given the right to vote.



Photos of an umbrella and t-shirt in NMAH’s “American Democracy” exhibit.

Again, the message could not be clearer: a visitor encountering the exhibits on display at NMAH or the educational materials provided online will notice how it is *the illegal alien* whose rights and interests NMAH seeks to prioritize and tell the story of, *not the American people’s*. In discussing the issue of illegal immigration, NMAH makes no effort to highlight Americans’ rights and interests in, for example, protecting (a) the availability and wages of low-skilled jobs and workers; (b) already strained public resources like schools, healthcare, and welfare; and (c) the public safety, national security, and cultural and social cohesion of America—not to mention the rule of law. This is by design, and it is intended to spur visitors into political action, not teach American history.



Photo of wall in NMAH’s “Girlhood” exhibit, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

A message on a wall in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit illustrates how the Museum’s new mission shows up in practice: “When the rules don’t fit, many girls take action.”²⁶⁸

In short, NMAH’s repeated message to young visitors is: “Be a social and political activist.” To be clear, this message is not unique to NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit. Indeed, Kathleen Franz, the “project director” for NMAH’s *Girlhood* exhibit²⁶⁹ was a member of the 11-

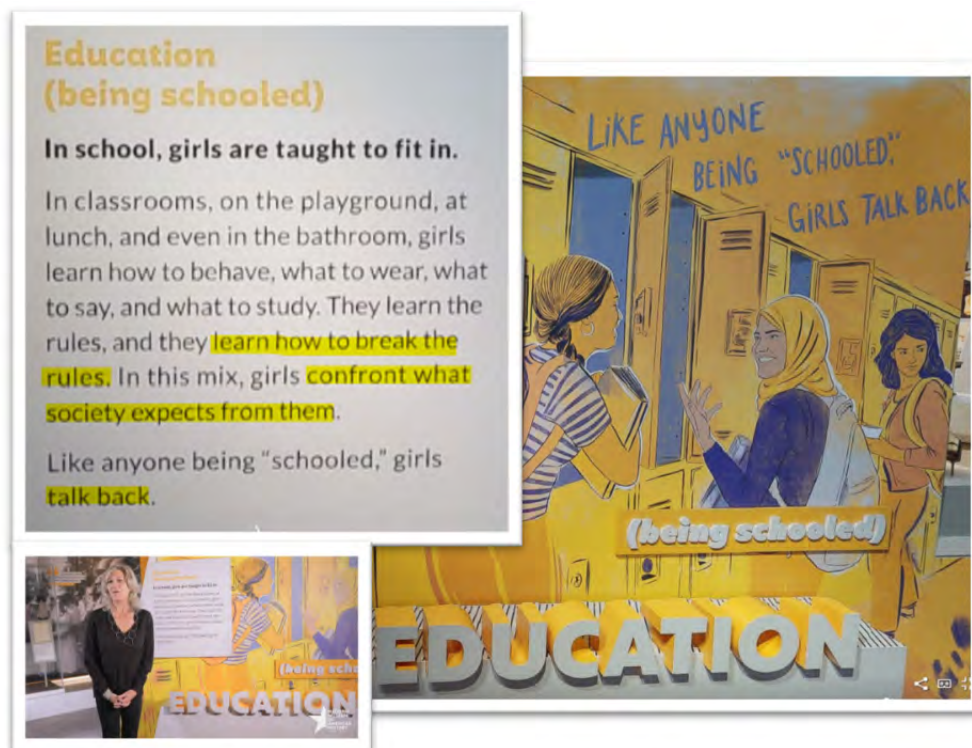
person committee responsible for drafting NMAH’s Collections Plan, which directs the entire Museum to collect and present history to “inspire community organizers to effect change,” “making choices in response to the needs and knowledge of our time, with an eye toward shaping new futures.”²⁷⁰

19. NMAH’s Efforts to Convince America’s Children to Defy All Authority

As *Girlhood* curator Sam Vong makes clear, NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit is simply one manifestation of the NMAH Interpretive Plan’s directive to challenge all authority by sharing stories that “illuminate how power works” and change “ingrained structures of power,”²⁷¹ stating:

Girls have consistently resisted and even subverted how institutions, experts, and other social authorities have sought to define and shape them and their girlhood. They have creatively fashioned their own identities and have influenced the ways we see and understand gender in all its nuances. This exhibition is important because it not only invites people to see girls as political and as history makers but it also encourages us to explore how power operates in American society through this concept of girlhood.²⁷²

NMAH encourages all young children—but girls in particular—to “talk back,” defy authority, including teachers, parents, and religion. As just one example, in a didactic about girls’ education, NMAH states that “[i]n school, girls are taught to fit in... They learn the rules, and they learn how to break the rules. In this mix, girls confront what society expects from them. Like anyone being ‘schooled,’ girls talk back.”²⁷³



Photos of NMAH’s “*Girlhood (It’s Complicated)*” exhibit, available at <https://youtu.be/GVYesfMeMOc?t=1229> and <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>. Highlights added.

In other words, NMAH and the Smithsonian does not just promote activism; it explicitly encourages opposition to authority in general, and specifically for minors, on the apparent assumption that authority figures are always or usually wrong.

20. NMAH's Involvement in the Smithsonian's "Reckoning with Our Racial Past" Initiative

In line with its new activist objectives, the Smithsonian created its "Our Shared Future: Reckoning with Our Racial Past" initiative in 2021. Deborah Lynn Mack, the initiative's head, explained how the initiative explores how museums can take "an activist stance" to advance "equity."²⁷⁴

Director Hartig ensured that NMAH played a central role in this initiative, co-hosting an event with current Smithsonian Under Secretary for Museums and Culture Kevin Gover (who receives over \$515,000 in annual compensation, according to the Smithsonian's 2023 tax filing²⁷⁵) to discuss how museums can serve as engines for "social justice work."²⁷⁶

At the event, Gover asked Dr. Mack, "Deborah, I mean, did you get into the museum business in order to be an agent of social change?"²⁷⁷ Mack replied,

Actually, absolutely! [...] [G]iven a charge that basically said, you know, that an activist stance, an engaged community stance, a listening and collaborative stance would be totally appropriate, and that was the history that I brought to the museum, it's been really excellent. It's been great to bring on the next two generations of practitioners, of staff, across Smithsonian, to see them engage in this work in ways that actually reinforces their activism, their sense of equity, their sense of social justice, and in a sense that also tells them that when they come to Smithsonian, they can bring their total selves to Smithsonian. They can bring their histories and their aunties and their communities and their collections and their beliefs with them, and THAT is part of who we are.²⁷⁸

Gover then asked Hartig "And is that why you came to the Smithsonian, Anthea?"²⁷⁹ Hartig replied, "It is, actually! I was at a point in my life and my career where there was no higher calling than to do my best every day to lead the National Museum of American History. [...] The fundamental needs of a democratic and civilized society are domestic peace and social justice."²⁸⁰

21. NMAH Implemented an Anti-Racist "Toolkit" for Staff to "Transform" Museums into Anti-White Institutions

In 2019—the same year Hartig became Director—NMAH started holding a recurring meeting for NMAH staff members to meet, discuss and read the "Museums as a Site for Social Action Toolkit," (or "MASS Action Toolkit"), a 200+ page, three-year roadmap (co-authored by half a dozen current/former Smithsonian employees²⁸¹) on how to "truly transform the museum space" that "privileges dominant Western ideals of race, class, and gender" and is linked "with white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, abuse of labor, colonization, imperialist theft of art and artifacts,

destruction or absencing of alternative ways of interpreting or representing art and artifacts, structural racism and other oppressions.”²⁸²

In order to **truly transform the museum space**, we must first recognize how and why it has come to be and for whom. We must pay attention to what its physical presence tells us, what its adjacencies are saying. We must see that the arrangement of its collection is a means of producing knowledge and we must ask what knowledge it is making. Finally, we must recognize that the changes that we and our audiences wish to see will **structurally shift how museums function**.

Historical and social context informs the conditions under which museums, historic sites and houses are created and within which their roles and purposes are defined. These sites cannot separate themselves from the collective memories that link **their development with white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, abuse of labor, colonization,** imperialist theft of art and artifacts, destruction or absencing of alternative ways of interpreting and representing art and artifacts, **structural racism and other oppressions**.

Screenshot of the “Museums as a Site of Social Action” toolkit, available at https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 13. Highlights added.

**Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report
Fiscal Year 2023**



| | | | |
|------|---------------------------|---|-------------------|
| NMAH | Mass Action Reading Group | The Mass Action Reading Group is reoccurring meeting for NMAH staff members to meet, discuss, and read the Mass Action Toolkit (https://www.museumaction.org/resources). The Toolkit is a "comprehensive guide outlines the theory and tools for practice towards creating greater equity within the museum field." The Reading Group is an activity of NMAH's IDEA Council. | 10/2019 - Present |
|------|---------------------------|---|-------------------|

Screenshot of the Smithsonian’s DEI Initiatives Report for Fiscal Year 2023, showing that NMAH convened a reading group to discuss the toolkit for at least four years (October 2019-October 2023, i.e., the end of FY 2023), available at https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 41.

One of the charts within the toolkit, entitled *Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization*, notes that the ultimate goal is to structurally “transform” museums from institutions that maintain “white power and privilege” to “anti-racist multicultural” organizations in a “transformed society” that “share[s] power with diverse racial, cultural, and economic groups.”²⁸³ “Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege” must be destroyed.²⁸⁴

Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization

MONOCULTURAL ==> MULTICULTURAL ==> ANTI-RACIST ==> ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL

Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Deficits ==> Tolerant of Racial and Cultural Differences ==> Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets

| Exclusive An Exclusionary Institution | 2. Passive A "Club" Institution | 3. Symbolic Change A Compliance Organization | 4. Identity Change An Affirming Institution | 5. Structural Change A Transforming Institution | 6. Fully Inclusive Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization in a Transformed Society |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans • Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution • Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels • Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups such as women, gays and lesbians, Third World citizens, etc. • Openly maintains the dominant group's power and privilege | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerant of a limited number of "token" People of Color and members from other social identity groups allowed in with "proper" perspective and credentials. • May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies • Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels of institutional life • Often declares, "We don't have a problem." • Monocultural norms, policies and procedures of dominant culture viewed as the "right way" business as usual" • Engages issues of diversity and social justice only on club member's terms and within their comfort zone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity • Sees itself as "non-racist" institution with open doors to People of Color • Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting "someone of color" on committees or office staff • Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups <p style="text-align: center;"><i>But...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Not those who make waves" • Little or no contextual change in culture, policies, and decision making • Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control • Token placements in staff positions: must assimilate into organizational culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity • Develops analysis of systemic racism • Sponsors programs of anti-racism training • New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege • Develops intentional identity as an "anti-racist" institution • Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities • Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage • Actively recruits and promotes members of groups have been historically denied access and opportunity <p style="text-align: center;"><i>But...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based upon anti-racist analysis and identity • Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their world-view, culture and lifestyles • Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institutions life and work • Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities • Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset • Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism and all other forms of oppression. • Institution's life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices • Members across all identity groups are full participants in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles, and interest • A sense of restored community and mutual caring • Allies with others in combating all forms of social oppression • Actively works in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate all forms of oppression and to create multicultural organizations. |

Screenshot of "Continuum on Anti-Racism" chart within the Museums as a Site of Social (MASS) Action Toolkit that NMAH staff met regularly to discuss, available at https://inclusion.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 201. Highlights added.

The toolkit also included various sections calling on museum staff to "confront whiteness" by "making the case for inclusion" to "create more just institutions"²⁸⁵—mirroring the language Director Hartig incorporated into her new vision for NMAH to be the most "inclusive" museum in the nation and NMAH's new mission to "create a more just and compassionate future."²⁸⁶

For example, one heading in *Chapter 8: Change-Making through Pedagogy*, entitled "Centering Anti-Oppression: Confronting Whiteness" states:

Museums hold institutional and cultural power as established by their colonial and imperial histories. Like other institutions (schools, hospitals, housing, policing, etc.) the ways in which museums maintain that power is by uncritically and unreflectively upholding the very systems that define this power. These systems, intersecting

assemblages of capitalism, patriarchy, whiteness, ableism, and cis- and heteronormativity, have been historically presented as “objective” in museum interpretation and continue to be the lens by which objects and narratives are interpreted. As such, museum educators are tasked with making these interpretations accessible to audiences, the burden being to promote critical thinking and inquiry skills that deconstruct this ‘objectivity’. In our interviews, it became evident that one system of power that manifests most saliently is white supremacy. White supremacy culture is defined and expanded upon in Chapter Three of this toolkit (Changing Museum Culture: Making the Case for Inclusion), but some of its characteristics, defensiveness, either/or thinking, power hoarding, objectivity, and right to comfort, came up in our interviews. We discussed the psychic and emotional toll women of color educators bear, the roles white museum educators need to embody in museums, and transforming the spaces we create by confronting whiteness. When considering the impacts of whiteness, nothing is more important to consider than the bodily, emotional, and psychic harm of unreflectively acting within white supremacy culture.²⁸⁷

According to the NMAH-endorsed toolkit, museums “being ‘non-racist’ or ‘culturally sensitive’” is not enough; they must “take on an explicitly anti-racist/anti-oppressive stance.”²⁸⁸ “What seems clear is that white supremacy is a white people problem that white people need to fix,” the toolkit reads.²⁸⁹ “White supremacy culture breeds defensiveness. If museums are truly going to open up toward transformation, those with the most proximity to whiteness, white people, need to let go of defensiveness in order to share power.”²⁹⁰

The NMAH-endorsed toolkit also mirrors NMAH’s Interpretive Plan, its Center for Restorative History, and Director Hartig’s broad vision for NMAH in crucial ways. First, the toolkit states that “[a]nti-oppression work has mechanisms built into it to critically reflect and recognize when and how power manifests,” mirroring the NMAH Interpretive Plan’s directive to “share histories that. . . illuminate how power works.”²⁹¹

Second, the toolkit states that “centering anti-oppression work needs to be a cross-departmental effort if there are to be systemic changes,” mirroring the NMAH Interpretive Plan’s directive to “share histories that. . . cross disciplines and sub-disciplines.”

Third, the toolkit states that “social justice work cannot be institutional(ized). The very nature of social justice movements is the need for flexible, improvisatory, and constantly evolving responsiveness to fight against the status quo and problematic normative standards,” mirroring (a) the NMAH Interpretive Plan’s directive to “arrive at ever-evolving understandings—interpretations—that frame the past in new ways”²⁹²; and (b) Director Hartig’s statement that American history should be “an ever-shifting landscape of knowledge” that can be “turn[ed] into a tool of utility” to “ignite civic engagement.”²⁹³

Fourth, the toolkit states that “[t]he history of museums is rooted in colonialism and patriarchy,” mirroring NMAH’s decision to (a) write a museum-wide “Decolonization Plan,” as highlighted in its current Collections Plan, which the Smithsonian has failed to provide to the White House despite our request for it as part of our monthslong investigation, (b) establish a Center for Restorative History; and (c) create a “decolonization working group” because “the museum is an

institution that has perpetuated harm through its histories of collecting and display.”²⁹⁴ Indeed, NMAH’s Collections Plan states that NMAH “must document and understand instances in which collections were assembled in support of, justification for, or expression of colonialism and racism. Across the institution, we must collaborate to use the emerging framework of Restorative History and decolonization to address these injustices and their legacies of harm.”²⁹⁵ As Director Hartig put it, “We’re launching the Center for Restorative History...[to] address the harm that we’ve done as the Smithsonian.”²⁹⁶

Fifth, the toolkit laments how “Non-Hispanic, White staff continue to dominate the job categories most closely associated with the intellectual and educational mission of museums, including those of curators, conservators, educators and leadership,”²⁹⁷ mirroring (a) NMAH’s decision to create an IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access) Advisory Council²⁹⁸; (b) the Smithsonian’s broader effort to make diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) “integral to all aspects of [its] operations and key components of [its] Strategic Plan” and “increase representation” of “under-served communities” in the Smithsonian’s “workforce, supplier base, and public programming”; and (c) the Smithsonian’s decision to regularly publish annual Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Reports (DIIR) “to capture and report on the multiplicity of diversity and inclusion related activities around the Institution” including “more than 4,570 Smithsonian Institution diversity and inclusion initiatives” since FY 2014 under the categories of “Program Diversity,” “Supplier Diversity,” and “Workforce Diversity.”²⁹⁹ The toolkit does not value merit in museum hiring, but one’s race.

To make it clear that whites, Christians, males, and Americans are the only major groups of individuals intentionally *not* included in its special DEI hiring practices and programming, the Smithsonian defines “under-served communities” as the following groups:

- “African Americans”
- “Asian Americans”
- “Hispanics”
- “Latinos”
- “LGBTQIA+”
- “Native Americans”
- “Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders”
- “Residents of Under-Resourced Communities”
- “Women” and
- “Other,” which includes, among others:
 - “Educators in Ghana”
 - “International Community”
 - “Nigerians”
 - “People who were Formerly Incarcerated”
 - “Diverse Adult Audiences”
 - “Non-English Speakers”
 - “Gender Nonconforming Individuals”
 - “Non-US Residents” and
 - “Muslims.”³⁰⁰

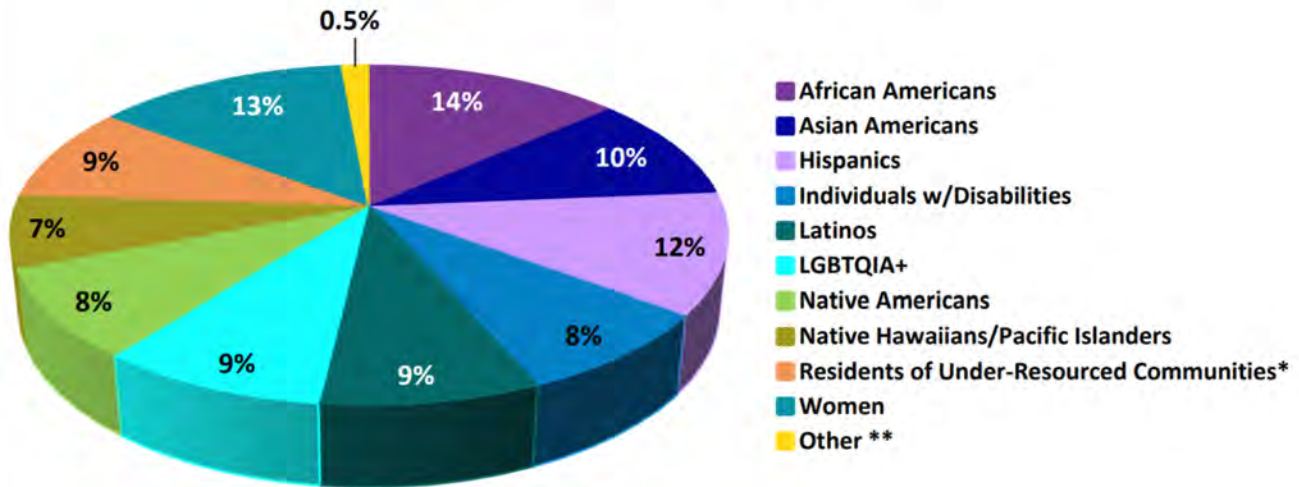
Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report
Fiscal Year 2023



OVERVIEW

Percent Served by Race and Ethnicity

(Units often target more than one group)



*Communities with limited and/or under-funded access to educational resources and technology.

**Includes: Rural Communities, Educators in Ghana, International Community, Nigerians, European Decent Communities, People who were Formerly Incarcerated, Jewish Americans, Diverse Adult Audiences, Non-English Speakers, South Koreans, Gender Nonconforming Individuals, Non-US Residents, Seniors, Small Disadvantaged Businesses, Small Businesses, Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses, 8(a) Small and Disadvantaged Businesses, Muslims

Screenshot of the Smithsonian's FY 2023 Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report, available at https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 4. Highlights added.

Notice how despite receiving over one billion dollars from *American* taxpayers every year,³⁰¹ the Smithsonian prioritizes hiring and providing special programming to “Non-US Residents,” such as those in Ghana, Nigeria, South Korea, and “Non-English Speakers”—demonstrating that the Smithsonian has sold out the very people who pay for its operations and whom it supposedly serves.³⁰²

Sixth, the toolkit's stated goal of “transforming” museums into multicultural, anti-racist, and anti-capitalist (and ultimately institutions antagonistic to whites and males)³⁰³ is mirrored in the goal of NMAH's Center for Restorative History, which seeks to be “a systemic intervention” to (a) “transform [museum] policies to effectively meet the [historically harmed] partner's needs while also redressing past and current practices that perpetuate harm” and (b) “transform the national historical narrative, restructur[e] institutional priorities, and privileg[e] knowledge production in the communities that have been silenced or overlooked by museums and other educational institutions.”³⁰⁴

Even the toolkit's title, "Museums as a Site for Social Action,"³⁰⁵ mirrors Director Hartig's misguided, overarching vision for NMAH, which is that the Museum and the practice of public history should be "a prime tool for social justice."³⁰⁶ The title also fits well with Hartig's admission that she "got into the museum business in order to be an agent of social change."³⁰⁷

Like NMAH's CRH and the broader Smithsonian, the toolkit bemoans how museum leadership positions have historically "overwhelmingly been filled with straight, white people," causing museum culture to "strongly reflect the norms of white, straight culture, able-bodied people."³⁰⁸ It also repeatedly criticizes museums for "center[ing] the culture of white, straight, male-dominated society as the pinnacle of culture" and for "othering" non-white, straight, male cultures, noting that "when we collect, interpret or preserve the cultures of marginalized or oppressed peoples, they are labeled, or 'othered' as different than the norm."³⁰⁹ In short, the toolkit argues that museums are infected with an "oppressive" "culture of whiteness, straightness, and maleness" that must be eradicated:

Practices embedded in museums are based on a culture of whiteness, straightness, and maleness. Norms of curator generated narratives and high culture defined by museums permeate the bedrock of best practices. Regardless of intentions, often the impact of these practices is oppressive to marginalized groups. Until museums can define and create inclusive museum cultures that foster inclusive museum practices, the best efforts of museum staff may not be good enough.³¹⁰

This helps explain why NMAH boasts that its Center for Restorative History "is comprised of predominantly BIPOC staff," referring to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (i.e., non-white people).³¹¹

Ironically, NMAH spends years studying a toolkit that condemns museums for staffing leadership with people of a particular race and culture and then turns around and boasts about staffing its Center for Restorative History based on race. A reader should ask: if filling positions based on the race of staff was wrong before, why is it celebrated now? But the toolkit never answers that question, because doing so would expose that the goal is not fairness, but power.

This anti-white agenda also helps explain why NMAH seeks to erase Christopher Columbus, the Founding Fathers, and the Pilgrims from American history. Portraying such history and historical figures at all, no matter how pivotal, let alone accurately, would be, in the eyes of NMAH, to perpetuate the oppressive "white supremacy culture" that the Smithsonian and broader museum profession is currently working so hard to undo.


Moreover, the toolkit explains that any attempt to resist this radical takeover and transformation of museums from history-focused institutions to political activist organizations would itself be deemed an expression of white privilege and a form of "defensiveness" that would prove the reality and oppressive nature of "white supremacy culture," even though the toolkit states that such privilege often operates as "unseen, invisible, even seemingly nonexistent."³¹²

As white privilege, and other types of privilege prevalent in museums (straight privilege, male privilege, able-bodied privilege) operate as unseen, invisible, even seemingly

nonexistent, people often feel that their power is challenged when inclusion of others is imminent. This often leads to a sense of defensiveness exhibited by those in power. People often respond to new ideas with defensiveness, making it more difficult to implement change. Within museums, ‘much energy is spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists’ or to expend extra energy in an effort not to hurt the feelings of those with power. ‘The defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture.’ This is the opposite of the culture that must be created for museums to become inclusive organizations.³¹³


The “White Supremacy Culture” document (shown two pages below) included in the NMAH-endorsed toolkit mirrors the language found in the Smithsonian’s now infamous “Aspects & Assumptions of Whiteness & White Culture in the United States” graphic, which asserted that “rational thinking and hard work, among others, are white values” that have been “normalized” and “internalized” in American society.³¹⁴

TALKING ABOUT RACE
NMAAHC




ASPECTS & ASSUMPTIONS OF WHITENESS & WHITE CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

White dominant culture, or **whiteness**, refers to the ways white people and their traditions, attitudes and ways of life have been normalized over time and are now considered standard practices in the United States. And since white people still hold most of the institutional power in America, we have all internalized some aspects of white culture — including people of color.




Rugged Individualism

- The individual is the primary unit
- Self-reliance
- Independence & autonomy highly valued + rewarded
- Individuals assumed to be in control of their environment, “You get what you deserve”




Family Structure

- The nuclear family: father, mother, 2.3 children is the ideal social unit
- Husband is breadwinner and head of household
- Wife is homemaker and subordinate to the husband
- Children should have own rooms, be independent



Emphasis on Scientific Method

- Objective, rational linear thinking
- Cause and effect relationships
- Quantitative emphasis



Protestant Work Ethic

- Hard work is the key to success
- Work before play
- “If you didn’t meet your goals, you didn’t work hard enough”

History

- Based on Northern European immigrants’ experience in the United States
- Heavy focus on the British Empire
- The primacy of Western (Greek, Roman) and Judeo-Christian tradition

Religion

- Christianity is the norm
- Anything other than Judeo – Christian tradition is foreign
- No tolerance for deviation from single god concept

Status, Power & Authority

- Wealth = worth
- Your job is who you are
- Respect authority
- Heavy value on ownership of goods, space, property

Future Orientation

- Plan for future
- Delayed gratification
- Progress is always best
- “Tomorrow will be better”

Time

- Follow rigid time schedules
- Time viewed as a commodity

Aesthetics

- Based on European culture
- Woman’s beauty based on blonde, thin – “Barbie”
- Man’s attractiveness based on economic status, power, intellect
- Steak and potatoes; “bland is best”

Holidays

- Based on Christian religions
- Based on white history & male leaders

Justice

- Based on English common law
- Protect property & entitlements
- Intent counts

Competition

- Be #1
- Win at all costs
- Winner/loser dichotomy
- Action Orientation
- Master and control nature
- Must always “do something” about a situation
- Aggressiveness and Extroversion
- Decision-Making
- Majority rules (when Whites have power)

Communication

- “The King’s English” rules
- Written tradition
- Avoid conflict, intimacy
- Don’t show emotion
- Don’t discuss personal life
- Be polite

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE
Smithsonian

Screenshot of the “Aspects & Assumptions of Whiteness & White Culture in the United States” graphic, available at <https://www.newsweek.com/smithsonian-race-guidelines-rational-thinking-hard-work-are-white-values-1518333>.

While the Smithsonian deleted and apologized for the above graphic after receiving substantial public backlash, noting that it had “erred in including the chart,”³¹⁵ the document below demonstrates that those same racist statements and ideas were being discussed at NMAH for years after that apology, informing staff responsible for the development of NMAH’s Interpretive and Collection Plans, educational resources, and exhibits of today.

White Supremacy Culture

From Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups, by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun, ChangeWork, 2001

This is a list of characteristics of white supremacy culture which show up in our organizations. Culture is powerful precisely because it is so present and at the same time so very difficult to name or identify. The characteristics listed below are damaging because they are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the group. They are damaging because they promote white supremacy thinking. They are damaging to both people of color and to white people. Organizations that are people of color led or a majority people of color can also demonstrate many damaging characteristics of white supremacy culture.

Perfectionism

- little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing; appreciation that is expressed usually directed to those who get most of the credit anyway
- more common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate
- or even more common, to talk to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to them
- mistakes are seen as personal, i.e. they reflect badly on the person making them as opposed to being seen for what they are ó mistakes
- making a mistake is confused with being a mistake, doing wrong with being wrong
- little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned that can improve practice, in other words little or no learning from mistakes
- tendency to identify what's wrong; little ability to identify, name, and appreciate what's right

antidotes: develop a culture of appreciation, where the organization takes time to make sure that people's work and efforts are appreciated; develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes offer opportunities for learning; create an environment where people can recognize that mistakes sometimes lead to positive results; separate the person from the mistake; when offering feedback, always speak to the things that went well before offering criticism; ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently when offering criticism

Sense of Urgency

- continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, to consider consequences
- frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, for example sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people (seen as default or norm community)
- reinforced by funding proposals which promise too much work for too little money and by funders who expect too much for too little

antidotes: realistic workplans; leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects; discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time; learn from past experience how long things take; write realistic funding proposals with realistic time frames; be clear about how you will make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency

Defensiveness

- the organizational structure is set up and much energy spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists rather than to facilitate the best out of each person or to clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it
- because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude)
- people respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas
- a lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt or working around defensive people
- the defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture

antidotes: understand that structure cannot in and of itself facilitate or prevent abuse; understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege); work on your own defensiveness; name defensiveness as a problem when it is one; give people credit for being able to handle more than you think; discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas gets in the way of the mission

Quantity Over Quality

- all resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals
- things that can be measured are more highly valued than things that cannot, for example numbers of people attending a meeting, newsletter circulation, money spent are valued more than quality of relationships, democratic decision-making, ability to constructively deal with conflict
- little or no value attached to process; if it can't be measured, it has no value
- discomfort with emotion and feelings
- no understanding that when there is a conflict between content (the agenda of the meeting) and process (people's need to be heard or engaged), process will prevail (for example, you may get through the agenda, but if you haven't paid attention to people's need to be heard, the decisions made at the meeting are undermined and/or disregarded)

antidotes: include process or quality goals in your planning; make sure your organization has a values statement which expresses the ways in which you want to do your work; make sure this is a living document and that people are using it in their day to day work; look for ways to measure process goals (for example if you have a goal of inclusivity, think about ways you can measure whether or not you have achieved that goal); learn to recognize those times when you need to get off the agenda in order to address people's underlying concerns

Worship of the Written Word

- if it is not in a memo, it doesn't exist
- the organization does not take into account or value other ways in which information gets shared
- those with strong documentation and writing skills are more highly valued, even in organizations where ability to relate to others is key to the mission
- antidotes: take the time to analyze how people inside and outside the organization get and share information; figure out which things need to be written down and come up with alternative ways to document what is happening; work to recognize the contributions and skills that every person brings to the organization (for example, the ability to build relationships with those who are important to the organization's mission)
- only one right way
- the belief there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it
- when they do not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them (the other, those not changing), not with us (those who know the right way)
- similar to the missionary who does not see value in the culture of other communities, sees only value in their beliefs about what is good

antidotes: accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal; once the group has made a decision about which way will be taken, honor that decision and see what you and the organization will learn from taking that way, even and especially if it is not the way you would have chosen; work on developing the ability to notice when people do things differently and how those different ways might improve your approach; look for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way and then name it; when working with communities from a different culture than yours or your organization's, be clear that you have some learning to do about the community's ways of doing; never assume that you or your organization know what's best for the community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community

Paternalism

- decision-making is clear to those with power and unclear to those without it
- those with power think they are capable of making decisions for and in the interests of those without power
- those with power often don't think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experience of those for whom they are making decisions
- those without power understand they do not have it and understand who does
- those without power do not really know how decisions get made and who makes what decisions, and yet they are completely familiar with the impact of those decisions on them

antidotes: make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions in the organization; make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization; include people who are affected by decisions in the decision-making

Either/Or Thinking

- things are either/or ó good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us
- closely linked to perfectionism in making it difficult to learn from mistakes or accommodate conflict
- no sense that things can be both/and
- results in trying to simplify complex things, for example believing that poverty is simply a result of lack of education
- creates conflict and increases sense of urgency, as people are felt they have to make decisions to do either this or that, with no time or encouragement to consider alternatives, particularly those which may require more time or resources

antidotes: notice when people use "either/or" language and push to come up with more than two alternatives; notice when people are simplifying complex issues, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made; slow it down and encourage people to do a deeper analysis; when people are faced with an urgent decision, take a break and give people some breathing room to think creatively; avoid making decisions under extreme pressure

Power Hoarding

- little, if any, value around sharing power
- power seen as limited, only so much to go around
- those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done in the organization, feel suggestions for change are a reflection on their leadership
- those with power don't see themselves as hoarding power or as feeling threatened
- those with power assume they have the best interests of the organization at heart and assume those wanting change are ill-informed (stupid), emotional, inexperienced

antidotes: include power sharing in your organization's values statement; discuss what good leadership looks like and make sure people understand that a good leader develops the power and skills of others; understand that change is inevitable and challenges to your leadership can be healthy and productive; make sure the organization is focused on the mission

Fear of Open Conflict

- people in power are scared of conflict and try to ignore it or run from it
- when someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem
- emphasis on being polite
- equating the raising of difficult issues with being impolite, rude, or out of line

antidotes: role play ways to handle conflict before conflict happens; distinguish between being polite and raising hard issues; don't require those who raise hard issues to raise them in "acceptable" ways, especially if you are using the ways in which issues are raised as an excuse not to address the issues being raised; once a conflict is resolved, take the opportunity to revisit it and see how it might have been handled differently

Individualism

- little experience or comfort working as part of a team
- people in organization believe they are responsible for solving problems alone
- accountability, if any, goes up and down, not sideways to peers or to those the organization is set up to serve
- desire for individual recognition and credit
- leads to isolation
- competition more highly valued than cooperation and where cooperation is valued, little time or resources devoted to developing skills in how to cooperate
- creates a lack of accountability, as the organization values those who can get things done on their own without needing supervision or guidance
antidotes: include teamwork as an important value in your values statement; make sure the organization is working towards shared goals and people understand how working together will improve performance; evaluate people's ability to work in a team as well as their ability to get the job done; make sure that credit is given to all those who participate in an effort, not just the leaders or most public person; make people accountable as a group rather than as individuals; create a culture where people bring problems to the group; use staff meetings as a place to solve problems, not just a place to report activities
- I'm the only one
- connected to individualism, the belief that if something is going to get done right, I have to do it
- little or no ability to delegate work to others

antidotes: evaluate people based on their ability to delegate to others; evaluate people based on their ability to work as part of a team to accomplish shared goals

Progress is Bigger, More

- observed in systems of accountability and ways we determine success
- progress is an organization which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)
- gives no value, not even negative value, to its cost, for example, increased accountability to funders as the budget grows, ways in which those we serve may be exploited, excluded, or underserved as we focus on how many we are serving instead of quality of service or values created by the ways in which we serve

antidotes: create Seventh Generation thinking by asking how the actions of the group now will affect people seven generations from now; make sure that any cost/benefit analysis includes all the costs, not just

Objectivity

- the belief that there is such a thing as being objective
- the belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making or group process
- invalidating people who show emotion
- requiring people to think in a linear fashion and ignoring or invalidating those who think in other ways
- impatience with any thinking that does not appear logical to those with power

antidotes: realize that everybody has a world view and that everybody's world view affects the way they understand things; realize this means you too; push yourself to sit with discomfort when people are expressing themselves in ways which are not familiar to you; assume that everybody has a valid point and your job is to understand what that point is

Right to Comfort

- the belief that those with power have a right to emotional and psychological comfort (another aspect of valuing logic over emotion)
- scapegoating those who cause discomfort
- equating individual acts of unfairness against white people with systemic racism which daily targets people of color

antidotes: understand that discomfort is at the root of all growth and learning; welcome it as much as you can; deepen your political analysis of racism and oppression so you have a strong understanding of how your personal experience and feelings fit into a larger picture; don't take everything personally

One of the purposes of listing characteristics of white supremacy culture is to point out how organizations which unconsciously use these characteristics as their norms and standards make it difficult, if not impossible, to open the door to other cultural norms and standards. As a result, many of our organizations, while saying we want to be multicultural, really only allow other people and cultures to come in if they adapt or conform to already existing cultural norms. Being able to identify and name the cultural norms and standards you want is a first step to making room for a truly multi-cultural organization.

Screenshots of the “White Supremacy Culture” document included in the NMAH-endorsed toolkit, describing objectivity, individualism, perfectionism, paternalism, either/or thinking, a sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, and other traits as damaging “white supremacy” characteristics, available at https://inluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 206-207. Highlights added.

22. More Examples of NMAH’s Progressive Reframing of American History

The first exhibit debuted under Hartig’s leadership, *All Work, No Pay: A History of Women’s Invisible Labor*, framed homemaking as oppressive to all women but particularly to “African Americans, Latinas and other women of color.”³¹⁶ The exhibit proudly displayed a quote by Angela Davis, a famous Marxist feminist and former vice-presidential candidate of the U.S. Communist Party in 1980, who has called for the abolition of police, jails, prisons, ICE, and immigration detention facilities, and whose quote “You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time” is prominently featured on the homepage of the Smithsonian’s “Our Shared Future: Reckoning with Our Racial Past” initiative.³¹⁷

NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, which debuted the following year in 2020, alleged that America is fundamentally misogynist because white, African American, and Latina women earn less than white men do on average, stating, “Schools undervalue girls because Americans undervalue women. Gender bias is reflected in their paychecks.”³¹⁸

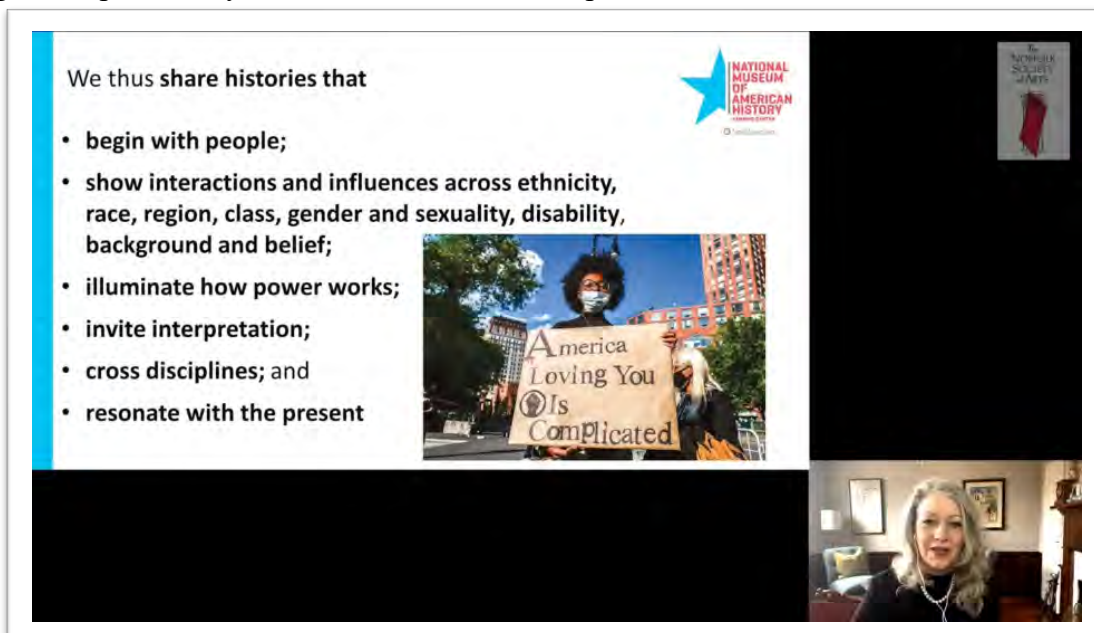
NMAH’s “Wage Gap” chart bemoans how white men earn more than white women, who in turn earn more than African American women, who in turn earn more than Latinas—all due to alleged “[g]ender bias.”³¹⁹



Photos of “Schooled to Work” and “The Wage Gap, 2018” didactics in NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

This exhibit fails to present other possible explanations for why wages may differ, and simply assumes it is because of “gender bias.” To NMAH’s current leaders and curators, factors like hours worked, education, skillsets, and occupation have no bearing. The answer must be discrimination and oppression, everywhere and always.

Indeed, this is the simplistic explanation NMAH provides for nearly every outcome in American history. There is little room for merit, hard work, personal choice, religious conviction, education, or factors largely outside anyone’s control, such as geography, environment, family background, personality traits, or childhood development.



Screenshot of slide where Hartig explains how NMAH shares histories that “illuminate how power works” and “invite interpretation” in a 2022 lecture, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HERz54an_-c&t=3023s.

This is why today, when walking through NMAH’s *Entertainment Nation* exhibit—which is featured in the Smithsonian’s “Our Shared Future: 250” programming for America’s 250th anniversary³²⁰—visitors learn that P.T. Barnum’s circus symbols reflect “concerns about maintaining white supremacy,” that “Ukeleles are both a product of U.S. imperialism and a potent symbol of Native Hawaiian resistance,” that “Wild West shows turned the subjugation of Indigenous people into theater,” and that Mickey Mouse represents “vestiges of longstanding traditions of blackface minstrelsy.”³²¹

At the same time, those visitors also learn about a bisexual blues singer, a lesbian actress, a sexually-liberated film star, an LGBTQ “icon,” a lesbian TV star, a gay major league baseball player, and a queer women’s soccer player, reflecting the NMAH Interpretative Plan’s prime directive to, “whatever the topic,” tie everything to “the core issues of our time,” namely:

- (1) “race and identity”;
- (2) “gender and sexuality”;
- (3) “environmental change”;
- (4) “immigration and migrations”;
- (5) “economic inequality”;
- (6) “technological change”; and
- (7) “nationalism and globalism.”³²²

NMAH directs that *every* exhibit, no matter the topic, be linked to at least one of these seven “core issues,” stating that “To do anything less is to shirk our commitment to relevance. . . . What gives these issues their potency is that they are both the live questions of our moment *and* the enduring challenges of our country’s history. They reflect the ideals and dilemmas at the heart of our national struggle.”³²³

This last point, about contemporary resonance, in turn leads to a final set of refraction tools that we use to heighten interpretive focus. **Whatever the topic, we ask questions that speak to the core issues of our time, including:**



- **race and identity**
- **gender and sexuality**
- **environmental change**
- **immigration and migrations**
- **economic inequality**
- **technological change**
- **nationalism and globalism**

To do anything less is to shirk our commitment to relevance. To address these issues explicitly, though, is also to be true to our commitment as historians. What gives these issues their potency is that they are both the live questions of our moment *and* the enduring challenges of our country’s history. They reflect the ideals and dilemmas at the heart of **our national struggle.**

Screenshots of NMAH’s Interpretive Plan, available at https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Interpretive_Plan.pdf. Highlights added.

NMAH’s Interpretive Plan and its seven core issues is the radical lens through which the current leadership of the Smithsonian and NMAH views both the past and the present. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the Museum’s exhibits are often cast in the wild-eyed language of an ideological manifesto.

23. NMAH's Efforts to Reject Biological Reality and Support Anti-Woman Activism

One of the clearest examples of NMAH's radical ideology is its refusal to correctly identify or define what a woman is.³²⁴ For example, in its Glossary of Terms for its *Becoming US* educational curriculum, which is supposedly intended to "change how migration and immigration are learned,"³²⁵ NMAH defines and discusses the terms "gender fluidity," "[g]ender-fluid children," "gender identity," "gender nonconforming," "gender normative," and "gender role."³²⁶ NMAH's Glossary states that "a child may feel they are a girl some days and a boy on others, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately," so it "is best to ask people who are gender fluid which pronouns they prefer."³²⁷ The Glossary also defines "gender identity" as "[o]ne's internal, deeply held sense of one's gender" that "does not [always] fit neatly into" the male or female categories and instructs educators to "avoid" the "[o]utdated" term "Gender Identity Disorder."³²⁸

NMAH's Glossary then notes that "[p]eople who step out of their socially assigned gender roles are sometimes referred to as transgender" but that "[s]imply being transgender does not make someone gender non-conforming" and therefore it "is best to ask gender non-conforming people which pronouns they prefer."³²⁹ The Glossary concludes its discussion of gender by claiming that "[o]ur culture recognizes two basic gender roles: masculine (having the qualities attributed to males) and feminine (having the qualities attributed to females)" but "[o]ther cultures have three or more gender roles," and therefore suggests that we should be open to the possibility that our culture is simply wrong on this issue.³³⁰

How "gender identity," "gender fluidity," "gender normativity," "gender nonconformity," and "gender roles" have anything to do with the history of migration and immigration in the United States is unclear. NMAH never explains in its Glossary. This is likely because NMAH's true goal is not to teach history, but to push a radical, all-encompassing, transformative ideology that seeks to uproot Americans' "outdated" and well-established views on these issues.

gender fluidity

Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviors that may even change from day to day. Gender-fluid children do not feel confined by restrictive boundaries of stereotypical expectations of girls or boys. In other words, a child may feel they are a girl some days and a boy on others, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately. It is best to ask people who are gender fluid which pronouns they prefer.

gender identity

One's internal, deeply held sense of one's gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not visible to others.

Gender Identity Disorder

Outdated, avoid.

gender nonconforming

A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. Please note that not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender; nor are all transgender people gender non-conforming. Many people have gender expressions that are not entirely conventional—that fact alone does not make them transgender. Many transgender men and women have gender expressions that are conventionally masculine or feminine. Simply being transgender does not make someone gender non-conforming. The term is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be used if someone self-identifies as gender non-conforming. It is best to ask gender non-conforming people which pronouns they prefer.

gender normative

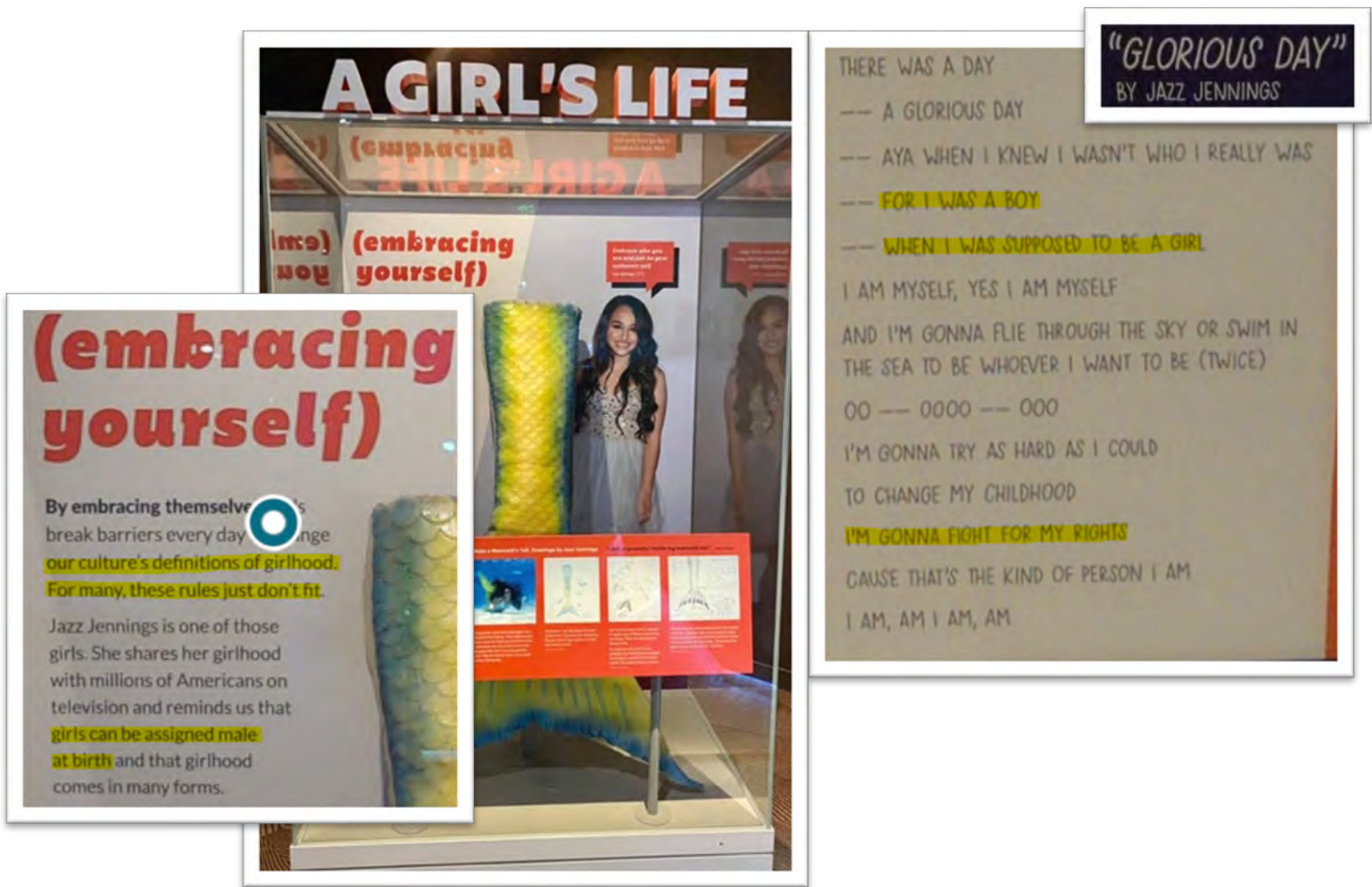
Refers to people whose sex assignment at birth corresponds to their gender identity and expression.

gender role

This is the set of activities, expectations, and behaviors assigned to females and males by society. Our culture recognizes two basic gender roles: masculine (having the qualities attributed to males) and feminine (having the qualities attributed to females). People who step out of their socially assigned gender roles are sometimes referred to as transgender. Other cultures have three or more gender roles.

Screenshot of NMAH's "Becoming US" gender-related Glossary of Terms, available at https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/sites/default/files/downloads/NMAH_Becoming%20Us_Glossary.pdf.

Indeed, unlike most Americans, NMAH believes that men can become women and pushes that ideology onto minors. For example, NMAH's *Girlhood* exhibit framed Jazz Jennings, a biological male, as someone who "always knew [that] she 'was a girl trapped inside a boy's body,'" dedicating an entire "A Girl's Life" display to discuss his "transgender" experience.³³¹ The display included statements such as, "I was a boy, when I was supposed to be a girl," "our culture's definitions of girlhood . . . just don't fit," "girls can be assigned male at birth," and "girlhood comes in many forms."³³²



Photos of display case and didactic in NMAH's "Girlhood (It's Complicated)" exhibit.³³³ Highlights added.

Another display entitled, "Not Checking the Boxes," similarly alleges that gender is merely a deeply-felt inner sense of one's identity, noting, "Sometimes gender isn't revealed at birth."³³⁴ The didactic tells the story of an "intersex" biological female who was "called by a name traditionally given to girls" but "legally changed his name to Ryan and transitioned to male" "because he felt he possessed 'a girl body and a boy brain'" and "never performed activities expected of a girl."³³⁵ The didactic concludes: "Ryan's story shows how checking boxes as male or female is limited. Those boxes could never fully capture the complex realities of one's gender and sexuality."³³⁶

Not Checking the Boxes

Sometimes gender isn't revealed at birth.

Ryan was born intersex. Growing up, he was called by a name traditionally given to girls. But he adopted his name because he felt he possessed "a girl body and a boy brain." He never performed activities expected of a girl, which made him an outcast in his social circles. Sports became an important outlet for self-expression, especially softball.

In 2014, after decades of struggling with his gender identity, he legally changed his name to Ryan and transitioned to male.

Ryan's story shows how checking boxes as male or female is limited. Those boxes could never fully capture the complex realities of one's gender and sexuality.

Photos of "Not Checking the Boxes" didactic in NMAH's "Girlhood (It's Complicated)" exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

An accompanying quote from Ryan encourages children visiting NMAH's exhibit to embrace their true gender identity, even if it differs from biological reality.³³⁷ It reads: "[F]or so many years, I lived and hid behind my mask. . . . You need your mask to protect you from harm, but if you don't remove it (or leave it on too long) it obstructs your view and prevents you from seeing. My mask serve(d) as my protection for decades but it was only when I finally had the courage to remove it that I was able to live freely."³³⁸

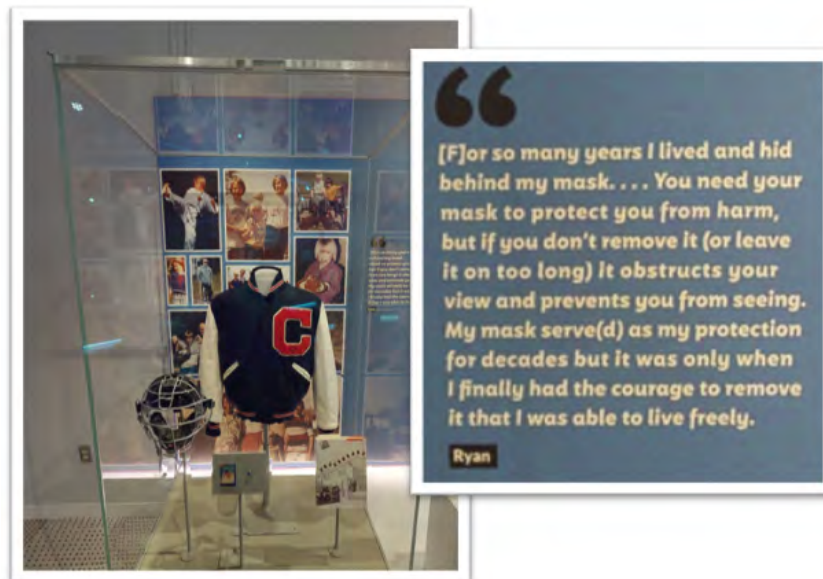


Photo of display case and Ryan's quote in NMAH's "Girlhood (It's Complicated)" exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

24. NMAH's Efforts to Upend "Entrenched Gender Binaries" and Allow Men in Women's Sports

In a December 2024 speech, Director Hartig noted that the *Girlhood (It's Complicated)* exhibit was designed to highlight what it was like "growing up female in the United States since the early republic in the face of patriarchal oppression" and intended to not "reconstruct entrenched gender binaries, but rather provoke a thoughtful discussion of gender as having a long and complicated history."³³⁹ Hartig explained how the exhibit "invited visitors to become part of this long legacy of activism," concluding that she hoped "that girls, women, and people inhabiting female bodies will keep talking to each other and to us."³⁴⁰ Apparently, to NMAH, "people inhabiting female bodies" are *not always* girls or women, and people "inhabiting" male bodies are *not always* boys or men.

Hartig's confusion about what it means to be a woman is also reflected across multiple NMAH exhibits³⁴¹ and encapsulated well in a message written on a wall in the *Girlhood* exhibit, stating, "In school, we learn who gets to be a girl..." implying that "who gets to be a girl" is something that society, not biology, determines.³⁴²



Photo of wall art stating "In school, we learn who gets to be a girl" in NMAH's "*Girlhood (It's Complicated)*" exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

In a virtual event celebrating the opening of the *Girlhood* exhibit, NMAH featured video submissions from several young girls stating that girls "love and support all colors, sizes, beliefs, and genders" and "always will be disproving the idea of what a girl is and what a girl isn't."³⁴³

In line with its commitment to avoiding "entrenched gender binaries" and inviting "visitors to become part of this long legacy of activism," NMAH's *Change Your Game* exhibit (currently on display) discusses whether biological male athletes should be allowed in women's sports and questions whether "gender testing" is "fair" because "intersex, transgender, and gender nonconforming athletes complicate those binary categories," and "challenge traditional gender norms."³⁴⁴



Photo of the “Is Gender Testing Fair?” didactic currently on display at NMAH’s “Change Your Game” exhibit.

NMAH’s *We Belong Here* exhibit—which features a chest binder belonging to a “trans nonbinary” skateboarder—answered this slanted question, alleging that “The struggle for equal opportunity in sports began long before Title 9 became law in 1972. And it continues today as transgender, nonbinary, and cisgender female athletes demand equality.”³⁴⁵

Apart from directly calling biological males females and biological females males, NMAH also praises activism that blurs the lines between the two genders, whether it be women embracing more masculine dress and hair styles, or participating in traditionally “male-dominated” academic fields and sports. For example, one didactic in the *Girlhood* exhibit, entitled “Dangerous Girls,” praises how girls “made new *gender-bending ideas*—such as bobbing their hair—popular” and “upended ideas about female respectability.”³⁴⁶



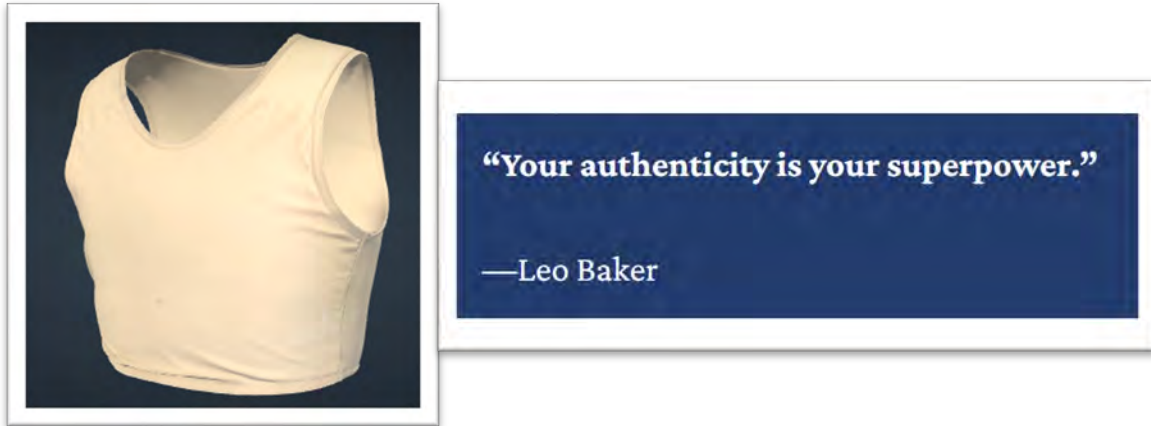
Photo of “Dangerous Girls” didactic in NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>. Highlights added.

Another wall features a didactic stating that “girls have used fashion to transform themselves, markets, and ideas about gender and growing up.”³⁴⁷



Photos of “Fashion (remix)” wall and didactic in NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>. Highlights added.

Similarly, NMAH's "We Belong Here" exhibit highlights a chest binder that "trans nonbinary" skateboarder Leo Baker used to make herself appear more like a man while skateboarding.



"Trans nonbinary" skateboarder Leo Baker's chest binder is on display on NMAH's "We Belong Here" exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/we-belong-here/online/leo-baker>.

The ideology threading through all of these exhibits—from the overtly transgender content to the seemingly benign "girls breaking barriers" framing—is gender theory, a branch of the postmodern critical theory framework (often called "postmodern progressivism"). Its core claim is that biological sex is a social construct, gender exists on a fluid spectrum, and traditional categories of male and female are oppressive "binaries" that must be dismantled.

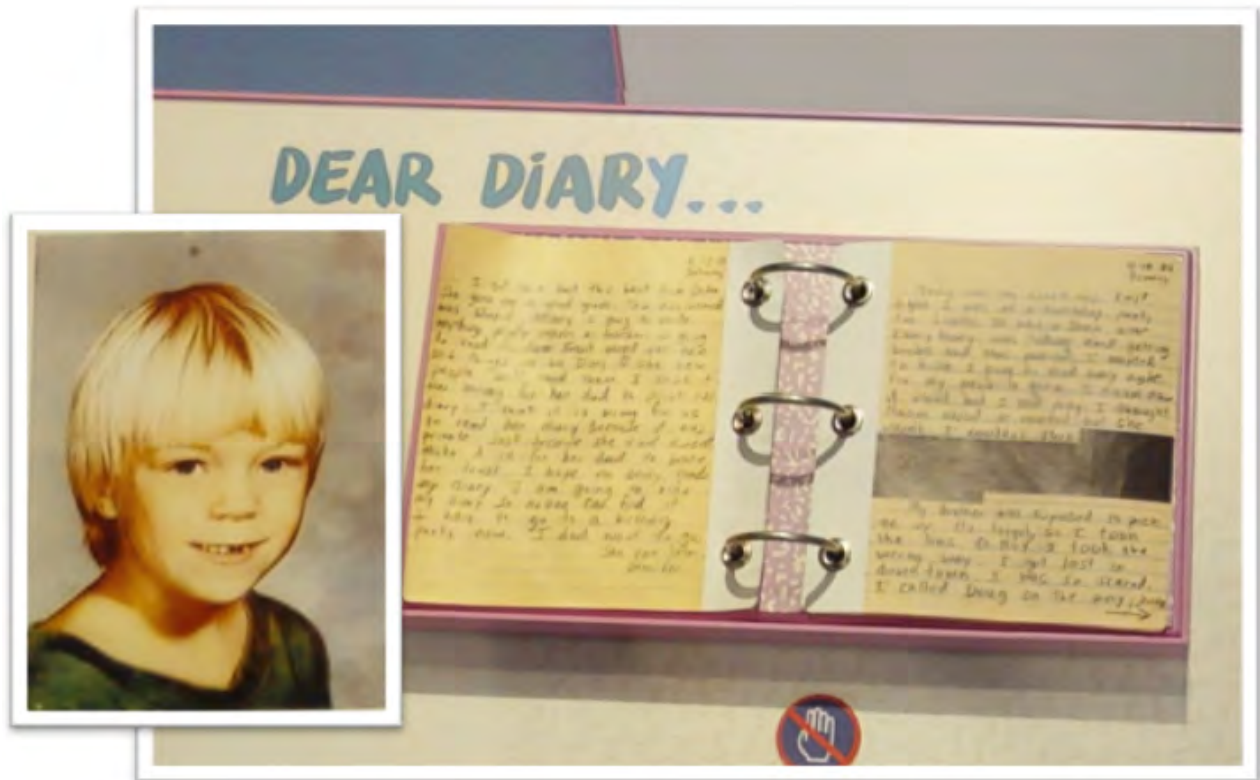
What makes NMAH's approach particularly concerning is the packaging. The more explicit content—displaying a chest binder, questioning gender testing in women's sports, referring to biological females as "people inhabiting female bodies"—is easy to identify. But the same ideology is being smuggled into exhibits that appear, on the surface, to simply celebrate girls and women.

The *Girlhood* exhibit is a case in point. It is not, at its core, a celebration of accomplished American girls and women. It is a vehicle for teaching children that "who gets to be a girl" is determined by society rather than biology, that traditional femininity is something to be "upended," and that young girls should view themselves as foot soldiers in "a long legacy of activism." The wall art, the video testimonials from young girls dutifully reciting that they are "disproving the idea of what a girl is," the praise for "gender-bending"—none of this is neutral history. It is ideological instruction directed at minors, using the authority and prestige of a national museum to normalize ideas that most American families have not consented to have taught to their children.

In short, NMAH is not preserving and presenting American history. It is using history as a wrapper for delivering gender ideology to the public—and doing so with federal funding.

25. NMAH's Decision to Put Inappropriate Material in Front of Children

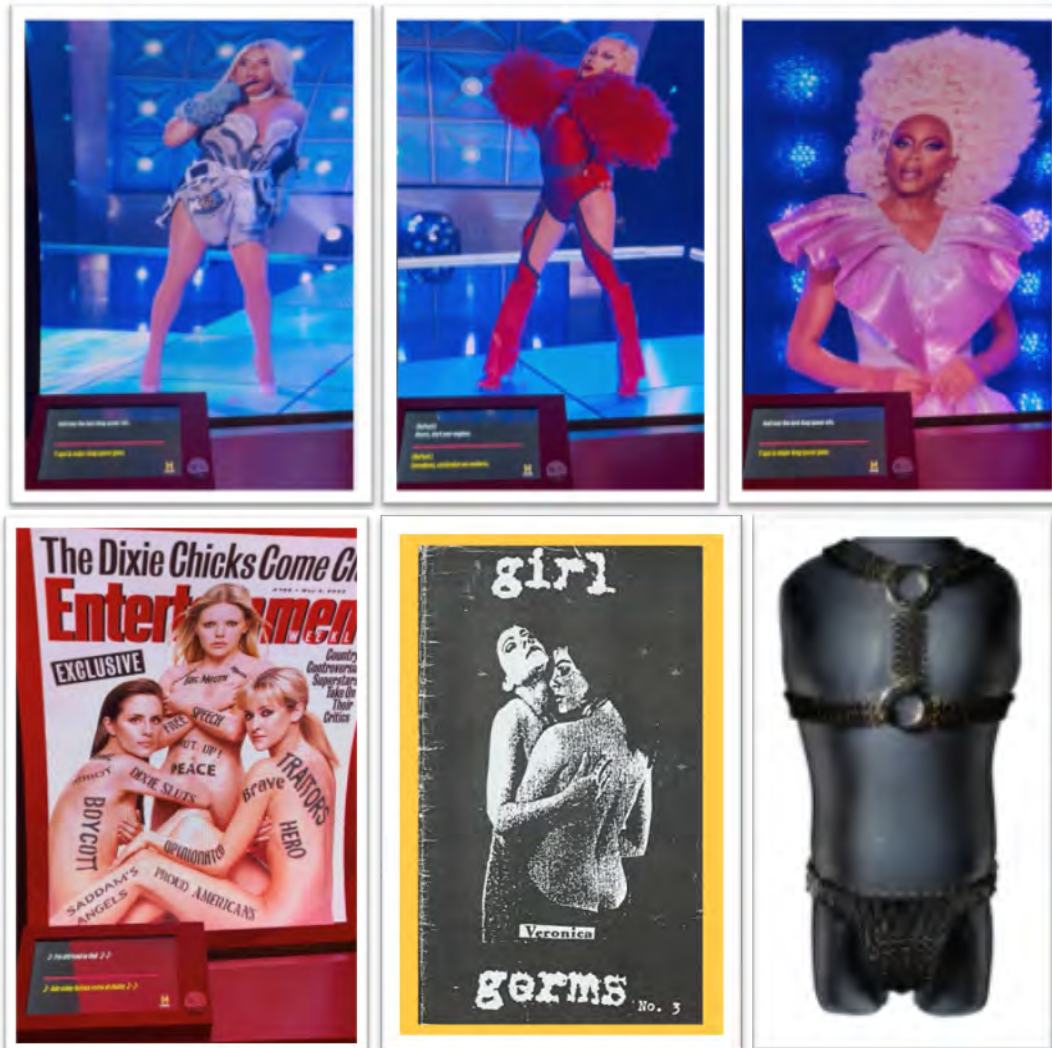
NMAH's ideological agenda comes at a direct cost to the dignity and privacy of the very children it claims to celebrate. While refusing to call her a girl in its *Girlhood* exhibit, NMAH displayed inappropriate pages from Ryan's diary where she recounts her struggle with being a girl, including where Ryan (then-named Jennifer) says "I hope no body reads my diary."³⁴⁸ Indeed, NMAH invited children to read about how the then-six-year-old biological female struggled with the idea of "getting boobs" and a "period" after attending a birthday party where other little girls were talking about the matter, writing, "Every body was talking about getting boobs and their period. I wanted to hide. I pray to God every night for my penis to grow. I know now it won't but I still pray."³⁴⁹



Photos of "Dear Diary..." display with Ryan's diary pages in NMAH's "Girlhood (It's Complicated)" exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

26. NMAH's Decision to Put Sexually Suggestive Material in Front of Children

NMAH also placed sexually suggestive material and other material inappropriate for young children in and around its *Entertainment Nation* exhibit, which is frequented by families and children, including video clips depicting drag queens and a magazine cover featuring a photo of nude young women.³⁵⁰ A separate exhibit featured a two-piece chrome and rubber crotch harness designed for sadomasochism (S&M) sexual activity,³⁵¹ and another displayed the cover of a self-published magazine entitled “Girl Germs” that shows two partially nude women embracing and discusses female masturbation and sexual experiences.³⁵²



Photos of a video playing on repeat depicting drag queens and a magazine cover featuring nude women in NMAH's “Entertainment Nation” exhibit, which is frequented by young children, a “Girl Germs” magazine cover on display in its “Music HerStory” online exhibit featuring partially nude women (<https://library.si.edu/exhibition/music-herstory/changemakers>), and a BDSM crotch harness on display in its “Illegal to be You: Gay History Beyond Stonewall” exhibit (<https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/gay-history-beyond-stonewall/online>).

27. NMAH's Pro-Abortion Activism

Another clear example of NMAH's ideological extremism is Director Hartig's decision to turn NMAH into a pro-abortion institution. For example, immediately after the Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision was announced on June 24, 2022, Hartig noted that she crafted a statement condemning the ruling.³⁵³

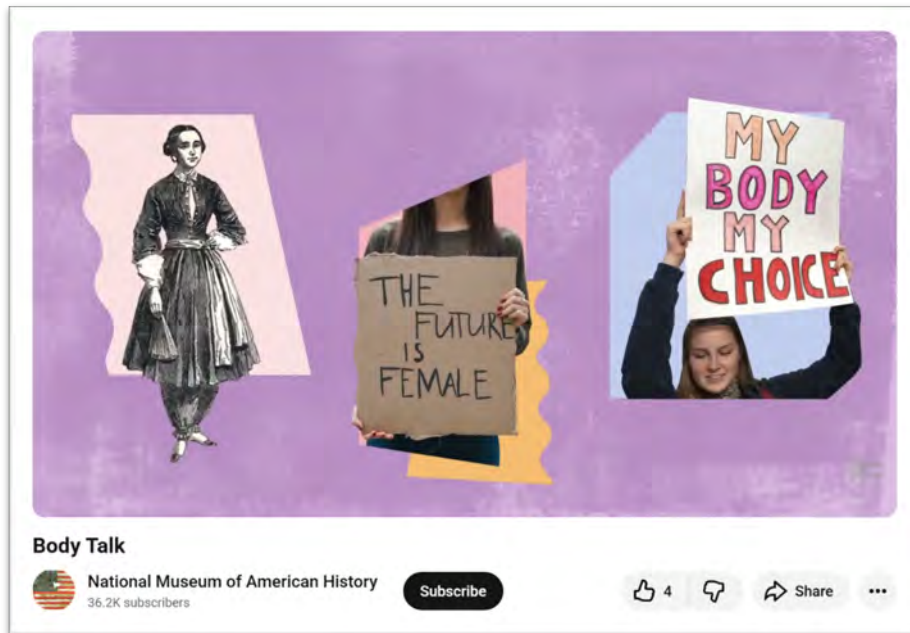
In a 2024 speech, Hartig explained that one of the "Talk Back" prompts featured in NMAH's *Girlhood (It's Complicated)* exhibit "became especially—and painfully—relevant after *Politico* leaked the draft of the Supreme Court's decision [...] in May 2022: Has someone else ever made a decision that affected your body?"³⁵⁴ Hartig continued: "The Supreme Court did just that when it ruled against *Dobbs* on June 24, effectively overturning the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, which held that the Constitution protects access to abortion."³⁵⁵

In the same speech, Hartig boasted to her fellow historians that NMAH's *Girlhood (It's Complicated)* exhibit urged museum visitors to voice "their outrage about attacks on reproductive freedom through these Talk Back cards, penned by the political voices of people identifying themselves mostly as women, girls, and lgbtqia+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, plus) youth," adding that, "while two cards spoke for the unborn, 184 tracked closely to national polls that put the majority of Americans on the side of reproductive rights."³⁵⁶

Hartig then explained how NMAH's new mission is designed to empower activism on politically controversial issues like abortion, stating: "At the Smithsonian, we are committed to the increase and diffusion of knowledge to all. And at the National Museum of American History, we are then moreover committed to our mission: empowering people to create a just and compassionate future by exploring, preserving, and sharing the complexity of our past. I feel that a future without federally protected reproductive health care rights is not informed, just, or compassionate."³⁵⁷ Hartig concluded that she and her colleagues were "[s]olidly in our lanes as historians" when they shared their "dismay" in how history was "manipulated" when "the Court adopted a flawed interpretation of abortion criminalization," instructing fellow historians that: "It is essential that we continue to engage our audiences in conversations on the history of reproductive health care... so that a brighter future that centers all our needs and rights to our bodies and lives will emerge... remember our powers as historians... That history is a prime tool of justice only continues to grow more resolute in my mind, as I hope it does in yours."³⁵⁸

Many of the phrases from Hartig's 2024 speech appear verbatim in an October 2022 NMAH press release, entitled *Girls talk back on questions of body autonomy*, issued four months after the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs*.³⁵⁹ As the statement's title reframed the abortion debate in terms of a woman's "body autonomy," the text repeatedly referenced the *Dobbs* decision in the context of a long history of oppression against women's bodies, such as through "dress codes" and "birth control," in the U.S.³⁶⁰ The statement also articulated Hartig's and NMAH's stated commitment to not "reconstruct entrenched gender binaries" and highlighted how NMAH's *Girlhood* exhibit has helped "women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ youth" express their "political voices":

As for reproductive rights, the Talk Back space has been animated by the political voices of people identifying themselves as women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ youth since the May 2, 2022, leak of the draft opinion on *Roe v. Wade* published in *Politico*. Many visitors gestured to the lack of self-determination over female and trans bodies in general as evidenced by dress codes, body shaming, and birth control. Others answered the question posed on the card directly, pointing to the Supreme Court and using slogans that have been spread across various media.”³⁶¹



Screenshot of a YouTube video created for NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s complicated)” exhibit showing an activist raising a poster with the phrase “MY BODY MY CHOICE,” available at <https://youtu.be/bE5NKAE58w0?t=24>.

28. NMAH’s Efforts to Turn America’s Youth into Anti-Gun Activists

NMAH and the Smithsonian have not been able to resist incorporating their anti-Second Amendment activism into exhibits, articles, and educational materials, including those aimed at young children.

For example, in its *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, NMAH dedicated an entire space to “News and Politics (girls on the front lines of change)” that exclusively featured anti-gun activists, artwork, and didactics.

One of the walls featured an end-to-end quote by Toni Morrison, an anti-white activist and author who attempted to link a spike in “hate crimes” after the 2016 election to “Trump voters” who were afraid that “America is losing its whiteness.”³⁶² In a 2016 [article](#), entitled *Making America White Again*, Morrison argued that “the United States holds whiteness as the unifying force,” bemoaned how white people are “not watched in a department store” and “are the preferred customer in high-end restaurants,” and lamented how “so many white voters...embraced the shame and fear sowed by Donald Trump.”³⁶³ Below Morrison’s quote, NMAH dedicated the rest of the wall to artwork showcasing dozens of pro-gun control “March

for Our Lives” activists at the Capitol in Washington, DC, holding up signs common at gun-control rallies, such as “Enough Is Enough” and “Not One More.”³⁶⁴



Photo of the space that exclusively featured anti-gun activists, artwork, and didactics in NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

The accompanying didactic implies that the anti-gun activism on display is both a bipartisan issue and history in the making, encouraging visitors to join in. It reads: “Girls make history. Now, and in the past, girls show us that politics runs much deeper than being a Democrat or a Republican. It’s political to speak up, to support a cause, or to use social media to turn heads or change minds. Some girls grab headlines. Others don’t. But that doesn’t mean they don’t make history. Just being a girl makes a person political.”³⁶⁵



Photos of “News and Politics (girls on the front lines of change)” didactic and wall featuring a quote by activist Toni Morrison and pro-gun control protestors in NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>. Highlights added.

In the corner, NMAH displayed a life-sized poster of Naomi Wadler, an 11-year-old girl who delivered a speech “in the 2018 March for Our Lives to end gun violence” after “becoming politically aware at age 5[.]”³⁶⁶



Photos of “Naomi Wadler” display and didactic in NMAH’s Girlhood (It’s Complicated) exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

An accompanying didactic shows Wadler speaking at a podium displaying the logo of March for Our Lives (MFOL), an organization that says it is dedicated to supporting prosecutions and investigations into gun rights groups like the National Rifle Association (NRA) and advocating for policy change, including downsizing police departments; dismantling voter ID laws; ending lifetime appointments for Supreme Court justices; appointing judges of “diverse...genders;” stripping gun manufacturers’ legal immunity; repealing “Stand Your Ground” laws; requiring national licensing to purchase a firearm; and banning “assault weapons,” unserialized firearms, and high-capacity magazines.³⁶⁷

MFOL also advocates for creating a national registry of firearms, raising the minimum age to purchase a firearm to 21, and preventing individuals “convicted of misdemeanor-level hate or bias-motivated crimes” from acquiring or possessing a firearm.³⁶⁸ Notably, in its 2024 policy agenda, MFOL stated that it opposes history that centers a “cisgender, heterosexual, white, Christian, able-bodied man” and seeks to confront “armed supremacy,” which it defines as “the use of guns and the threat of gun violence to reinforce power structures, hierarchies and status,” including by law enforcement.³⁶⁹

The exhibit also sets in front of young NMAH visitors a quote from the young activist’s speech, encouraging children in elementary school to already be thinking about activism and politics.³⁷⁰ It reads: “My friends and I might still be in . . . elementary school, but . . . we know life isn’t equal for everyone and we know what is right and wrong. We . . . stand in the shadow of the Capitol and we know that we have seven short years until we too have the right to vote.”³⁷¹

“

My friends and I might still be . . . in elementary school, but . . . we know life isn't equal for everyone and we know what is right and wrong. We . . . stand in the shadow of the Capitol and we know that we have seven short years until we too have the right to vote.

So I am here today to honor the words of Toni Morrison. 'If there's a book that you want to read but it hasn't been written yet, you must be the one to write it.'

Naomi Wadler, March 24, 2018

Photo of “Naomi Wadler, March 24, 2018” didactic in NMAH’s “Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

When introducing the exhibit to the American people, Director Hartig chose to sit in front of the Naomi Wadler display because, as she put it, “girlhood is political and because girls past and present have pushed back against expectations and spoken their minds.”³⁷²



Screenshots of NMAH Director Anthea Hartig sitting in front of the wall featuring the pro-gun control “March for Our Lives” activists in 2020, available at <https://youtu.be/GVYsfMeMOc?t=728>.

Chapter IV. How the National Museum of American History Undermines American History

Today, America's Founders, Founding, and national story are missing at America's history museum. By design, the Museum is not telling any cohesive national story. As illustrated by the educational resources it offers to high school teachers across America, stating that "[t]here is no single American culture, language, or narrative,"³⁷³ NMAH has no plans to tell a coherent story of America and will not do so as currently led.

Millions of museum visitors, student groups and families, immigrants and international guests, expecting to learn something about America's inspiring narrative, attracted by the prestige of a great national museum and its prominent artifacts, are given an altogether different story of our past at the National Museum of American History. As the Museum is curated today, there is no "infinite richness" of American history worth recounting, and no national narrative worth teaching. There is only "the complexity of our past" that tells a shameful tale of systemic oppression.

1. NMAH and the Smithsonian's Rejection of a Coherent National Narrative

The larger "systemic intervention" at the NMAH to reframe American history overall is reflected especially in the two key exhibits currently on display at the museum that address America's beginnings: *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* and *Many Voices, One Nation*. These exhibits illustrate how the changes Hartig made to NMAH's mission statement has directly influenced exhibit development.

As previously stated, by substituting "our" for "American" in describing the past and taking out "infinite richness" as a modifier for the past within the new mission statement, Director Hartig telegraphed her desire to move the National Museum of American History away from a cohesive, patriotic national narrative towards an amorphous, undefined, non-American-centric, and—as Hartig later put it—"ever-shifting" portrayal of American history that can be used as "a tool of utility" to "ignite civic engagement."³⁷⁴

Indeed, like other members of current Smithsonian leadership,³⁷⁵ Hartig has questioned whether there even should be a "grand narrative" of American history.³⁷⁶ In 2021, she stated that she does not believe NMAH's "audiences" want such a "grand narrative" of American history: "I also think we're hearing from our audiences that they want not just one narrative; they don't want a kind of a grand narrative. They want many stories represented. They want to see themselves reflected in the stories, the art, the science that we share, that we collect, that we preserve, and that we digitize. So, I think in many respects, especially our younger audiences want the information so that then they can apply their critical lens so that we can help them on their path towards an understanding. And really, I think in the end . . . to help them find ways to enact their civic duty."³⁷⁷

This explains why *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* begins with a reference to the Declaration of Independence—"many Americans" united around its statement of rights and the principle of the consent of the governed—but immediately notes that "Americans also inherited a

belief in social hierarchy and institutions that perpetuated inequality.”³⁷⁸ References to early events of the period center on Thomas Paine to emphasize the revolutionary nature of the moment.³⁷⁹

But there is no narrative explaining how Americans got to this point, who the key players were, what shaped their thinking and political judgments, or why they declared independence and what they intended in creating a new nation.

The exclusive focus of the exhibit following this content is the Nation’s failures as a democracy and popular resistance to alleged systemic flaws. For example, one wall features large lettering with the words “PRIVILEGE,” “SLAVERY,” and “RIGHTS OF WOMAN” while terms like “FREE PRESS,” “CITIZENSHIP,” and “RIGHTS OF MAN” are much smaller.³⁸⁰

The right to petition, which is a core right of the First Amendment, is interpreted to mean protest. The exhibit culminates in a wall of thirty-two protest posters, almost all for various progressive causes, such as one calling for “basic rights and more efficient pathways to citizenship for the nearly 11 million people living in the country without legal authorization.”³⁸¹

Hartig’s decision to avoid a unified, national narrative also explains why NMAH’s *American Democracy* exhibit asks visitors, “How should Americans remember their Revolution and the founding of the nation?” without providing an answer. The didactic, unironically entitled “Revolution and the National Story” gives visitors no definitive information about either, suggesting that no one really knows whether the America’s Founding was a “sacred event led by a great patriot, who as American children would learn, never told a lie” or a “deeply imperfect” event as “Americans disputed the issue within decades of the Revolution itself.”³⁸²

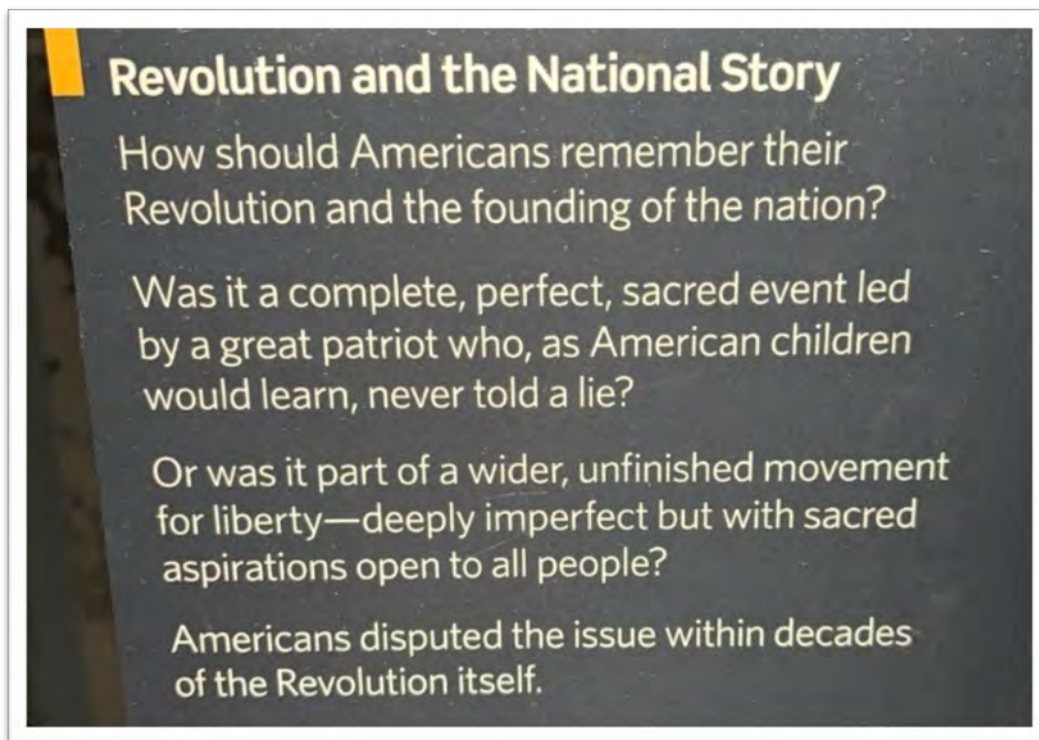


Photo of the “Revolution and the National Story” didactic in NMAH’s “American Democracy” exhibit.

Another didactic asks, “Do We Need a Shared National Identity?” While noting that Americans have “established holidays such as the Fourth of July and later Thanksgiving Day and chronicled the story of America from the landing at Plymouth Rock through the Founding Fathers and the Revolutionary War,” it frames the issue as unsettled and part of an “ongoing debate,” asking visitors to consider, “if there were to be common beliefs and a national narrative that expressed the values of the nation, what should be included?”³⁸³ In other words, the museum effectively tells its visitors, “We are the National American History Museum, but we do not know what the national narrative should be, so you tell us.”

In a didactic entitled “Teaching American History,” NMAH refuses to take a firm stance on whether schools should teach “patriotic values and the history of the nation through the Founding Fathers and aspirational figures” at all or rather teach “*historical understanding* and the stories of less famous and diverse peoples and groups,” noting that “Schools throughout the nation have struggled to find the right balance appropriate for their communities.”³⁸⁴

The didactic implies that teaching patriotism and the Founding Father’s central role in America’s story is somehow ahistorical, is more or less appropriate for certain American “communities,” rather than for everyone to learn, and that there is a legitimate debate about whether the contributions to American history of George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay should be taught in schools throughout the country.³⁸⁵

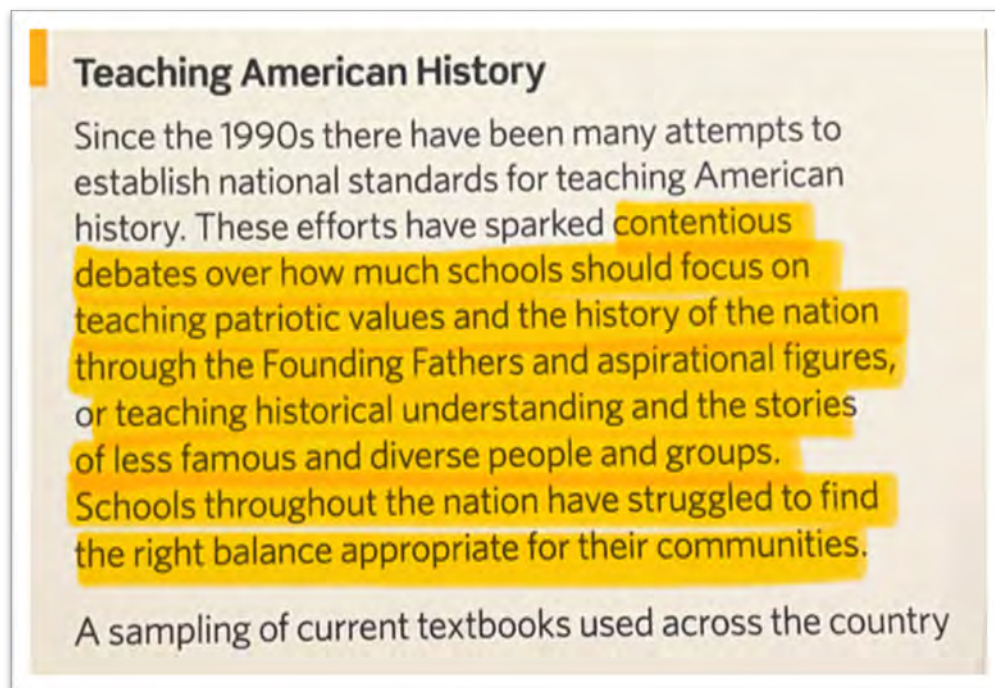


Photo of the “Teaching American History” didactic in NMAH’s “American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith” exhibit. Highlights added.

Another didactic entitled “Creating the Father of Our Country” states that “Mason Locke Weems’s biography of George Washington...helped to establish a national narrative that cemented Founding Fathers in our national consciousness.”³⁸⁶

In this telling by NMAH, a biography, not the heroic actions of George Washington and other Founders to fight, found, and lead our country, is the reason that there were “dozens of pageants and plays that celebrated the bicentennial of [Washington’s] birth and continue today”—as if Americans had to “create” the narrative that George Washington was the father of our country.

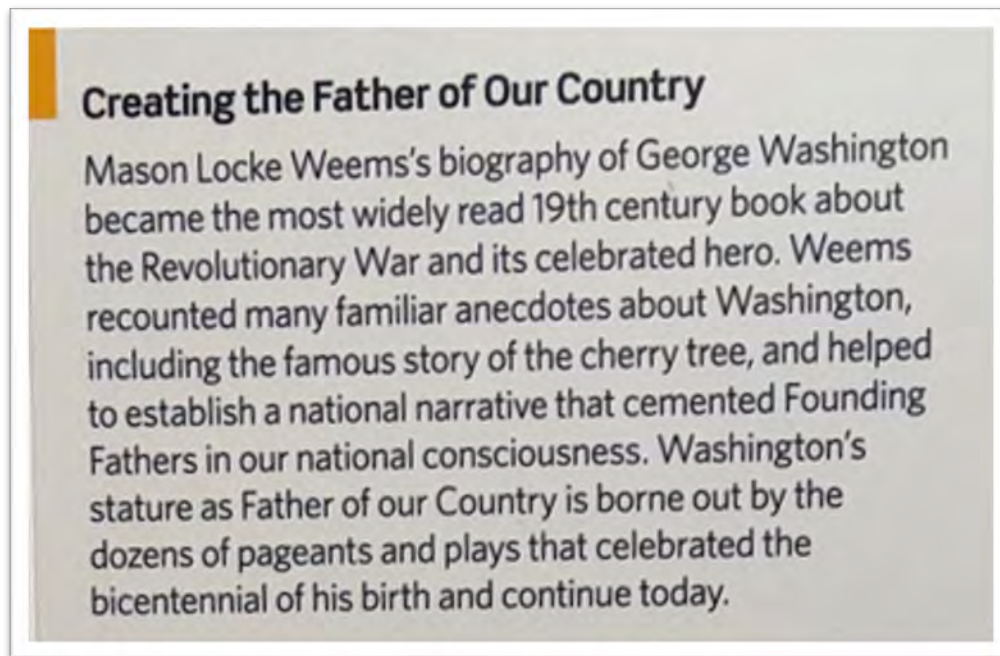


Photo of the “Creating the Father of Our Country” didactic in NMAH’s “American Democracy” exhibit.

2. NMAH and the Smithsonian’s Political Activism by Omission

NMAH’s refusal to affirm that Washington was a hero mirrors how its *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit handles the Father of Our Country, limiting references to Washington to trivial facts and never his profound influence and role in shaping the new nation.

George Washington is never properly presented to visitors. For example, one didactic entitled “Assimilation through Public Schools” notes that “Public schools encouraged the incorporation of newcomers with programs and images intended to inspire patriotism. In most classrooms, American flags hung alongside images of the American eagle and George Washington”—completely failing to tell visitors a single fact about him.³⁸⁷ Another didactic, entitled “Emblem of America Pitcher, around 1800,” states that, “This British-made pitcher depicts America as a European American female figure with a U.S. flag, and George Washington, along with smaller images of Native Americans.”³⁸⁸ Who is George Washington and why does he matter? Visitors are never told.

Likewise, a didactic in *American Democracy* on “The Pledge of Allegiance” does not tell visitors anything about what the Pledge says, but only includes basic information (i.e., its author, when

and how it was published) and that it was intended to “instill American nationalism through flag ceremonies” across the country.³⁸⁹ Why does NMAH not showcase the words? Perhaps because the words themselves would undercut the Museum’s broader narrative that America is not, and has not long been, dedicated to “Liberty and Justice for all.”

Indeed, an adjoining didactic on “Independence Day” states that Americans created “celebrations” to “establish national identity” and “a day of patriotic symbolism and a tribute to the founding principles of equality of liberty and revolutionary ideals of democracy,” while not including any reference to the actual Founders who proclaimed those principles and fought and died in that Revolution to secure them. Yet, the didactic promptly adds, “For Americans still fighting for those freedoms, the holiday became a day to remind the country of the promise yet to be fulfilled.”³⁹⁰

Even a didactic in *American Democracy* entitled “Abraham Lincoln in the Classroom” only notes that “The historic images that hung in classrooms across America were intended to instill patriotic values and reinforce the idea of a shared national heritage. While George Washington was a perennial favorite, fellow president Abraham Lincoln tended to be only regionally displayed.”³⁹¹

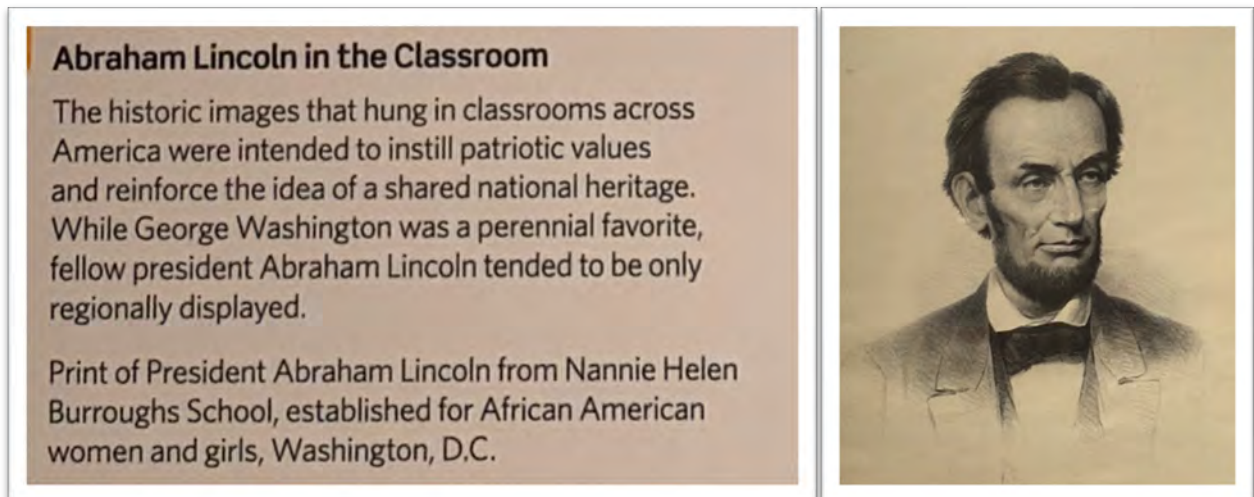
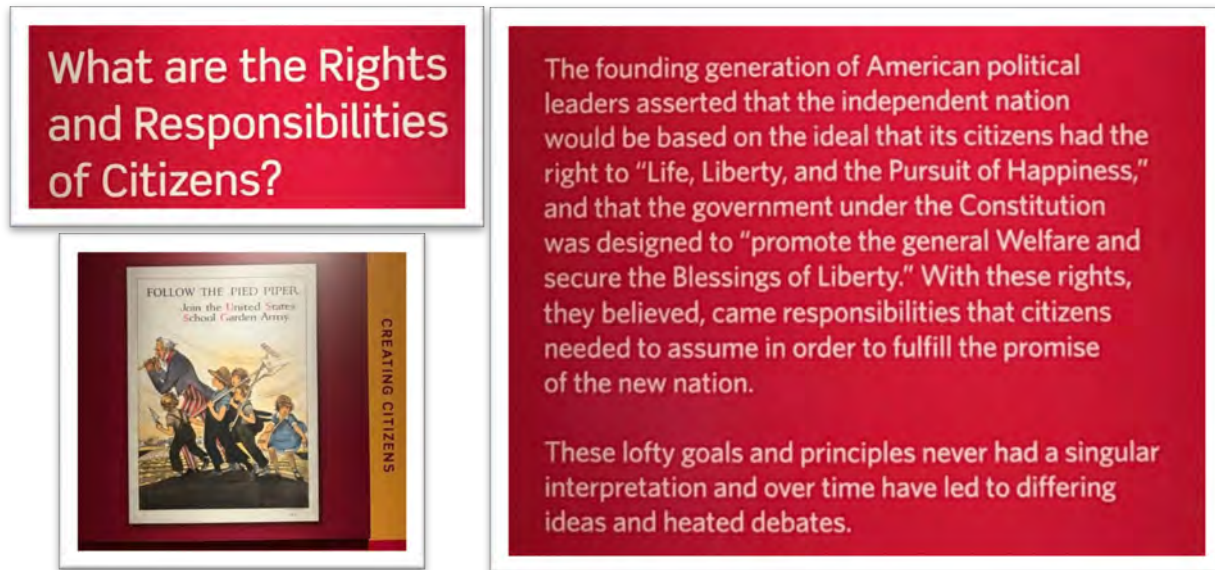


Photo of “Abraham Lincoln in the Classroom” didactic in NMAH’s “American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith” exhibit.

Visitors will note the complete lack of information about the accomplishments of two of America’s greatest heroes. All visitors learn from this didactic is that Washington and Lincoln were U.S. presidents and that Americans have used images of them in an attempt to “instill patriotic values and reinforce the idea of a shared national heritage.”³⁹² What are those values, what is that shared national heritage, and how and why do these men embody them? In this didactic and throughout the exhibit, NMAH is noticeably silent on such matters.

Another didactic in *American Democracy* asks, “What are the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens?” continuing: “The founding generation of American political leaders asserted that the independent nation would be based on the ideal that its citizens had the right to ‘Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness,’ and that the government under the Constitution was designed to

‘promote the general Welfare and secure the Blessings of Liberty.’ With these rights, they believed, came responsibilities that citizens needed to assume in order to fulfill the promise of the new nation. These lofty goals and principles never had a singular interpretation and over time have led to differing ideas and heated debates.”³⁹³



Photos of “What are the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens?” didactic in NMAH’s “American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith” exhibit.

Visitors will not find any Founders mentioned by name or even referred to by their traditional collective title (“Founders” or “Founding Fathers”) in this didactic, but rather acknowledged as a “founding generation of American political leaders.”³⁹⁴ Nor will visitors find the most important part of the Declaration of Independence’s preamble: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”³⁹⁵ Why are these historic words intentionally omitted? It is likely because including this essential context would prove that our Founders truly did believe (a) that there are self-evident, objective truths about human beings, (b) that one of those truths is that *all men are created equal*, and (c) that those universal rights of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” are *granted by God*, not men.

An informed visitor will also take note that the only part of the Constitution’s preamble that the didactic cites refers to promoting “welfare” and securing undefined “Blessings of Liberty.”³⁹⁶ There is no reference to how the Constitution secures those rights or promotes such welfare, namely by “establish[ing] Justice” (a fair legal system where law is higher than any individual), “provid[ing] for the common defence” (against foreign invaders and outside threats), and creating a structured system of government that separates and limits government power.³⁹⁷ Such a visitor will also notice how NMAH refuses to affirmatively note that rights do actually come with responsibilities, noting only that the Founders “believed” that was the case.³⁹⁸

The NMAH didactic claims that these “lofty goals and principles never had a singular interpretation and over time have led to differing ideas and heated debates.”³⁹⁹ In other words, NMAH states that no one knows what these words actually mean and the debate is ongoing. This

suggests that one can interpret them however they see fit and that the Founders did not explain themselves enough.⁴⁰⁰ Finally, the NMAH didactic never attempts to answer the stated question of what responsibilities might come with the rights of citizenship.⁴⁰¹

NMAH does not tell visitors that citizens have a duty to obey the laws, respect the rights and property of others, and treat fellow citizens with equality. It does not tell visitors that citizens have a fundamental responsibility to join together in voluntary groups and civic associations to solve community problems without state intervention, actively participate in local politics, and make sacrifices for the communal good. It fails to mention that citizens have a responsibility to love their country, prioritize the public good over private interests, and maintain the moral virtue necessary for free society. And it fails to tell visitors that citizens must remain watchful over the government and laws to maintain control over their own destiny.

These are omissions by design. If NMAH provided even the most basic context on didactics about America's Founders and the American Founding, it would undercut the underlying arguments presented in those didactics, not to mention the broader exhibit and museum. And if NMAH informed visitors about the responsibilities of citizenship (like jury duty or paying taxes), it would undermine its goal of radical social transformation through civil disobedience and resistance to legitimate laws and state institutions.

3. *NMAH's Slander of America's Founders*

Since it rewrote its mission statement to take out the words “infinite richness...of American history,” NMAH has only committed to telling visitors about “the complexity of our past.” And when the Founders are mentioned, that “complexity” is always code for slavery. For example, one didactic about the Broadway musical *Hamilton* in *Entertainment Nation* simply called Alexander Hamilton an “influential and flawed founding father” likely, in part, because he may have owned slaves.⁴⁰² There is no mention of Hamilton's key role in drafting *The Federalist Papers*, helping Washington win the Revolutionary War, establishing the American financial system, founding the Coast Guard, or devising early American industrial policy—or the fact that he was a vocal critic of slavery and helped found the anti-slavery New York Manumission Society in 1785, which worked to end the slave trade,⁴⁰³ supported and lobbied for the “ultimate extermination” of slavery,⁴⁰⁴ “connected black people with resources such as legal representation, helped protect them from kidnapping from slave dealers, put on anti-slavery lectures and readings,” and quickly started founding African Free Schools that “educat[ed] more than 1,400 students by the time they started becoming part of the New York City public school system in the 1830s[.]”⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, “[h]istorian Eric Foner, in his book *Gateway to Freedom*, describes the [New York Manumission Society's African Free Schools] as ‘the backbone of black education in the city,’” educating remarkable Americans, such as “James McCune Smith, the first African American to earn a medical degree; Ira Aldridge, a prominent Shakespearean actor; and Henry Highland Garnet, a leading abolitionist once called America's ‘Moses.’”⁴⁰⁶

Another NMAH exhibit, *The Electric Dr. Franklin*, devotes a full 20 percent of the exhibit to “Enslaved People,” stating that “Benjamin Franklin's remarkable scientific accomplishments were, in part, enabled by slavery” and he “chose to take advantage of that system” even though

“he later became an abolitionist.”⁴⁰⁷ While entitled *The Electric Dr. Franklin*, the exhibit is dedicated to “the women, indentured servants, and enslaved people” whose “labor enabled” Franklin’s electrical research, rather than to Benjamin Franklin himself.⁴⁰⁸

The exhibit includes multiple speculative paragraphs asking museum visitors to ponder whether Franklin’s experiments, including those related to “electric shocks,” ever involved “an indentured servant or an enslaved person,” while admitting there is no evidence that they did and “he never mentioned them in reports of his work.”⁴⁰⁹

In fact, the exhibit curators admit that they are “not even certain exactly how many people he kept enslaved” and how many were indentured servants.⁴¹⁰ Only in the section’s second to last paragraph do we learn that “Franklin became president of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery in 1787, and supported Pennsylvania’s adoption of gradual emancipation,” in addition to making the “emancipation of Bob a condition for the Baches to inherit his estate.”⁴¹¹

The section concludes, “Franklin’s place in the nation’s history of slavery is part of his legacy, as is his electrical research. [...] We encourage visitors to look for more information about Franklin, and especially about the people whom he enslaved.”⁴¹²

Even the didactic beside the famous eleven-foot Neoclassical statue of a toga-clad George Washington, which has long greeted visitors at the museum since shortly after it opened in 1964, refuses to affirm the exceptional courage of the American people. It reads that the depiction of “Hercules saving himself and his brother Iphicles from a snake” on the sculpture “symbolizes the *perceived* courage of the American people.”⁴¹³

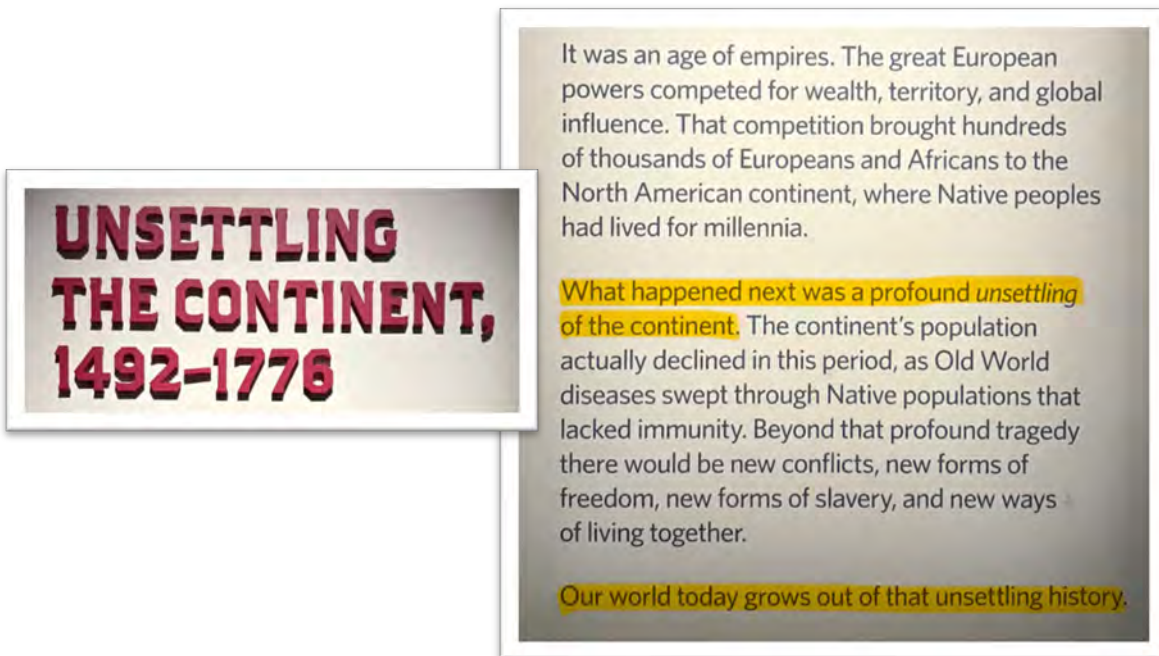


Classical Symbolism, Nationalistic Views

George Washington’s chair is covered with symbols of a heroic nation. The Greek god Apollo in his chariot represents American enlightenment. Hercules saving himself and his brother Iphicles from a snake symbolizes the **perceived** courage of the American people. Christopher Columbus and a Native American represent the meeting of the old and new worlds. The Latin inscription on the back of the chair reads: Horatio Greenough created this image as a great example of liberty and one which will not endure without it.

“George Washington” sculpture by Horatio Greenough, 1840, and accompanying didactic on display at NMAH.

The thinly veiled anti-Americanism on display at NMAH is merely a symptom of the widespread belief among Smithsonian leadership that America is, and has been since Columbus first set foot in the New World, a fundamentally oppressive nation. This helps to explain why Smithsonian leadership has called Christopher Columbus a “murderer,” “slaver,” “killer,” and “thief,” and ignored his contributions to America’s Founding, urging the abolition of Columbus Day.⁴¹⁴ It is why NMAH’s *Upending 1620* exhibit reframes the Pilgrims as “colonizers” and suggests Thanksgiving should be a “National Day of Mourning,”⁴¹⁵ and why the *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit portrays the European settling of America as a “profound unsettling of the continent” with a section entitled “Unsettling the Continent, 1492-1776” noting that, “Our world today grows out of that unsettling history.”⁴¹⁶



Photos of “Unsettling the Continent, 1492-1776” didactic in NMAH’s “Many Voices, One Nation” exhibit. Highlights added.⁴¹⁷

Indeed, as illustrated by the “1492-1776” didactic, current Smithsonian leadership view Columbus and our Founders as two sides of the same coin. After calling Columbus a murderous “slaver,” they levy the same charge against our Founders. In 2023, NMAH Director Hartig stated that “chattel slavery,” not Americans’ relentless fight for freedom, was “the legacy of the nation’s founding” and that our “democracy was founded on the backs of African and . . . Indian slavery and genocide.”⁴¹⁸ In 2019, the Secretary of the Smithsonian insisted that the Institution “legitimize” and “support the *New York Times*’ 1619 Project” which, “in the words of the *Times*, set out to ‘reframe the country’s history, understanding 1619 as our true founding, and placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of the story we tell ourselves about who we are.’”⁴¹⁹ In collaborating with the *New York Times*’ 1619 Project, the Secretary of the Smithsonian noted that he viewed it as “a great victory” that “everybody” “saw that the Smithsonian had fingerprints on it.”⁴²⁰

The National Museum of the American Indian's (NMAI) *Nation to Nation* exhibit—which is also featured in the Smithsonian's "Our Shared Future: 250" programming for America's 250th anniversary and which current Smithsonian Under Secretary for Museums and Culture Kevin Gover actively promoted as head of NMAI between 2007 and 2021⁴²¹—frames America's founding as a fundamentally oppressive and genocidal effort to take Native Americans' land and oppress their culture and peoples.⁴²² For example, the exhibit's introductory video begins by stating that the story of the U.S. and Native American Indian nations is a story about "the rise of a new great nation at the sacrifice of hundreds of others."⁴²³ The exhibit also features several YouTube videos, including one entitled "The 'Indian Problem'" where Suzan Shown Harjo, one of the exhibit's curators, states that, "When you wrench people from their homelands, wasn't that genocide? We don't make the case that there was genocide. We know there was."⁴²⁴

4. NMAH's Repeated Claim that America Rests on Stolen Land

Echoing NMAI's fundamental claim that America was built on stolen land, Smithsonian Under Secretary for Education Monique Chism and NMAH Director Anthea Hartig, on at least *ten* different occasions, have begun their official museum-related speeches with a "land acknowledgement" of thanksgiving "to the First Peoples on *whose land* we're honored to live, love, struggle, and work."⁴²⁵

NMAH's exhibits also allege that the U.S. rests on stolen land. For example, NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit alleges that the U.S. government, "forcibly pushed Indians from their ancestral lands" for "European American settlement," "provided 160 acres of land often taken from Native peoples to immigrants who declared intent to become citizens and willingness to farm on the land for five years,"⁴²⁶ and "declared war with Mexico to acquire western land" in 1846.⁴²⁷

5. NMAH's Slander of America and Reframing of its "Traditional Celebratory Narrative"

Like *American Democracy*, NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit explains that in creating the new nation, "early leaders envisioned a country that promised opportunity and freedom—but only for some."⁴²⁸ It would be up to "the people who lived in the United States . . . to negotiate, or work out, what it meant to be American."⁴²⁹



The people of North America came from many cultures and spoke different languages long before the founding of the United States, even before European contact. In creating the new nation, early leaders envisioned a country that promised opportunity and freedom—but only for some. As the population grew, the people who lived in the United States found ways to negotiate, or work out, what it meant to be American. That negotiation continues. This exhibition explores how the many voices of people in America have shaped our nation.

Photo of the introductory didactic in NMAH's "Many Voices, One Nation" exhibit. Highlights added.⁴³⁰

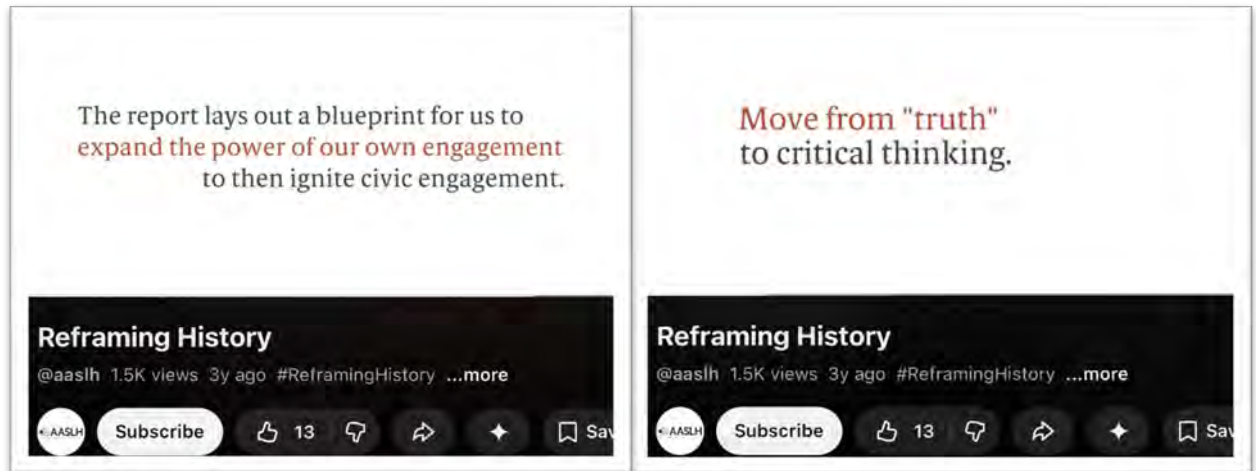
While *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* deconstructs and reinterprets the American idea to mean revolution and resistance to persistent racial hierarchies and systemic flaws through petition and protest, *Many Voices, One Nation* reframes "our past" to consist of cross-cultural encounters of ethnic, sexual, and racial identity groups seeking restorative justice, particularly immigrants.

The two exhibits—both of which are prominently featured in the Smithsonian's "Our Shared Future: 250" programming for America's 250th anniversary⁴³¹—decisively reframe the narrative of American history.

The key figures of early American history are set aside, and the key events are decontextualized to avoid the presentation of a coherent or chronological story by which those historic individuals and events are central. This decentering avoids, as Hartig explained, "the traditional celebratory narrative of U.S. history"⁴³² and deconstructs American history through a progressive analysis of the past, and then the reconceptualization of history as social encounters and restorative action defines and empowers a new public identity "to create a more just and compassionate future."⁴³³

NMAH's reframing of American history follows the exact blueprint outlined in the final report of the American Association for State and Local History's (AASLH) *Reframing History* project, which notes that "historical narratives that center white men as the 'neutral,' depoliticized American history that should be taught in schools (for example, learning about the Founding Fathers)" are "a way of perpetuating dominant groups' power" and "reinforce white supremacist logic."⁴³⁴

This *Reframing History* report was endorsed by multiple Smithsonian museums,⁴³⁵ with Hartig calling it a "blueprint for us to expand the power of our own engagement to then ignite civic engagement" and NMAL Founding Director Jorge Zamanillo calling it "a great resource" for NMAL "staff and the educators that work on these programs every day."⁴³⁶



Screenshots from AASLH’s “Reframing History” June 2022 YouTube video, <https://youtu.be/A0qv7DVXBvw?t=283>.

In fact, in 2022, Hartig hosted an event at NMAH to discuss and “mark the launch” of the report, stating, “We are delighted to welcome this program, especially in light of our work as we together have crafted a new Strategic Plan that we hope will take us through the next 10 years of our existence.”⁴³⁷



Screenshot from AASLH’S “Reframing History: A Conversation at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History” March 2022 YouTube video, https://youtu.be/IQv2tN9p5_E?t=1523. NMAH Director Anthea Hartig is sitting on the far right, moderating the panel, and NMAL Director Jorge Zamanillo is sitting on the far left.

The *Reframing History* report’s anti-white animus helps explain the anti-white and anti-Christian sentiment expressed by Hartig, others across the Smithsonian, and within NMAH exhibits.⁴³⁸

Furthering the Conversation About Whiteness

Whiteness, like every other racialized category, is not biologically inherited but socially constructed.

Whiteness as a concept is foundational to the history of the United States, actively shaping this country's social, cultural, political, and economic structures. Beginning in the 1930s, scholars from W. E. B. DuBois and David Roediger to Cheryl Harris have studied the many ways whiteness operates as a system of power that normalizes and reproduces structures of inequality, exclusion, and violence. As a field, whiteness studies help us better understand how racial hierarchies are created and sustained in the United States and asks us to critically engage with concepts of race, privilege, and identity.

Creating a more just, sustainable, and equitable society requires an unflinching engagement with our past, including how historical injustices are reproduced and shape our present.



Screenshots of the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Smithsonian Learning Lab's poster, "DOWN WITH THE WHITENESS," and a page with additional information and recommended reading for SAAM's "groundbreaking" exhibition, which argues that whiteness "operates as a system of power that normalizes and reproduces structures of inequality, exclusion, and violence." These screenshots typify the anti-white sentiment across the Smithsonian and are available at <https://learninglab.si.edu/q/r/6186305> and <https://americanart.si.edu/furthering-conversation-about-whiteness>. Highlights added.

For example, one didactic in *Many Voices, One Nation* states that America stole Indian land in the 1800s to help "white gold miners" and "pressured the Nez Perce people into ceding their lands by exploiting divisions caused by Christianizing efforts."⁴³⁹ Another bemoans how one Native population "had largely been forced out or Christianized . . . by the early 1800s."⁴⁴⁰ And another notes, "Some [Indians who were removed in the Midwest] were able to retain Native belief systems; others became Christians."⁴⁴¹ Yet another states that "Christian religious fervor . . . lay behind early European efforts at conquest in the Americas."⁴⁴²

These claims are selective, tendentiously framed, and present a distorted picture of history by omitting critical context. The displacement of Native peoples in the 1800s was driven by a complex mix of factors—agricultural expansion, the belief in Manifest Destiny, population pressure, economic opportunity, and resource extraction—making the reduction of this history to serving "white gold miners" a politically loaded oversimplification.⁴⁴³

Presenting Native conversion as uniformly coerced similarly erases the historical record of voluntary conversion and the significant role Christian Native leaders played in their own

communities.⁴⁴⁴ And describing early European conquest as motivated by “Christian religious fervor” frames Christian evangelism and Christians’ flight from religious persecution in Europe as an intent to subjugate the New World, rather than flee life-threatening persecution, spread the good news of the Gospel, and share the love of Jesus Christ with those in this new land.

What makes this pattern especially glaring is what NMAH leaves out entirely. The Museum makes no meaningful effort to acknowledge the central and positive role Christianity played in the Founding and flourishing of America. It was Christian conviction and principles that animated the abolitionist movement and Civil Rights Movement. Figures like William Wilberforce,⁴⁴⁵ Frederick Douglass,⁴⁴⁶ Harriet Beecher Stowe,⁴⁴⁷ and Martin Luther King Jr.⁴⁴⁸ grounded their opposition to slavery and racial discrimination explicitly in Christian faith. It was Christian moral philosophy that undergirded the Declaration of Independence’s assertion of God-given, unalienable rights.⁴⁴⁹ And it was Christian institutions—churches, schools, and charitable organizations—that built much of America’s civil society from the ground up.⁴⁵⁰ The selective condemnation of Christianity’s role in American history, combined with the complete silence on its civilizing and liberating contributions, is not a neutral curatorial choice. It is a pattern—one consistent with a museum-wide editorial agenda that treats Christianity as a historical villain while ignoring the faith that, more than any other, shaped the ideals that America continues to strive toward.

Additionally, NMAH’s *Upending 1620: Where Do We Begin?* exhibit explicitly reframes the Christian Pilgrims as colonizers, *not* “founders” or “settlers” and claims that the fact that a “chest that traveled across the Atlantic Ocean” on the *Mayflower* was owned by an English family that “did not belong to the Pilgrims’ religious sect . . . demonstrates that not every passenger aboard the *Mayflower* was fleeing religious persecution.”⁴⁵¹ It also reframes Thanksgiving as a “National Day of Mourning,” offers “evidence that upends these myths,” and “urges audiences to reexamine these stories without reducing their importance in American history. Fragments from Plymouth Rock are on display, juxtaposed with artifacts from the Wampanoag community, questioning the stone’s role in the Plymouth’s landing and challenging visitors’ preconceptions.”⁴⁵²



Photos of NMAH's "Upending 1620: Where Do We Begin?" exhibit.⁴⁵³

The Smithsonian stated that the exhibit was designed to undo the "myth" of Plymouth precisely because it "is cemented in many minds as the birthplace of the United States and central to its founding events." Because it is central to these events, it therefore contradicts the incoherent, anti-Christian, and anti-freedom narrative of America that NMAH and the Smithsonian seek to tell.⁴⁵⁴ Because Plymouth proves that America's longstanding belief in self-government and peaceful coexistence with neighboring sovereigns has Christian roots, current Smithsonian leadership has stated that it must be destroyed, boycotted, mourned, and "upended."

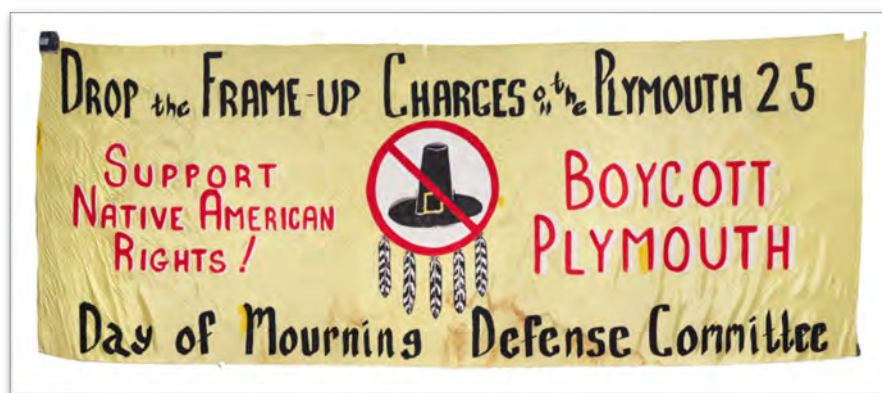


Photo of the 1998 "Day of Mourning" "protest banner" displayed in NMAH's "Upending 1620: Where Do We Begin?" exhibit, which says it seeks to "upend" the "powerful myths, when later Americans reimagined the English as 'Pilgrims' and founders of the U.S. nation."⁴⁵⁵ The Smithsonian notes that the banner was used in a National Day of Mourning protest "first organized by Indigenous Americans in 1970 to honor their ancestors, tell a more complete history, and continue their strive for equality" and "provid[es] insight into this alternative way to mark the American Thanksgiving holiday."⁴⁵⁶

In addition to attacking America’s white Christian Founders, NMAH’s exhibits also portray restrictive immigration laws as a tool of white supremacy. The *Many Voices, One Nation* didactic entitled “Negotiating Inclusion” alleges that when “thousands of Chinese journeyed to the American West, encouraged by the promise of gold rush opportunity” in the 1850s, “[t]heir race...troubled white Americans,” leading to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, “the first of many restrictive immigration laws.”⁴⁵⁷ Another states, “White laborers considered the Chinese competition and responded with hostility.”⁴⁵⁸

One *American Democracy* didactic asks “How Diverse Should the Citizenry Be?” and notes that “In a nation created by immigrants...One view is that ‘multiculturalism,’ the preservation of diverse cultural heritage, enriches the country...Still others challenged diversity by seeking to restrict immigration and exclude certain racial and ethnic groups.”⁴⁵⁹

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Photo of “How Diverse Should the Citizenry Be?” didactic in NMAH’s “American Democracy” exhibit.

Another *American Democracy* didactic claims that “the calls for exclusion of certain groups span the history of the nation” and is not limited “to certain ethnic and racial groups, but also sought to exclude those of differing . . . sexual orientations.”⁴⁶³

This rhetoric mirrors language Director Hartig used in an April 13, 2024 address while serving as the President of the Organization for American Historians, where she recounted the story of

Juana Briones, a Mexican-American immigrant who “fought a long battle to retain title to her lands” after “the American take-over of California in 1848,” stating:

Understanding Juana’s life thus also foreshadows and connects for us the long and on-going histories of brutality in all European colonial regimes across the continent. In particular, in California after 1848, Anglo-American ‘sexual violence, laws prohibiting interracial and same-sex relationships, and controls on women’s reproduction helped establish and maintain white male supremacy and class hierarchy in North America. Each served as scaffolding to slavery, Native American removal, Jim Crow, and immigration restrictions.’⁴⁶⁴

Notice what Hartig repeatedly demonizes here—“European,” “Anglo-American,” “white male”—and her characterization of “immigration restrictions” as a racist and oppressive practice akin to “slavery,” “Native American removal,” and “Jim Crow.”⁴⁶⁵

6. *America’s Flagship Museum Insists the Country Hasn’t Changed Since 1957*

But it is not just America’s past that NMAH and Smithsonian leadership have a problem with; they view America as systemically racist *today*. This is a remarkable position for a history museum to take. Between 1957 and today, America passed the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and the Fair Housing Act; desegregated its schools, military, and public institutions; elected a Black president twice; and built the most racially diverse professional and civic leadership class in its history. None of this appears to register with NMAH’s current leadership.

In 2020, Director Hartig directed NMAH staff to form a “rapid response collecting posture as the pandemic hit and as, of course, the ongoing and cascading crises—especially racial, constitutional, environmental, as well as civic—roiled throughout the nation. And that meant, of course, especially after the murders of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor and sadly so many others . . . really trying to center anti-Black violence across time in our new collecting around political history but as well thinking about the many, many ways in which the discrepancies of history have played out in COVID response and, of course, human loss[.]”⁴⁶⁶



Screenshot of Director Hartig explaining how NMAH worked to document the Black Lives Matter movement, available at <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=703>.

Hartig oversaw the creation of NMAH’s *Reckoning with Remembrance* exhibit, which argues that the murder of Emmett Till in 1955 “is not just part of a racist past; it reflects our ongoing present.”⁴⁶⁷ Hartig also ensured that NMAH was involved in the Smithsonian’s *Reckoning with Our Racial Past* initiative, which notes that it is based on “centuries of systemic racism and its urgent, present-day reality.”⁴⁶⁸ Other articles, including some published by NMAH staff curators on NMAH’s website allege that: “Our political and legal systems are inextricably intertwined with and fueled by structural racism.”⁴⁶⁹ “Racism has been a public health emergency in America for over 400 years.”⁴⁷⁰ And America is facing “two pandemics—COVID-19 and structural racism.”⁴⁷¹

In support of her assertion that America is systemically racist today, Director Hartig compared the example of Minnie Jean Brown fighting “daily discriminatory and tortuous behaviors of her white classmates” at Little Rock Central High School in the 1950s to recent data, featured in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, finding that “Black girls are suspended 6x more often than white girls.”⁴⁷²

Hartig noted that this black-white discrepancy in suspensions clearly means that there is “ongoing discrimination especially against black and brown girls,” displaying an NMAH graphic stating that “Schools are telling black girls that they (and their education) don’t matter.”⁴⁷³



Screenshot of Director Hartig explaining how America is racist today because data shows that black girls are suspended from school more often than white girls, available at <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=893>.

After all, to Director Hartig, there could be no other reason why a student in America today could be suspended from school apart from their race. This conclusion, however, ignores a substantial body of research finding that disparities in school discipline are influenced by numerous factors beyond race alone, including lack of parental guidance or support, trauma, mental health issues, gang involvement, drug use, social media, socioeconomic status, school climate, and wide variation in disciplinary policies across districts and states—none of which Hartig acknowledges or attempts to address.⁴⁷⁴

NMAH’s intentional decision to pretend that race relations in America were the same in 1957 as they are 63 years later in 2020 (when the exhibit opened) illustrates how current museum

leadership, under the pretext of telling American history, seeks to highlight and twist tragic events in America’s past to achieve its partisan goal of shaming Americans into supporting radical social and political change in the present.



Photos of NMAH’s “Who Gets to Go to School and Stay in School?” didactic, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

7. The Smithsonian and NMAH Are Not Celebrating America’s Founders or Founding on America’s 250th Anniversary

NMAH’s only special programming to commemorate America’s 250th anniversary, *In Pursuit of Life, Liberty & Happiness*, fails to celebrate America’s Founders and the American Founding. This exhibition highlights 250 objects from the museum’s collections, including remarkable artifacts like the desk Thomas Jefferson used to draft the Declaration of Independence, George Washington’s uniform, a ship of the early U.S. Navy, and, of course, the Star-Spangled Banner, the 1813 flag that inspired the National Anthem.⁴⁷⁵

Visitors to NMAH today will notice that these objects have not been moved to any new, prominent position within the Museum. Jefferson’s desk and Washington’s uniform remain in the same display cases and exhibits that they were previously. NMAH has only affixed a couple small bilingual stickers to each display case, indicating that the pieces belong to its broader “In Pursuit” list of objects. This is hardly a new “exhibition,” as claimed by NMAH.⁴⁷⁶ It is a repackaging of items spread like a scavenger hunt across the Museum.

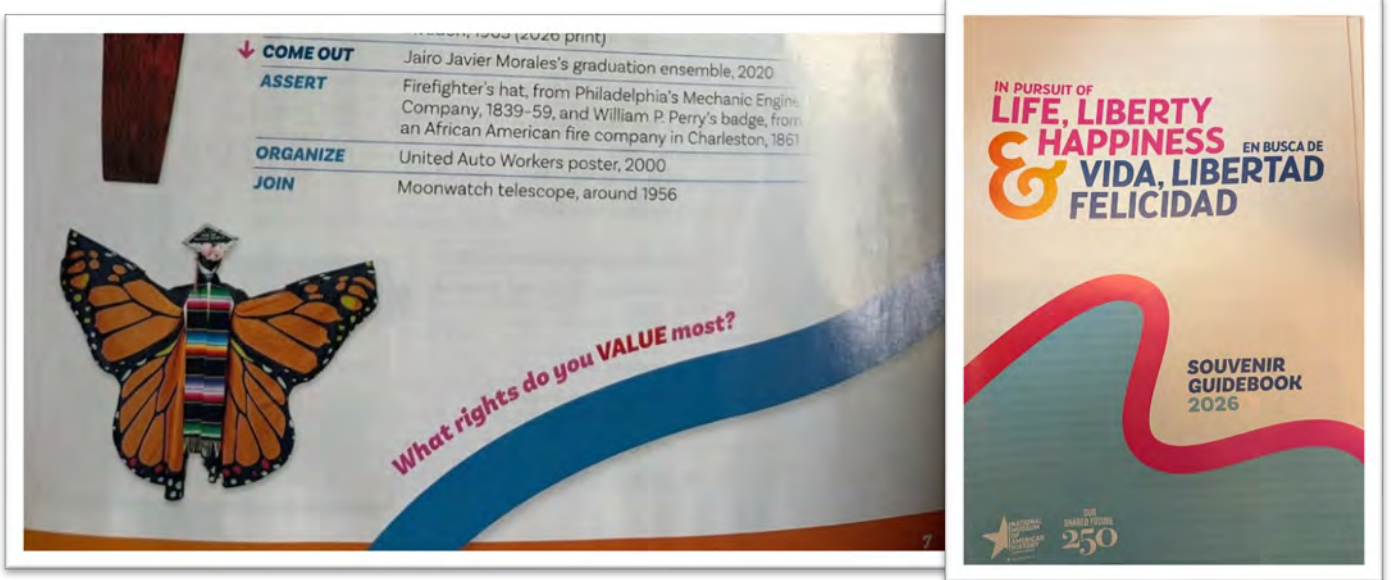


Photos of NMAH's display case for Jefferson's desk as of May 17, 2026.



Photos of NMAH's display cases for Washington's uniform as of May 17, 2026.

While NMAH failed to move these revered, historic objects to a place of prominence, it did move several of its preferred objects of political activism to a central place in the Museum. For example, in the *Souvenir Guidebook* provided to visitors, the Museum highlights a Monarch-butterfly-themed graduation gown, symbolizing the movement to grant illegal aliens U.S. citizenship.



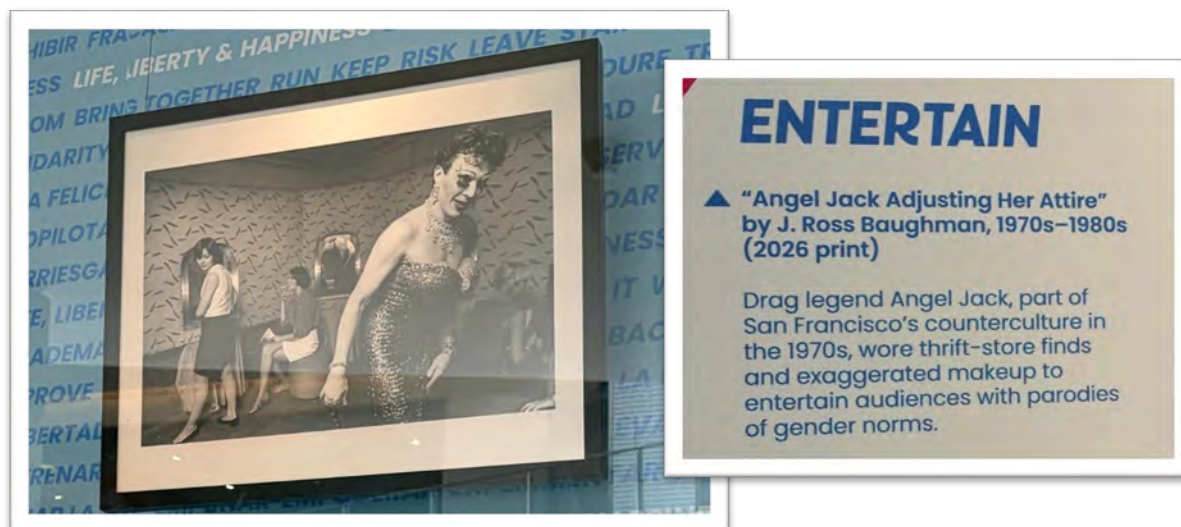
Photos of NMAH's *Souvenir Guidebook* informing visitors about the objects on display for its "In Pursuit" exhibit.

NMAH created a special display near the main entrance to the Museum (on the first floor), showcasing the butterfly gown and a didactic stating that it "expand[ed] the boundaries of belonging" when it was worn by a "queer, Mexican, and undocumented" man who "came out" at his college graduation.



Photos of NMAH's special display showcasing the Butterfly gown and "COME OUT" didactic.

NMAH also highlighted a framed photo of a drag queen in a separate special display in its Flag Hall (main atrium on the second floor) as well as in its *Souvenir Guidebook*, again, as part of its *In Pursuit* programming allegedly designed to celebrate the 250th anniversary of America’s independence. The accompanying didactic states: “Drag legend Angel Jack, part of San Francisco’s counterculture in the 1970s, wore thrift-store finds and exaggerated makeup to entertain audiences with parodies of gender norms.”



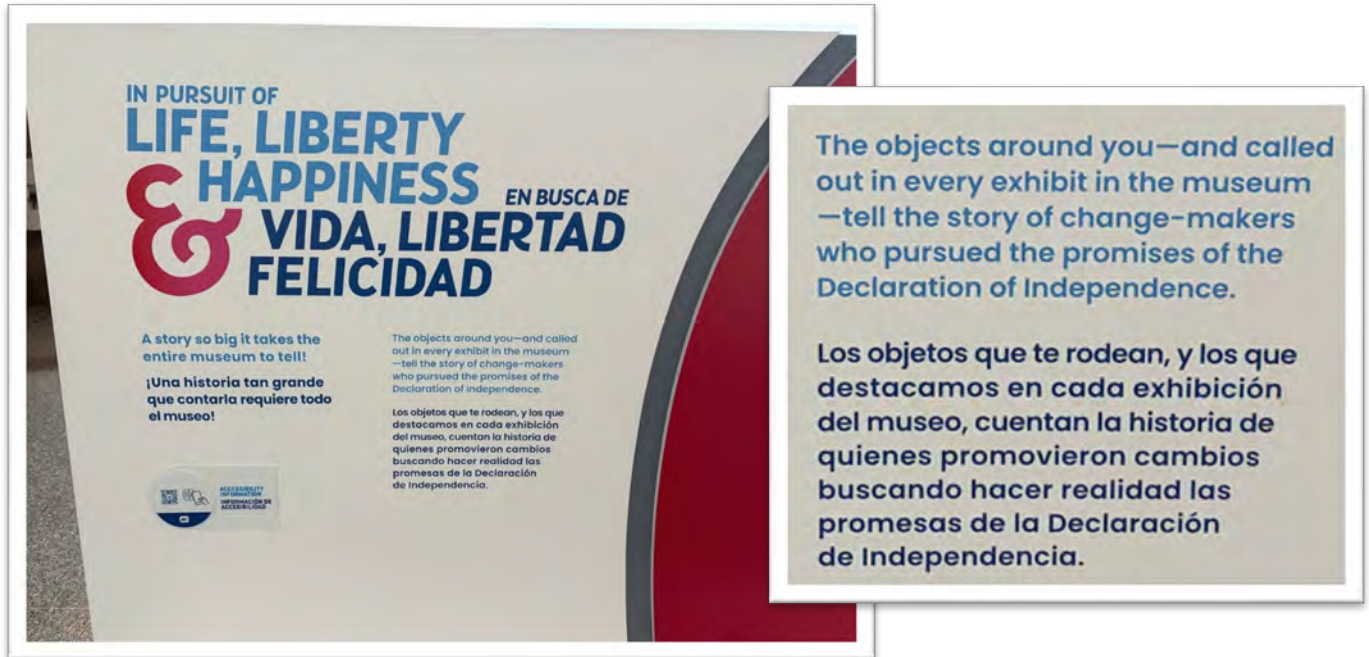
Photos of NMAH’s special display showcasing the drag queen framed photo and “ENTERTAIN” didactic.

NMAH was sure to include its 12-foot immigrant farm worker statue of liberty among its 250 objects as well.



Photos of NMAH’s “Immokalee Statue of Liberty” and “In Pursuit” sticker.

This is because NMAH’s special programming to commemorate America’s 250th anniversary is more about American activism than the American Founding. One of the primary informational panels explaining the new “exhibition” reads: “The objects around you—and called out in every exhibit in the museum—tell the story of change-makers who pursued the promises of the Declaration of Independence.”



Photos of one of the primary informational panels for the “In Pursuit” exhibit.

What are those promises? Who are those change-makers? Apart from the title of “life, liberty, and happiness,” NMAH does not tell visitors.

The Museum refuses to substantively address the Declaration of Independence and Revolutionary War because it does not want visitors thinking about America’s Founders or Founding at all. When drafting the words for a welcome sign explaining NMAH’s new programming, Director Hartig made sure to include her pronouns (“she/her/hers”) but failed to mention any of the Founding Fathers, anything about the Revolutionary War, or anything of substance about America’s Founding. Instead, Hartig stated that the focus would be on the “Americans [who] have worked since that time to realize the ideals written into” the Declaration, as well as “the next 250 years,” rather than “the revolutionary generation” who signed, fought, and died for it. She stated:

Thank you for joining us this year as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Throughout the museum you'll experience the history and legacies of the revolutionary generation, that took a great leap into democracy together in 1776. And you'll see how Americans have worked since that time to realize the ideals written into this groundbreaking document. We are proud to celebrate the birth of the United States and will continue to share the stories of all Americans as we look to the next 250 years.



Anthea M. Hartig, PhD
(she/her/hers)
Elizabeth MacMillan Director
National Museum of
American History
amhistdirector@si.edu

WELCOME TO YOUR NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY!

Thank you for joining us this year as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Throughout the museum you'll experience the history and legacies of the revolutionary generation, that took a great leap into democracy together in 1776. And you'll see how Americans have worked since that time to realize the ideals written into this groundbreaking document. We are proud to celebrate the birth of the United States and will continue to share the stories of all Americans as we look to the next 250 years.

ANTHEA M. HARTIG, PHD
ELIZABETH MACMILLAN DIRECTOR



¡TE DAMOS LA BIENVENIDA AL MUSEO NACIONAL DE HISTORIA AMERICANA!

Gracias por celebrar con nosotros el 250 aniversario de la Declaración de Independencia. Recorra el museo y reviva la historia y los legados de la generación revolucionaria, que en 1776 dio un gran paso hacia la democracia. También descubrirá cómo, desde entonces, el pueblo estadounidense ha trabajado en pos de hacer realidad los ideales plasmados en este documento histórico. Nos enorgullece celebrar el nacimiento de los Estados Unidos y seguir compartiendo las historias de todos los estadounidenses de cara a los siguientes 250 años.

DRA. ANTHEA M. HARTIG
DIRECTORA ELIZABETH MACMILLAN

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Photos of Director Hartig's welcome sign explaining NMAH's "In Pursuit" programming.

A visitor to the Museum today will not find a single depiction of a Founding Father or other famous American symbol (e.g., Liberty Bell, Statue of Liberty, bald eagle, American flag) on any of the promotional boards surrounding the Museum building or on the covers of the current promotional materials provided to visitors inside the building (e.g., maps, guidebooks). Instead, NMAH’s main design theme is white squiggly lines with red and blue backgrounds.



Photos of the “In Pursuit” promotional boards, banners, and signs surrounding the Museum.

Despite being the Museum housing America’s most iconic flag, American flags—including new reproductions or depictions of the Star-Spangled Banner—are noticeably absent from the Flag Hall of the Museum and most of the interior decorations.



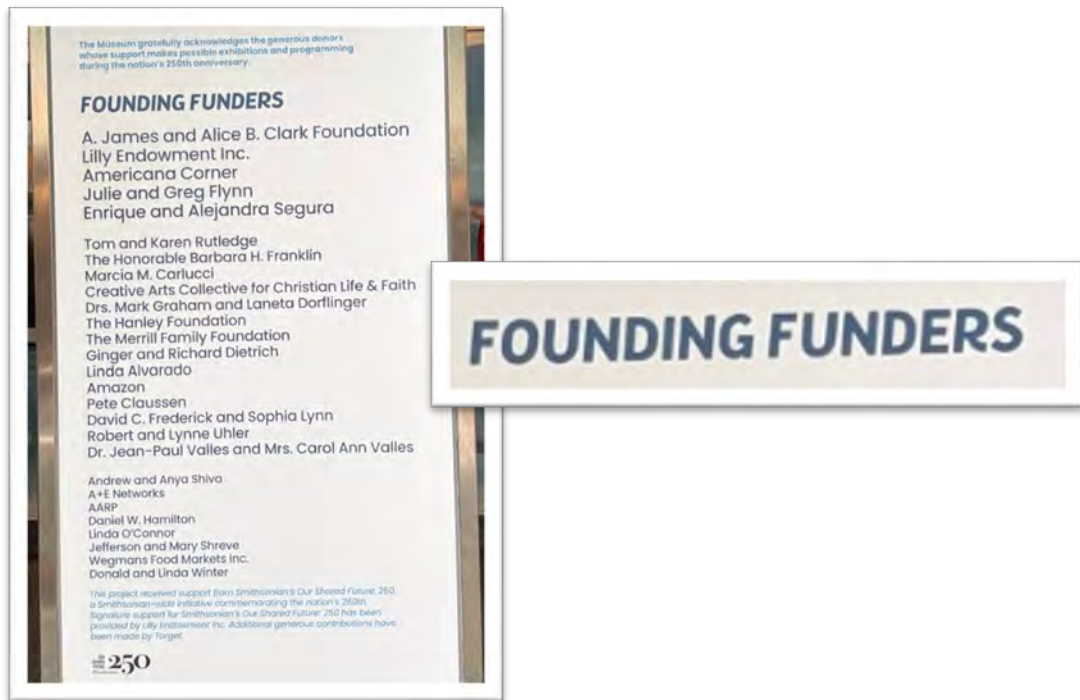
Photos of the Flag Hall of the Museum and other interior “In Pursuit” decorations.

The only new depiction of the American flag that we could find inside the Museum was wall art depicting two Americans holding up their own American flags at a ceremony honoring a fallen soldier.



Photo of wall art depicting two Americans holding up American flags at a ceremony honoring a fallen soldier.

In fact, NMAH included a sign with the names of the “Founding Funders” who contributed financially towards its special programming that refuses to substantively address the Founding Fathers.



Photos of the “Founding Funders” sign on display as part of NMAH’s “In Pursuit” exhibit.

Even the Museum’s new map refuses to utter the phrase “Founding Fathers.” The back cover reads: “Since 1776, generations of Americans, have pursued life, liberty, and happiness—the ‘unalienable rights’ at the heart of the Declaration of Independence. Their story is so big it takes the entire museum to tell! Objects in 1 and 2 Center and highlighted in exhibits throughout the museum offer examples of the many ways people have acted on the promises of the nation’s founding document.”



Photos of the back of the English version of the museum map for NMAH’s “In Pursuit” exhibit.

As with every other material related to America's 250th anniversary, visitors will notice the intentional vagueness here. Not only are the Founding Fathers not mentioned, but there is no reference to any of the brave Americans who fought, sacrificed, and won the Revolutionary War and toiled to establish the enduring constitutional framework of the American Republic.

It quickly becomes clear that the goal of NMAH's *In Pursuit* programming is not to inspire visitors with the exceptional bravery and wisdom of the Founders, nor marvel at the providential Founding and endurance of our Republic, but rather to highlight the activists whom the Museum believes have done what the Founders and Founding ultimately failed to do. In short, NMAH does not seek to celebrate America's 250th anniversary; it seeks to "problematize" it.

By failing to create any new exhibits recognizing the great figures or the key events of the American Revolution or any special presentation on the Declaration of Independence during America's 250th anniversary, NMAH has shown what it looks like to "problematize" and reframe American history away from any "celebratory narrative of U.S. history."⁴⁷⁷

Much like NMAH's *In Pursuit* "exhibition," the Smithsonian's new *American Aspirations* exhibit located within the Smithsonian Castle is a collection of approximately "30 objects from five of the Smithsonian's 21 museums."⁴⁷⁸ While referencing "the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence," this exhibit likewise fails to tell the story of any of America's Founders or the American Founding, providing incredibly minimal information about the Founders it does mention in passing (i.e., Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and John Adams).⁴⁷⁹ This is because the exhibit is focused on "presenting the promise and aspirations of America," rather than celebrating the Nation's Founders, Founding, and our unparalleled legacy of freedom.⁴⁸⁰

In fact, the opening didactic of the Smithsonian's new *American Aspirations* exhibit states that the ideals of the Declaration have been "in conflict and contested since [America's] founding" and still need to be "fulfill[ed]" and "ma[d]e concrete."⁴⁸¹ Another didactic, "In Pursuit of New Horizons," besmirches one of the opening chapters in American history, editorializing that the "romantic story" of Plymouth is a "tale" that is part of America's "mythic past."⁴⁸²

Another didactic entitled "In Pursuit of Fairness" shamefully divides Americans based on race by reducing the decades-long effort to eradicate slavery—pursued by Americans of every background and color—to a racial lens, noting that, "Since the inception of our nation, African Americans fought to abolish slavery, achieve equality and freedom, and overcome segregation through a variety of means: legal recourse, political persuasion, public protests, and non-violent demonstrations," and that "many have found...tragic irony in the phrase 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'"⁴⁸³

Rather than *celebrate* the ideals, heroes, and exceptional achievements of Americans of all backgrounds, the Smithsonian's *American Aspirations* exhibit *critiques* America's alleged contradictions and divides Americans by race. In so doing, the exhibit is the latest example of how the Smithsonian is working to "problematize" and discredit American history during our Nation's 250th anniversary year and is illustrative of the NMAH Interpretive Plan's curatorial

guidelines, which instruct staff to, “whatever the topic,” bring exhibits back to a radical ideological framework as part of the Smithsonian’s “commitment to relevance.”⁴⁸⁴

8. NMAH No Longer Holds Patriotic Ceremonies Celebrating America’s Flag

In fact, for many years, NMAH held a hands-on summer “flag folding” program where visitors would unfold a replica of the Star-Spangled Banner in the middle of the Museum each “June, July and August,” sing the National Anthem, and then refold the flag.⁴⁸⁵ For at least the last five years, NMAH has no longer hosted this program. Even in the 250th year of America’s independence, it appears that this program will not be making a return to the Museum. The only flag-related ceremony we found since 2020 under current Smithsonian and NMAH leadership was a June 13, 2022 ceremony to mark the addition of four flags belonging to unincorporated U.S. territories to NMAH’s “outdoor display of the 50 state flags and those of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia” to advance “the museum’s role in telling the complicated story of American history.”⁴⁸⁶



Screenshot of June 14, 2017 video where “Smithsonian visitors at [NMAH] unfold a replica of the 30x42 foot Star Spangled Banner and sing the National Anthem together,” available at <https://youtu.be/NS58ilw1a2Q?t=10>.

Perhaps the reason NMAH does not devote any substantial attention to the “the symbol of our nation” on “Flag Day” (June 14) is because it is too busy preparing for “June Pride Month/WorldPride in D.C.” each year.⁴⁸⁷ Last year, NMAH listed on its website its calendar of exhibitions and events for June 2025, and its programming for Flag Day was inviting visitors to visit the Star-Spangled Banner in the same display case where it rests year-round.⁴⁸⁸ NMAH announced that its LGBTQ-Pride Month celebrations, however, would begin on May 24, span 12 full days, and include participating in the Washington D.C.’s citywide “WorldPride” event “by hosting a series of programs between May 24 and June 8” that included “ongoing and special displays, a documentary screening, [and] book signing and choral performances.”⁴⁸⁹



Screenshot of the “WorldPride” event logo featured on NMAH’s website, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/June-2025-calendar>.

As Director Hartig explained in a June 2024 presentation, all her attention was focused on flying the Smithsonian Pride Alliance’s “intersexual pride flag during June” in 2023 and 2024: “One of the other key policy changes that’s just happened this month internally has been—I’m the liaison to the Pride Alliance here—and for the first time in the history of the Smithsonian, we flew the pride flag last year and this year, and so that’s a small thing in a way: to fly their intersexual pride flag during June.”⁴⁹⁰

This year—America’s 250th year of independence—NMAH has failed to schedule or hold any special programming or celebratory activities for Flag Day (June 14), not even one of its traditional flag-folding ceremonies.⁴⁹¹

9. NMAH No Longer Celebrates America’s Independence Day (July 4th)

In fact, NMAH’s *Calendar of Exhibitions and Events* for the summer of 2025 reveals that America’s national history museum did not devote any special programming to celebrate Independence Day on July 4th, 2025, despite the museum being open that day.⁴⁹² Even the article NMAH published describing the NMAH-related programming that would be taking place during July 2025 failed to even refer to “Independence Day” or “July 4.”⁴⁹³ No one reading that article would even know the holiday exists, let alone that the following year—2026—is the 250th anniversary of the drafting and adoption of the Declaration of Independence for which we celebrate it.

Rather, the only NMAH programming in close proximity to July 4th that the Museum highlighted last year was “a screening of ‘The Ride Ahead,’ a documentary” on July 3rd that “follows Samuel Habib, a typical 21-year-old, itching to move out, start a career and find love.”⁴⁹⁴ In keeping with its view that the telling of history should result in activism, NMAH explained that, “Following the screening, the filmmakers will be in conversation with lawyer, scholar, activist and community organizer Ly Xīnzhèn M. Zhǎngsūn Brown and the audience.”⁴⁹⁵

Even NMAH's Civic Season programming, which uses "history" as a pretext to spur America's youth to become political activists,⁴⁹⁶ spans "from Juneteenth (June 19) to the Fourth of July," stopping short on July 3.⁴⁹⁷ Indeed, NMAH's "Civic Season 2025" page makes clear that there was "No Programming" on July 4.⁴⁹⁸

Even in 2026—the 250th anniversary year of America's independence—the Smithsonian and NMAH have failed to schedule or hold any special July 4th-only programming for Independence Day.⁴⁹⁹

10. The Smithsonian's Determination to Stage an Intervention with the American People and Focus on America's Flaws During Our 250th Anniversary

These actions are not an oversight, but quite intentional. By its own terms, the leadership of the Smithsonian and NMAH are dedicated to carrying out an intervention with the American people, who must be made to confront "national reckonings" of America's past.⁵⁰⁰ If you thought you could spend a day visiting the Capitol with your family to celebrate America's 250th birthday and share in the infinitely rich history of the country you love by visiting America's national history museum, you would be sadly mistaken.

NMAH leadership has openly stated that it seeks to focus on America's flaws this year. In 2020, Director Hartig asserted that the museum profession has "to figure out" how "we're going to problematize" the "250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026."⁵⁰¹ In 2023, Hartig wrote that "given that we are lurching towards the semiquincentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, let's focus on the gaps surrounding that document."⁵⁰²

Barbara Clark Smith—a NMAH "curator of early American social and political history" and co-curator NMAH's *Upending 1620* exhibit,⁵⁰³ who was on the Committee responsible for drafting NMAH's current Interpretive Plan⁵⁰⁴—noted in a recent interview posted on NMAH's website that, "The 250th anniversary invites us to reconsider the Declaration's relevance and its role in shaping American identity today" given "the historical and present-day inequities that would have us question the authenticity of these promises."⁵⁰⁵ When asked, "What lessons from 1776 are relevant today, and should we celebrate the 250th?" Smith simply replied, "The Revolutionary era teaches us that profound change is possible. Despite inheriting a world structured by deep inequalities, the revolutionaries challenged these norms. They imagined a new order based on the consent of the common people. It's up to us to ask for ourselves: What parts of our history should we celebrate today? What do we regret, and how must we change? Can we unite around shared commitments in order to make a difference?"⁵⁰⁶

In addition, the Smithsonian's programming for America's 250th anniversary is entitled "Our Shared Future: 250," integrating it into the Smithsonian's broader "Our Shared Future" initiative, the only other aspect of which is entitled "Our Shared Future: Reckoning with our Racial Past,"⁵⁰⁷ which, according to the Secretary of the Smithsonian, is intended to "explore [the] history and legacy of race and racism" in America.⁵⁰⁸ As noted on its website, the initiative seeks to explore "how museums and cultural institutions can serve as an engine for social justice and

the changes needed to end racial and economic inequality” in light of “Black Lives Matter and 2020 and George Floyd.”⁵⁰⁹

11. The Smithsonian Proudly Highlighted an Employee’s Talk on a Future Where “America Exists in Hindsight” in Its 2023 DEI Initiatives Report

The Smithsonian decided to highlight the entry of one Smithsonian employee in one of its annual DEI initiatives reports, which stated that the employee had “delivered a talk from the perspective of a future when the United States of America (and the Archives of American Art) exists in hindsight.”⁵¹⁰ The Smithsonian chose to proudly list a talk about a future where America no longer exists as a contribution to one of its 400+ DEI initiatives that fiscal year.⁵¹¹



Screenshot of the Smithsonian highlighting an employee who “delivered a talk from the perspective of when the United States of America...exists in hindsight” as one of its DEI initiatives in its FY 2023 DEI report, available at https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 34.

Chapter V. Conclusion: Ideological Capture at the Museum

We must be committed to restoring truth and sanity in how American history is presented and taught. President Trump’s Executive Order of March 2025 notes that the Smithsonian’s effort “to rewrite history deepens societal divides and fosters a sense of national shame, disregarding the progress America has made and the ideals that continue to inspire millions around the globe.”⁵¹² As a result, to restore the truth of America’s story as it regards the Smithsonian Institution, EO 14253 directs the Vice President (as Regent of the Smithsonian) to work with the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy “to remove improper ideology from such properties, and shall recommend to the President any additional actions necessary to fully effectuate such policies” and with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to “prohibit expenditure on exhibits or programs that degrade shared American values, divide Americans based on race, or promote programs or ideologies inconsistent with Federal law and policy.”⁵¹³

Rather than part of a national trust for the diffusion of knowledge, dedicated to explaining the “infinite richness and complexity of American history,”⁵¹⁴ the National Museum of American History has become an instrument—a “prime tool,” as Director Hartig has put it—for a radical, activist cohort dedicated to reframing the American story to serve its ideological ends.⁵¹⁵

In both theory and practice, NMAH is a clear and institutionalized example of intersectional critical theory—an intellectual framework rooted in Marxism that seeks to radically transform society by revealing and challenging alleged “overlapping systems of oppression”—applied to American history. It fails “to provide America’s young people access to what is genuinely inspiring and unifying in our history, as well as to the lessons imparted by the American experience of overcoming great national challenges”—stories and lessons that make “possible the informed and honest patriotism that is essential for a successful republic.”⁵¹⁶ Its message does not seek to instill an “American education grounded in the principles of our founding that is accurate, honest, unifying, inspiring, and ennobling,” but rather seeks to teach disdain and inspire disgust of our great country.⁵¹⁷

Today, the Museum fails to “place before millions who visit the Nation’s Capital each year a stimulating permanent exposition that commemorates our heritage of freedom and highlights the basic elements of our way of life.”⁵¹⁸ It has strayed far from Secretary Carmichael’s original vision of a place that “instill[s] in each citizen a deepened faith in our country’s destiny as champion of individual dignity and enterprise” and “in each foreign visitor admiration and respect for our ever-expanding social and technological horizons.”⁵¹⁹ It has fallen far short of Director Kellogg’s hope that it would “awaken in citizen and foreigner alike a clear understanding of the inspiring story of the United States—its origins, struggles, development, traditions, strength.”⁵²⁰ And it has failed to live up to President Johnson’s dream that it would record “as William Faulkner expressed it, the agony and the sweat of the human spirit, the victory of freedom and genius of our country” and “the ripe fruit of America’s historical harvest” for the children of the Nation.⁵²¹ In short, NMAH has failed to maintain the “treasure-house of our inheritance” because it no longer seeks to “illuminate our heritage.”⁵²²

As our nation celebrates its 250th anniversary, NMAH has refused to celebrate the Nation and its history. It has not created any exhibit dedicated to presenting a general narrative of American

history or telling the story of any of our Founding Fathers, the Second Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence, the American Revolutionary War, or the achievement of independence and the establishment of the constitutional rule of law—even in the 250th anniversary of the first of those pivotal events.

For purposes of policy formulation under EO 14253, this review of the National Museum of American History concludes that NMAH, by the intention and at the direction of current Museum and Smithsonian leadership, has become subject to institutional capture by a radical, activist ideology that is fundamentally opposed to telling the noble, honest story of the great country we know and love.

¹ David K. Allison & Hannah Peterson, *Exhibiting America: The Smithsonian's National History Museum, 1881-2018* (Feb. 18, 2021), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-SI-PURL-gpo152991/pdf/GOVPUB-SI-PURL-gpo152991.pdf>, at 50.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.* at 54.

⁶ *Id.* at 43.

⁷ *Id.* at 44.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service (Anthea Hartig)*, (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 3:01, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=181>.

¹⁰ University of California Riverside, *Chancellor's Distinguished Lecture Series: Anthea M. Hartig*, (YouTube, Nov. 16, 2020) at 41:24, <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=2484>.

¹¹ Anthea M. Hartig, *In Slavery's Shadow: George Floyd and American Legacies*, NAT'L MUSEUM OF AM. HIST. (May 31, 2020), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/slaverys-shadow-george-floyd-and-american-legacies-anthea-m-hartig-elizabeth>.

¹² University of California Riverside, *Chancellor's Distinguished Lecture Series: Anthea M. Hartig*, (YouTube, Nov. 16, 2020) at 41:24, <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=2484>.

¹³ University of California Riverside, *Chancellor's Distinguished Lecture Series: Anthea M. Hartig*, (YouTube, Nov. 16, 2020) at 1:03:31, <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=3811>.

¹⁴ Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future* (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 14:15, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=855>.

¹⁵ Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan. 26, 2022) at 35:30, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=2130.

¹⁶ Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (Apr. 16, 1963), https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.

¹⁷ University of California Riverside, *Chancellor's Distinguished Lecture Series: Anthea M. Hartig*, (YouTube, Nov. 16, 2020) at 1:03:31, <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=3811>.

¹⁸ See *Hamilton* didactic in *Entertainment Nation* exhibit (“Featuring performers of color in the roles of the nation’s all-white founders, *Hamilton* struck a chord that reverberated far beyond Broadway. Lin-Manuel Miranda told the story of influential and flawed founding father, Alexander Hamilton. Through rap and hip-hop-and non-white casting—*Hamilton* made this history accessible and relatable to audiences of color and gave more people a sense of ownership of American history.”); *Franklin’s Electrical Years: Enslaved People in Franklin’s Research?*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/electric-dr-franklin/online/enslaved-people> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026) (where NMAH devotes a full 20 percent—one of the five sections—of the exhibit to “Enslaved People,” stating that “Benjamin Franklin’s remarkable scientific accomplishments were, in part, enabled by slavery,” and only in the section’s second to last paragraph do we learn that “Franklin became president of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery in 1787, and supported Pennsylvania’s adoption of gradual emancipation,” in addition to making the “emancipation of Bob a condition for the Baches to inherit his estate.”).

¹⁹ See, e.g., “Creating the Father of Our Country” and “Abraham Lincoln in the Classroom” didactics in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit; “Assimilation through Public Schools” and “Emblem of America Pitcher, around 1800” didactics in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

²⁰ See “The Pledge of Allegiance” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit (“Francis Bellamy wrote the original Pledge of Allegiance. It was first published in *The Youth’s Companion* to coincide with the dedication of the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago on October 21, 1892, as a way to instill American nationalism through flag ceremonies.”).

²¹ See “What are the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens?” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit; see also Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let’s Bring Them Back before It’s Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179>, at 439.

²² See, e.g., “Incorporating Nez Perce Land,” “Tatawiam Sandstone Mortar and Pestle, used in the 1800s,” “Indian Removal in the Midwest,” and “Helmet” didactics in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit; *1620 Display at National Museum of American History Asks “Where Do We Begin?”*, THE SMITHSONIAN (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/1620-display-national-museum-american-history-asks-where-do-we-begin>; *Upending 1620: Where Do We Begin?*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/upending-1620-where-do-we-begin> (last accessed Apr. 7, 2026).

²³ See, e.g., “Negotiating Inclusion” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit; Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let’s Bring Them Back before It’s Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179>, at 429-430 (where Hartig repeatedly demonizes the terms “European,” “Anglo-American,” and “white male” and treats “immigration restrictions” as a racist and oppressive practice akin to “slavery,” “Native American removal,” and “Jim Crow”); *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 12-13, 147-149 (which was studied by NMAH staff for years and outlines the three-year roadmap to “truly transform the museum space” that “privileges dominant Western ideals of race, class, and gender” and is linked “with white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, abuse of labor, colonization, imperialist theft of art and artifacts, destruction or absencing of alternative ways of interpreting or representing art and artifacts, structural racism and other oppressions.” See *Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: Fiscal Year 2023*, https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 41).

²⁴ *Upending 1620: Where Do We Begin*, NMAH (n.d.) <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/upending-1620-where-do-we-begin> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).

²⁵ *Id.*; see also *1620 Display at National Museum of American History Asks “Where Do We Begin?”*, THE SMITHSONIAN (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/1620-display-national-museum-american-history-asks-where-do-we-begin>.

²⁶ See “Unsettling the Continent, 1492-1776” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

²⁷ University of California Riverside, *Chancellor’s Distinguished Lecture Series: Anthea M. Hartig*, (YouTube, Nov. 16, 2020) at 1:03:31, <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=3811>.

²⁸ See, e.g., *Problematize*, NEW DISCOURSES (n.d.), <https://newdiscourses.com/tftw-problematize/> (last accessed May 28, 2026) (noting that “Problematizing is the functional core of Critical Social Justice and its Theory and activism. To problematize something is to look for, identify, manufacture, and/or ‘expose’ the ‘problematics’ in it or associated with it. Problematics are ways in which the phenomenon, entity, person, circumstance, object, etc., under examination falls short of the moral agenda that necessarily lies at the heart of the critical theory examining it (by definition of a critical theory, which must be normative against what it sees as ‘oppression’ Problematizing is, as adherents to Critical Social Justice and other critical theories would say, the process of making those oppressions (and other moral failings) ‘visible.’ Put otherwise, problematics are what critical theories criticize, and problematizing is how it does its criticism. The goal of this activity is to replace false consciousness (especially internalized oppression) with critical consciousness (i.e., wokeness) and thus agitate for a social and cultural revolution.). Of particular interest are ways in which those things might marginalize, exclude, minoritize, harm, cause oppression, or maintain or legitimate dominance and injustice through the machinations of systemic power. It is impossible to overstate the central relevance of problematizing to the Theory and praxis of Critical Social Justice. This is because problematizing is the chief epistemological tool of any critical theory, which is taken to a particular extreme in the critical Theories of Critical Social Justice (e.g., critical race Theory, postcolonial Theory, queer Theory, whiteness studies, fat studies, disability studies, gender studies, women’s studies, masculinity studies, media studies, and critical pedagogy). That is, problematization is the primary, if not sole, means by which a critical theory

decides whether or not a concept is valid and thus constitutes authentic knowledges (or ‘truths’.”); Mike Gonzalez & Katharine Cornell Gorka, *Nextgen Marxism: What It Is And How To Combat It* (2024), at 142 (noting that “These terms—*dismantle, centering, disrupt, problematize, interrogate*, all existing words with new revolutionary twists that made up a veritable new dialect—were furnished by a coterie of legal academics who took over an important corner of the law faculty, the area of civil rights.”); see also Duncan Waite & Khalid Arar, *Problematizing the Social in Social Justice Education*, in *Handbook on Promoting Social Justice in Education* (Denise Mifsud et al. eds., 2020), https://link.springer.com/rwe/10.1007/978-3-030-14625-2_153 at 169; *Problematizing History: Indigenous perspectives on Welsh settlement in Patagonia*, THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES, n.d., <https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/external-exhibitions/problematising-history> (last accessed May 28, 2026) (discussing a “Problematising History” project that seeks “to reflect critically on settler colonialism and its foundational narratives, where the relationship between indigenous peoples, Welsh immigrants and the Argentine State is portrayed as a harmonious meeting of cultures” and reframe that narrative away from one that “make[s] Mapuche Tehuelche memories invisible and silence[s] their testimonies about forced displacement, territorial dispossession and heritage appropriations” and towards one that highlights the “life experiences, testimonies, and memories that were made invisible, denied or pushed to the margins.”); Paul R. Carr, *Whiteness and White Privilege: Problematizing Race and Racism in a Color-blind World and in Education*, INT’L J. CRITICAL PEDAGOGY 1, 1 (2016), <https://janeway.uncpress.org/ijcp/article/id/740/>, at 7, (arguing “that Whiteness captures different, overlapping and fundamental concerns that shape contemporary societies globally, and can be used to understand, problematize and deconstruct a range of social conditions, interactions, and lived realities for all people” and “concluding with some suggestions for critical engagement in and through education so as to, hopefully, lay the groundwork for social justice and a more socially just society.”).

²⁹ Anthea Hartig et al., *Modern American History and the Smithsonian*, 6 MOD. AM. HIST., 250 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1017/mah.2023.30>, at 244.

³⁰ Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service* (Anthea Hartig), (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 1:15:36, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=4536>.

³¹ Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan. 26, 2022) at 35:30, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=2130.

³² See *Calendar of Exhibitions and Events: July 2025*, NMAH (Jun 12, 2025), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/July-2025-calendar>; see also *Civic Season*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/topics/civic-season> (last accessed Apr. 15, 2026).

³³ See *Strategic Plan 2020-2030*, NMAH (Feb. 2020) (on file with author), at 1; see also Screenshot of Director Hartig outlining NMAH’s new mission, available at <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=2578>.

³⁴ Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service* (Anthea Hartig), (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 1:15:36, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=4536>.

³⁵ University of California Riverside, *Chancellor’s Distinguished Lecture Series: Anthea M. Hartig*, (YouTube, Nov. 16, 2020) at 41:24, <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=2484>.

³⁶ Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future* (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 1:20:34, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=4834>.

³⁷ Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service* (Anthea Hartig), (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 3:01, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=181>.

³⁸ See, e.g., Anthea M. Hartig, *In Slavery’s Shadow: George Floyd and American Legacies*, NAT’L MUSEUM OF AM. HIST. (May 31, 2020), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/slaverys-shadow-george-floyd-and-american-legacies-anthea-m-hartig-elizabeth>.

³⁹ See, e.g., Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service* (Anthea Hartig), (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 32:00, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=1920>; *Id.* at 1:24:15, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=5055>.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future*, (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 15:45 <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=948>; *Restorative History [explained]*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY (n.d.) https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026).

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- ⁴¹ *Restorative History [explained]*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY (n.d.) https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026).
- ⁴² See, e.g., NMAH Collections Plan (Jan. 2021), https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Collections_Plan.pdf, at 4 (noting that NMAH’s “Decolonization/Restorative History plan” was “called for in the Strategic Plan”); *Restorative History [explained]*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY (n.d.) https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf, at 10 (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026); see also Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan 26, 2022) at 50:23, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HERz54an_-c&t=3023s (where Hartig references the existence of the Decolonization Plan); Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future*, (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 9:49, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=589> (where Hartig notes that the Strategic Plan “called out for three subsequent plans: Collections Plan, Interpretive Plan, and a Decolonization Plan”).
- ⁴³ See, e.g., Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service (Anthea Hartig)*, (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 3:01, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=181>; *Transcript: From ‘Our Divided Nation’ to ‘Our Shared Future’: Museums and the Advancement of Equity and Understanding*, OUR SHARED FUTURE (Oct. 27, 2021), <https://web.archive.org/web/20250328103327/https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/events/our-divided-nation-our-shared-future-museums-and-advancement-equity-and-understanding#transcript>.
- ⁴⁴ *NMAH Interpretive Plan*, NMAH (Jan. 2021), https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Interpretive_Plan.pdf, at 7.
- ⁴⁵ See *Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: Fiscal Year 2023*, https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 41; *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf.
- ⁴⁶ *Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: Fiscal Year 2023*, THE SMITHSONIAN (2023), https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 3-4.
- ⁴⁷ See, e.g., *Undocumented Organizing Collecting Initiative*, NMAH (n.d.), https://web.archive.org/web/20240724002347/https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/centers/restorative-history/projects/uoci?utm_source=web&utm_medium=calendar (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026); Anna Diamond, *How the Smithsonian Is Documenting the Work of Immigrant Rights Activists*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Feb. 21, 2020), <https://web.archive.org/web/20241204082257/https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-smithsonian-documenting-undocumented-political-organizing-movements-180974220/>; Nancy Bercau & Patricia Arteaga, *Redefining ‘American’*, AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS (Sept. 1, 2020), <https://www.aam-us.org/2020/09/01/redefining-american/>.
- ⁴⁸ Anna Diamond, *How the Smithsonian Is Documenting the Work of Immigrant Rights Activists*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Feb. 21, 2020), <https://web.archive.org/web/20241204082257/https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-smithsonian-documenting-undocumented-political-organizing-movements-180974220/> (“The curatorial team has settled on six different locations to conduct their collecting: Washington, D.C., Southern California (Orange County and Los Angeles), Chicago, Nebraska, North Carolina in the U.S. and Mexico City in Mexico. Each city corresponds to a pattern in immigration and organizing identified in their research. For example, Mexico City is where many who have been deported from the U.S. currently live in large numbers and are organizing to bring awareness to their situation.”).
- ⁴⁹ See NMAH’s “Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like” graphic, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20240701064456/https://www.americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like>; Screenshot of Anthea Hartig’s Screen at Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future* (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 21:54, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=1314>.
- ⁵⁰ See, e.g., Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let’s Bring Them Back before It’s Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179>, at 436; “Is Gender Testing Fair?” didactic currently on display at NMAH’s *Change Your Game* exhibit; *We Belong Here: Explore Online*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/we-belong-here/online>; *Dangerous Girls*” didactic in NMAH’s

Girlhood (It's Complicated) exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>; “Fashion (remix)” wall and didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It's Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>; “Trans nonbinary” skateboarder Leo Baker’s chest binder on display at NMAH’s “We Belong Here” exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/we-belong-here/online/leo-baker>.

⁵¹ See, e.g., “Dear Diary...” display with Ryan’s diary pages in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It's Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery> (discussing how she struggled with the idea of “getting boobs” and praying “every night for my penis to grow.”); “What is love?” movie theater video and other videos in NMAH’s *Entertainment Nation* exhibit.

⁵² Exec. Order No. 14,253, 90 Fed. Reg. 14,563 (Apr. 3, 2025) (Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History).
⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *National Museum of American History – Strategic Plan: 2013-2018*, NMAH (2013), https://amhistory.si.edu/docs/nmah_strategicplan_2013.pdf (showing NMAH’s previous mission statement).

⁵⁵ See Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service (Anthea Hartig)*, (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025), <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=181> (with Hartig noting that “History as a practice...is for me a prime tool of social justice.”).

⁵⁶ Exec. Order No. 13,958, 85 Fed. Reg. 70,951 (Nov. 5, 2020) (Executive Order on Establishing the President’s Advisory 1776 Commission).

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ David K. Allison & Hannah Peterson, *Exhibiting America: The Smithsonian’s National History Museum, 1881-2018* (Feb. 18, 2021), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-SI-PURL-gpo152991/pdf/GOVPUB-SI-PURL-gpo152991.pdf>, at 50.

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ *Id.* a 54.

⁶¹ *Id.* at 44.

⁶² *Id.* at 44-45.

⁶³ 20 U.S.C. § 41.

⁶⁴ See the Smithsonian’s 2023 tax filing (Form 990, Schedule G, Part IV), <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/530206027/202542239349300544/full> (noting that the Smithsonian Institution “IS A TRUST INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE U.S. AND AS SUCH IS EXEMPT FROM STATE REGULATIONS PURSUANT TO THE SUPREMACY CLAUSE OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION.”).

⁶⁵ 20 U.S.C. § 41 *et seq.*

⁶⁶ *The Status of the Smithsonian Institution Under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act*, 12 Op. O.L.C. 122 (1988), <https://www.justice.gov/file/150986/dl?inline>.

⁶⁷ *Immunity of Smithsonian Institution from State Insurance Laws*, 21 Op. O.L.C. 81, 86 (1997), <https://www.justice.gov/file/146711/dl?inline>.

⁶⁸ Office of General Counsel, *Legal History*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), <https://www.si.edu/ogc/legalhistory> (last accessed June 4, 2026).

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ Exec. Order No. 14,253, 90 Fed. Reg. 14,563 (Apr. 3, 2025) (Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History).

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² See NMAH Facilities Master Plan Update, May 2018 (on file with author) (noting that “The National Museum of American History is the nation’s primary exhibition and research center for exploring, celebrating, and telling the American story.”).

⁷³ In contrast, the NMAH-endorsed *Reframing History* report views “talking about historical ‘truth’” and “reporting on ‘just the facts’” as unhelpful because it “will cue unproductive thinking about truth versus bias and will lead people to assume that interpretations about the past—including those made by historians—are inherently ‘biased.’” *Making History Matter: From Abstract Truth to Critical Engagement*, AASLH (Feb. 2022), <https://download.aaslh.org/Research/FWI-Reframing-History-Report.pdf>, at 6, 8.

⁷⁴ See Letter from Vince Haley, Dir., Domestic Policy Council, Lindsey Halligan, White House Senior Assoc., & Russ Vought, Dir., Office of Mgmt. & Budget, to Lonnie G. Bunch III, Sec’y, Smithsonian Inst. (Aug. 12, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Letter-Sec.-Bunch-Smithsonian-8.12.2025.pdf>.

⁷⁵ In January 2026, 12 of the 16 advertising boards placed on sidewalks around the museum highlighted just two exhibits: *Corazon y Vida: Lowriding Culture*, highlighting Mexican-Americans and Mexican culture, and *How Can You Forget Me: Filipino American Stories*, highlighting Filipino-Americans and Filipino culture.

⁷⁶ The museum profession has catechized and codified the ideological dogma of DEI to such an astonishing degree that to begin to understand and unpack the academic underpinnings of this radical ideological framework would itself need to be the subject of a separate update. One example illustrative of this ideological radicalism is NMAH's decision to host "a recurring meeting for NMAH staff members to meet, discuss and read the MASS Action Toolkit" since 2019. See *Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: Fiscal Year 2023*,

https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 41. MASS Action stands for "Museums as a Site for Social Action." The toolkit outlines the three-year roadmap to "truly transform the museum space" that "privileges dominant Western ideals of race, class, and gender" and is linked "with white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, abuse of labor, colonization, imperialist theft of art and artifacts, destruction or absencing of alternative ways of interpreting or representing art and artifacts, structural racism and other oppressions." *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 12-13.

⁷⁷ In 2021, the Mellon Foundation allocated \$72 million to "racial justice" projects aimed at shedding a public spotlight on "the nation's racist past" and bringing about "cultural and social transformation." *Mellon Awards \$72M+ to Teams Led by Humanities Scholars to Ensure "Just Futures" and Expand National Cultural Narratives*, MELLON FOUND. (Jan. 13, 2021), <https://www.mellon.org/news/mellon-awards-more-than-72-million-to-teams-led-by-humanities-scholars-to-ensure-just-futures-and-expand-national-cultural-narratives>. It has also subsidized other social justice projects on "Ecowomanism," "Transfeminisms," "Racial Colonial Capitalism," "Environmental Anti-Racism," "Black Trans Studies," and "Visualizing Abolition," a project that "promotes research and art that calls for the elimination of prisons." See John D. Sailer, *The Mellon Foundation's Idea of 'Social Justice'*, WALL ST. J. (Feb. 6, 2026), <https://www.wsj.com/opinion/the-mellon-foundations-idea-of-social-justice-d73ceb7f?>

⁷⁸ The Smithsonian's intertwinement with the dogma of DEI is too voluminous and all-encompassing to be adequately addressed here. As such, it will be the subject of a future update.

⁷⁹ *History*, NMAH, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/history> (last accessed May 1, 2026).

⁸⁰ *Id.*; *Record Unit 250*, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION ARCHIVES (n.d.), https://siarchives.si.edu/collections/siris_arc_216814 (last accessed May 1, 2026).

⁸¹ Blue Ribbon Comm'n on the Nat'l Museum of Am. History, *Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on the National Museum of American History* (2002), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/reports/brc/2a.htm>.

⁸² *History*, NMAH, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/history> (last accessed May 1, 2026) (noting that "some 4 million visitors a year have passed through the doors to enjoy the museum's exhibitions, public programs, educational activities, collections, and research facilities"); see also NMAH Facilities Master Plan Update, May 2018, at 10 (on file with author) (noting that "the Museum welcomes more than 3.8 million visitors a year, supports over 500 staff, and operates 364 days a year on a 12.8 acre site, and in a 750,000 square foot, 6-level structure, prominently located on the National Mall.").

⁸³ *History*, NMAH, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/history> (last accessed May 1, 2026).

⁸⁴ *Smithsonian Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Justification to Congress*, THE SMITHSONIAN (Apr. 2022), <https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/about/smithsonianfy2023budgetrequestcongress.pdf>; *Smithsonian Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Justification to Congress*, THE SMITHSONIAN (Mar. 2023), <https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/about/fy2024-budgetrequestcongress.pdf> (noting that "The NMAH's vision is a timely reflection of its status as the Smithsonian's flagship history museum").

⁸⁵ Blue Ribbon Comm'n on the Nat'l Museum of Am. History, *Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on the National Museum of American History* (2002), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/reports/brc/2a.htm>.

⁸⁶ *Id.*

⁸⁷ *Women are increasingly getting the top museum jobs. Will more of them finally get equal pay?* CIMAM (July 5, 2019), <https://cimam.org/news-archive/women-are-increasingly-getting-top-museum-jobs-will-more-them-finally-get-equal-pay/> (noting that Hartig "took over the National Museum of American History for \$300,000").

⁸⁸ See the Smithsonian's FY 2024 tax filing (Form 990, Schedule J), <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/530206027/202542239349300544/full> (listing \$989,566 as the Secretary of the Smithsonian's total compensation in 2023); the Smithsonian's FY 2019 tax filing (Form 990, Schedule J), <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/530206027/202022279349301432/full>.

⁸⁹ University of California Riverside, *Chancellor's Distinguished Lecture Series: Anthea M. Hartig*, (YouTube, Nov. 16, 2020) at 41:24, <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=2484>; see also Alice George, *Why Museums Are Primed to Address Racism, Inequality in the U.S.*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/why-museums-are-primed-address-racism-inequality-us-180978992/> (in which Hartig states, “I think that it’s possible for us to create a very complicated landscape of interwoven narratives in which we see the intersections. . .where we understand the solidarities, where we know and come together to make change”); Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let's Bring Them Back before It's Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179> (in which Hartig asks, “And what is the role that women historians can have in connecting schools, universities, and communities in the project of promoting change and greater social and gender justice?”).

⁹⁰ Anthea M. Hartig, *In Slavery's Shadow: George Floyd and American Legacies*, NAT'L MUSEUM OF AM. HIST. (May 31, 2020), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/slaverys-shadow-george-floyd-and-american-legacies-anthea-m-hartig-elizabeth>.

⁹¹ Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future* (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 1:20:34, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=4834>.

⁹² Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service (Anthea Hartig)*, (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 3:01, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=181>.

⁹³ *About*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/about> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026); AASLH, *Reframing History: A Conversation at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History*, (YouTube, Mar. 1, 2022) at 1:55, https://youtu.be/IQv2tN9p5_E?t=115 (Hartig: “We’ve dedicated ourselves and my incredible staff and board and volunteers to becoming the most inclusive, relevant, accessible, and sustainable museum in the nation.”); see also Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let's Bring Them Back before It's Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179> (“As we move toward and through the semiquincentennial toward realizing our vision in 2030 to be the most inclusive, accessible, relevant, and sustainable history museum in the nation. . .”).

⁹⁴ *National Museum of American History – Strategic Plan: 2013-2018*, NMAH (2013), https://amhistory.si.edu/docs/nmah_strategicplan_2013.pdf (showing NMAH’s previous mission statement).

⁹⁵ *Strategic Plan 2020-2030*, NMAH (Feb. 2020) (on file with author), at 1. Despite listing its Interpretive and Collection Plans on its website, NMAH’s current Strategic Plan is noticeably absent on the “Plans and Reports” page of its website. We had to request a copy after the Smithsonian failed to provide the Plan in its initial document productions. See *Plans and Reports*, NMAH, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/reports> (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026). Also absent from NMAH’s website is its “Decolonization/Restorative History plan” cited on page 4 of NMAH’s Collections Plan as being “called for in the Strategic Plan” (although there is no reference to such a plan in the version of the Strategic Plan the Smithsonian provided to us) and referenced by Director Hartig as in existence in a January 2022 lecture. See Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan. 26, 2022) at 50:23, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HERz54an_-c&t=3023s.

⁹⁶ *Compare National Museum of American History – Strategic Plan: 2013-2018*, NMAH (2013), https://amhistory.si.edu/docs/nmah_strategicplan_2013.pdf, with *Strategic Plan 2020-2030*, NMAH (Feb. 2020) (on file with author). It is also worth noting that since removing “rigorous research” from its mission, the Smithsonian website reports that NMAH staff have been consistently publishing fewer and fewer academic studies and books. See *Publication History for NMAH-American History*, SMITHSONIAN DASHBOARD, <https://dashboard.si.edu/research> (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026).

⁹⁷ Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service (Anthea Hartig)*, (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 3:01, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=181>.

⁹⁸ Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service (Anthea Hartig)*, (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 1:15:36, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=4536>.

⁹⁹ *Id.* (cleaned up).

¹⁰⁰ Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service (Anthea Hartig)*, (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 1:13:40, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=4420>.

¹⁰¹ See Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan. 26, 2022) at 20:25, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1225.

¹⁰² Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan. 26, 2022) at 20:25, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1225.

¹⁰³ *Id.* at 35:30, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=2130.

¹⁰⁴ *Id.* at 29:31, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1772.

¹⁰⁵ *Id.* at 30:16, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1816.

¹⁰⁶ *Id.* at 26:21, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1581.

¹⁰⁷ *Id.* at 28:18, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1698.

¹⁰⁸ *Id.* at 31:32, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1892.

¹⁰⁹ *NMAH Interpretative Plan*, NMAH (Jan. 2021),

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Interpretive_Plan.pdf.

¹¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹¹ Alice George, *Why Museums Are Primed to Address Racism, Inequality in the U.S.*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/why-museums-are-primed-address-racism-inequality-us-180978992/>.

¹¹² See *NMAH Collections Plan* (Jan. 2021),

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Collections_Plan.pdf, at 4 (noting that NMAH’s “Decolonization/Restorative History plan” was “called for in the Strategic Plan”); See *Restorative History [explained]*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY (n.d.)

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf, at 10 (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026); see also Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan 26, 2022) at 50:23, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HERz54an_-c&t=3023s (where Hartig references the existence of the Decolonization Plan); Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future*, (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 9:49, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=589> (where Hartig notes that the Strategic Plan “called out for three subsequent plans: Collections Plan, Interpretive Plan, and a Decolonization Plan”). However, to date, the Smithsonian has failed to produce NMAH’s “Decolonization Plan” to the White House.

¹¹³ Letter from the Smithsonian Institution to the White House (Apr. 20, 2026) (on file with the author) (asserting that “No Decolonization/Restorative History Plan exists. While the 2020 NMAH Strategic Plan called for one, efforts to produce that plan were disbanded as such a plan was not prudent or possible. Likewise, the Decolonization Working Group no longer exists. Similarly, there is also no *New Collections Interpretive Decolonization Plan*, nor has there ever been one.”).

¹¹⁴ See Summary of the Smithsonian’s Document Productions to the White House (on file with the author); *NMAH Collections Plan* (Jan. 2021), https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Collections_Plan.pdf, at 5 (noting “the Decolonization Plan’s pursuit of restorative justice through history”).

¹¹⁵ Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future* (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 15:45, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=948> (Hartig: “The hopes that we had to create a true Decolonization Plan have grown and were challenged and have beautifully come into another being, if you will, in the form of the emergent Center for Restorative History—this practice developed by many, including those on the call with me... spearheaded by Tsione Wolde-Michael and Dr. Nancy Bercaw.”).

¹¹⁶ *Restorative History [explained]*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY (n.d.)

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026).

¹¹⁷ *Id.*

¹¹⁸ *Id.*

¹¹⁹ At the same time that the Center was created in 2019, and continuing for the next three years, there was “a recurring meeting for NMAH staff members to meet, discuss and read the MASS Action Toolkit.” See *Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: Fiscal Year 2023*, https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 41. MASS Action stands for “Museums as a Site for Social Action.” The toolkit outlines the three-year roadmap to “truly transform the museum space” that “privileges dominant Western ideals of race, class, and gender” and is linked “with white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, abuse of labor, colonization, imperialist theft of art and artifacts, destruction or absencing of alternative ways of interpreting or representing art and artifacts, structural racism and other oppressions.” *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 12-13.

¹²⁰ *Restorative History [explained]*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY (n.d.)

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf (last accessed Mar. 30,

2026). The Center’s recommended reading for its audiences includes a variety of materials divided into six categories: (1) “Restorative Justice” with titles like *Decolonizing Restorative Justice*; (2) “Reconciliation, Transitional Justice, and Reparative Practice” with titles like *Restorative Justice and Reparations*; (3) “Decolonization and Museums” with titles like *Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor* and *Decolonizing the Smithsonian*; (4) “Collections and Community Engagement” with titles like *Museums, African Collections and Social Justice, Ten Principles for an Anti-Racist, Anti-Orientalist, Activist Approach to Collections*, and *Legacies of Colonialism in Museum Documentation*; (5) “Museum Theory and Practice” with titles like *Centering Intersectional Feminism Online* and *The Future of Archaeology Is Antiracist*; and (6) “History of Museums,” with titles like *Rethinking Settler Colonialism* and *From Scientific Racism to Human Prehistory in Museums*. See *Bibliography for Further Reading and Listening*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/CRH%20Website%20Bibliography.pdf> (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026).

¹²¹ *Center for Restorative History*, NMAH, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/centers/restorative-history> (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026) (cleaned up).

¹²² While the page outlining CRH’s UOCI no longer exists on NMAH’s website, an archived version can still be found online. See *Undocumented Organizing Collecting Initiative*, NMAH (n.d.), https://web.archive.org/web/20240724002347/https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/centers/restorative-history/projects/uoci?utm_source=web&utm_medium=calendar (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).

¹²³ *Undocumented Organizing Collecting Initiative*, NMAH (n.d.), https://web.archive.org/web/20240724002347/https://americanhistory.si.edu/about/centers/restorative-history/projects/uoci?utm_source=web&utm_medium=calendar (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).

¹²⁴ Anna Diamond, *How the Smithsonian Is Documenting the Work of Immigrant Rights Activists*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Feb. 21, 2020), <https://web.archive.org/web/20241204082257/https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-smithsonian-documenting-undocumented-political-organizing-movements-180974220/> (noting that “The curatorial team has settled on six different locations to conduct their collecting: Washington, D.C., Southern California (Orange County and Los Angeles), Chicago, Nebraska, North Carolina in the U.S. and Mexico City in Mexico. Each city corresponds to a pattern in immigration and organizing identified in their research. For example, Mexico City is where many who have been deported from the U.S. currently live in large numbers and are organizing to bring awareness to their situation.”).

¹²⁵ *Id.*; After losing his election, Sheriff Carmichael sat down for an interview with a local news station, which reported that “the biggest push back Carmichael faced was for 287G - the immigration program, that was in place long before Carmichael became Sheriff, that flags criminals who are in the country unlawfully. ‘Top 4 crimes in Mecklenburg County for 287G: DWI is 1, assault on a female is 2, both of those are misdemeanors,’ said Sheriff Carmichael. ‘The third and fourth ones are felonies. Third one is trafficking heroin and the fourth one is indecent liberties with a child.’” *Mecklenburg County Sheriff reflects on success, criticism as term ends*, WBTV (Nov. 21, 2018), <https://www.wbvtv.com/2018/11/21/mecklenburg-county-sheriff-reflects-success-criticism-term-ends/>. In other words, CRH chose to document the stories of illegal aliens who ousted a sheriff for helping ICE deport hundreds of criminals from American communities.

¹²⁶ Anna Diamond, *How the Smithsonian Is Documenting the Work of Immigrant Rights Activists*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Feb. 21, 2020), <https://web.archive.org/web/20241204082257/https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-smithsonian-documenting-undocumented-political-organizing-movements-180974220/>.

¹²⁷ *Id.*

¹²⁸ Nancy Bercaw & Patricia Arteaga, *Redefining ‘American’*, AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS (Sept. 1, 2020), <https://www.aam-us.org/2020/09/01/redefining-american/>.

¹²⁹ *Id.*

¹³⁰ *Id.*

¹³¹ *Id.*

¹³² *Resiliency + Hope—Highlights Report 2021*, NMAH (2021), https://amhistory.si.edu/docs/NMAH_report_2021.pdf.

¹³³ *Compare* Original NMAH “Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like” Page, available at <https://www.americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like> with Archived Version of

NMAH’s “Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like” Page, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20240701064456/https://www.americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like>.

¹³⁴ See Navigation Panel on an Archived Version of NMAH’s “Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like” Page, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20230206065951/https://americanhistory.si.edu/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like/esther-jeon>.

¹³⁵ See NMAH’s “Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like” graphic, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20240701064456/https://www.americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like>.

¹³⁶ *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like: Learning from Undocumented Organizers*, SMITHSONIAN LEARNING LAB (last modified Feb. 5, 2025), <https://learninglab.si.edu/collections/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like-learning-from-undocumented-organizers/jio9sA5r6OIWbgqQ>.

¹³⁷ *Survival, Compassion, and Connection: Jung Woo Kim on Organizing through Mutual Aid*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://web.archive.org/web/20230201233112/https://americanhistory.si.edu/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like/jung-woo-kim> (last accessed Apr. 15, 2026).

¹³⁸ *Id.*

¹³⁹ *Id.*

¹⁴⁰ *Id.*

¹⁴¹ See NMAH Collections Plan (Jan. 2021), https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Collections_Plan.pdf, at 2 (noting that “For instance, as the strategic plan compels and inspires us to collect from underrepresented communities (so as to challenge traditionally exclusionary historical narratives), we do so in a spirit of collaboration, building relationships and trust. In all our collecting, we creatively balance acquisition of collections that extend the reach and utility of our holdings with alternatives to outright ownership that sustain partnerships, avoid duplication, and conserve resources”).

¹⁴² See Screenshot of Anthea Hartig’s Screen at Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future* (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 21:54, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=1314>.

¹⁴³ See *id.*

¹⁴⁴ Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future* (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 14:15, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=855> (where Hartig states, “As we all know in this conference, loving America is very complicated.”).

¹⁴⁵ Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future* (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 9:32, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=572>.

¹⁴⁶ See Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan. 26, 2022) at 30:16, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1816.

¹⁴⁷ *Id.*; *id.* at 31:32, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1892.

¹⁴⁸ See *Becoming US: About*, NMAH (n.d.) (last accessed Apr. 4, 2026), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/about>; *Becoming US*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/> (last accessed May 8, 2026) (noting that the *Becoming US* educational curriculum seeks to answer “How did we become US?” and focus people’s attention to peoples, cultures, and languages that came “long before the founding of the United States[.]”).

¹⁴⁹ *About*, NMAH (n.d.) (last accessed Apr. 4, 2026), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/about>.

¹⁵⁰ See *Becoming US: Essential Understandings*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/essential-understandings> (last accessed Apr. 4, 2026); Larry Ferlazzo, *The Smithsonian Releases New Curriculum on U.S. Migration & Immigration History*, LARRY FERLAZZO BLOG (Nov. 17, 2019), <https://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2019/11/17/the-smithsonian-releases-new-curriculum-on-u-s-migration-immigration-history/>.

¹⁵¹ See *Becoming US: Essential Understandings*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/essential-understandings> (last accessed Apr. 7, 2026).

¹⁵² *Id.*

¹⁵³ *Becoming Us – Glossary of Terms*, NMAH (n.d.), https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/sites/default/files/downloads/NMAH_Becoming%20Us_Glossary.pdf (last accessed June 11, 2026), at 16.

¹⁵⁴ *Id.*

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- ¹⁵⁵ See, e.g., *Arizona v. United States*, 132 S. Ct. 2492, 2497 (2012), <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/11-182> (holding that “Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), an agency within the Department of Homeland Security, is responsible for identifying, apprehending, and removing illegal aliens” and citing the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), which the Court describes as “a comprehensive framework for ‘combating the employment of illegal aliens,’ *Hoffman Plastic Compounds, Inc. v. NLRB*, 535 U. S. 137”); Presidential Memorandum on Deterring Illegal Immigration, 60 Fed. Reg. 7885 (Feb. 7, 1995), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1995-02-10/pdf/95-3554.pdf> (where President Clinton notes that “this Administration is the first to obtain funding from the Congress to reimburse States for a share of the costs of incarcerated illegal aliens.”).
- ¹⁵⁶ See, e.g., *id.*; 8 U.S.C. §1365, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/8/1101>; 8 U.S.C. §1101 (a)(3), <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/8/1101>.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Over Border on Bicycle*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 15, 2026), <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1926/08/15/104211201.html>.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Becoming US: A Dream Deferred*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/policy/dream-deferred> (last accessed Apr. 9, 2026).
- ¹⁵⁹ *Id.*
- ¹⁶⁰ *Id.*
- ¹⁶¹ *Id.*
- ¹⁶² *Id.*
- ¹⁶³ See *Immigrant Law Group PC*, INFLUENCE WATCH (n.d.), <https://www.influencewatch.org/for-profit/immigrant-law-group-pc/> (last accessed May 5, 2026).
- ¹⁶⁴ *Becoming US: A Dream Deferred*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/policy/dream-deferred> (last accessed Apr. 9, 2026); see Infographic created by the for-profit law firm, Immigrant Law Group PC, that NMAH encourages high school teachers to pass out to students, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20240727121953/https://www.riohondo.edu/dreamers/wp-content/uploads/sites/71/2016/11/DACA-infographic-copy-4-low-low-res-1024x791.jpg>.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Becoming US: A Dream Deferred*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/policy/dream-deferred> (last accessed Apr. 9, 2026); see Vox, *DACA, explained* (YouTube, Sept. 6, 2017) (pro-DACA YouTube video that NMAH recommends high school teachers across America play for their students in the classroom), <https://youtu.be/UzYDqQDNFzc?t=297>.
- ¹⁶⁶ Vox, *DACA, explained* (YouTube, Sept. 6, 2017) (pro-DACA YouTube video that NMAH recommends high school teachers across America play for their students in the classroom), <https://youtu.be/UzYDqQDNFzc?t=297>.
- ¹⁶⁷ See *id.*
- ¹⁶⁸ See Matthew Green, *TIMELINE: Inside the Epic, Ongoing Battle over DACA*, KQED (Feb. 26, 2018), <https://www.kqed.org/lowdown/28184/how-we-got-here-the-rise-and-demise-of-daca-with-lesson-plan>.
- ¹⁶⁹ See *id.*
- ¹⁷⁰ *Becoming US: A Dream Deferred*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/policy/dream-deferred> (last accessed Apr. 9, 2026).
- ¹⁷¹ Dara Lind, *Trump just turned DACA into a ticking time bomb for 800,000 immigrants*, VOX (Sept. 5, 2017), <https://web.archive.org/web/20180816145228/https://www.vox.com/2017/9/5/16252648/trump-daca-end-deadline>.
- ¹⁷² *Becoming US: A Dream Deferred*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/policy/dream-deferred> (last accessed Apr. 9, 2026).
- ¹⁷³ *Id.*
- ¹⁷⁴ *Id.*
- ¹⁷⁵ *About*, NMAH (n.d.) (last accessed Apr. 4, 2026), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/about>.
- ¹⁷⁶ Compare “Becoming US” Essential Understandings and other educational materials with *Many Voices, One Nation*’s opening display and didactics.
- ¹⁷⁷ See *Becoming US: Essential Understandings*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/essential-understandings> (last accessed Apr. 6, 2026) (noting that “There is no single American culture, language, or narrative.”).
- ¹⁷⁸ *Many Voices, One Nation*, NMAH (n.d.) (last accessed Apr. 6, 2026), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/many-voices>.
- ¹⁷⁹ See “Establishing the United States” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

¹⁸⁰ *Original Design of the Great Seal of the United States (1782)*, NATIONAL ARCHIVES (n.d.), <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/original-design-of-the-great-seal-of-the-united-states> (last accessed June 12, 2026).

¹⁸¹ *Congress Adopts the Great Seal of the United States*, HISTORY.COM (Nov. 13, 2009), <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/june-20/congress-adopts-the-great-seal-of-the-united-states>.

¹⁸² *Id.*

¹⁸³ See, e.g., ALEXANDER KEYSSAR, *THE RIGHT TO VOTE: THE CONTESTED HISTORY OF DEMOCRACY IN THE UNITED STATES* (2000), <https://www.amren.com/news/2018/11/alexander-keyssar-history-of-the-right-to-vote/> (noting that “In the late colonial period, perhaps just under 60 percent of white men owned property and could vote.”); *What Are Property Qualifications?*, SPIEGATO (n.d.), <https://spiegato.com/en/what-are-property-qualifications?> (last accessed June 12, 2026); *Chapter 1.0. Voting Rights in Early America, Introduction*, UNIV. OF WISCONSIN-MADISON (n.d.), <https://wisc.pb.unizin.org/ls261/chapter/part-1-the-road-to-partial-democracy/> (last accessed June 12, 2026) (noting that “The linchpin of both colonial and British suffrage regulations was the restriction of voting to adult men who owned property.”).

¹⁸⁴ See “Germans in Pennsylvania” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

¹⁸⁵ *Many Voices, One Nation: Explore Online*, NMAH (n.d.) (last accessed Apr. 7, 2026), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/many-voices/online>.

¹⁸⁶ See *Many Voices, One Nation: Explore Online*, NMAH (n.d.) (last accessed Apr. 7, 2026), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/many-voices/online> (noting that “The people of North America came from many cultures and spoke different languages long before the founding of the United States, even before European contact. In creating the new nation, early leaders envisioned a country that promised opportunity and freedom—but only for some. As the population grew, the people who lived in the United States found ways to negotiate, or work out, what it meant to be American. That negotiation continues. This exhibition explores how the many voices of people in America have shaped our nation.”).

¹⁸⁷ See introductory didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit (noting that “The people of North America came from many cultures and spoke different languages long before the founding of the United States, even before European contact. In creating the new nation, early leaders envisioned a country that promised opportunity and freedom—but only for some. As the population grew, the people who lived in the United States found ways to negotiate, or work out, what it means to be American. That negotiation continues. This exhibition explores how the many voices of people in America have shaped our nation.”).

¹⁸⁸ See generally NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit and the “Negotiating Freedom” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

¹⁸⁹ See the “Negotiating Freedom” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit (noting that “The importation of enslaved African peoples and slavery’s acceptance by founders of the new nation bound the country to an institution at odds with its ideals of equality, liberty, and freedom.”).

¹⁹⁰ See Statue of Liberty and Columbia displays across NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

¹⁹¹ See *Abraham Lincoln’s July 10, 1858 Speech at Chicago, Illinois*, TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY, <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/speech-at-chicago-illinois>.

¹⁹² *Id.*

¹⁹³ See *Becoming US – “George Washington” Search Results*, NMAH (n.d.), https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/search?search_api_fulltext=george+washington (last accessed May 8, 2026) (showing no results).

¹⁹⁴ See *Becoming US – “Thomas Jefferson” Search Results*, NMAH (n.d.), https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/search?search_api_fulltext=thomas+jefferson (last accessed May 8, 2026) (showing no results).

¹⁹⁵ Search “John Adams,” “James Madison,” “Alexander Hamilton,” “Benjamin Franklin,” and “John Jay” at NMAH’s *Becoming US* webpage, and you will not find anything. See, e.g., *Becoming US – “John Adams” Search Results*, NMAH (n.d.), https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/search?search_api_fulltext=john+adams (last accessed May 8, 2026).

¹⁹⁶ See *Becoming US – “Declaration” Search Results*, NMAH (n.d.), https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/search?search_api_fulltext=declaration (last accessed May 8, 2026) (showing no results).

¹⁹⁷ See *Becoming US – “Constitution” Search Results*, NMAH (n.d.), https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/search?search_api_fulltext=constitution (last accessed May 8, 2026) (showing one result, which is simply a reference to “Constitution Avenue” where NMAH is located).

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- ¹⁹⁸ See *Celebrate the Nation's 250th in 2026*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/celebrate-the-nations-250th-in-2026> (last accessed May 8, 2026).
- ¹⁹⁹ See *Public Engagement: Educational Outreach*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), <https://dashboard.si.edu/public-engagement#educational-outreach> (last accessed Apr. 23, 2026); see also *Smithsonian Institution: FY 2025 Management's Discussion & Analysis*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d. – last cited Sept. 20, 2025), https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/about/smithsonian_fy2025_mda.pdf (stating that “Participation in Smithsonian educational programs” reached “30.1 million” in FY 2024).
- ²⁰⁰ See *AHA Staff and Members Quoted on the Impact of Smithsonian Review on Classrooms*, AM. HISTORICAL ASSOC. (Sept. 5, 2025), <https://www.historians.org/news/aha-staff-and-member-quoted-on-the-impact-of-smithsonian-review-on-classrooms/>.
- ²⁰¹ Orlando R. Serrano, Jr., Ph.D., LINKEDIN (n.d.), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/orlando-r-serrano-jr-ph-d-16426771/> (last accessed Apr. 23, 2026) (listing Serrano as the “Elizabeth MacMillan Head of PreK-12 Learning” since May 2024 to Present as the “Manager of PreK-12 Learning” between January 2023 and May 2024 and the “Manager of Youth and Teacher Programs” between July 2017 and January 2023.)
- ²⁰² See Orlando R. Serrano, Jr., *There are Different Suns: Learning, Restorative History, and Finding Ground*, JOURNAL OF MUSEUM EDUCATION (July 4, 2023), 346–360, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10598650.2023.2286178#ack>.
- ²⁰³ Orlando R. Serrano, Jr., Ph.D., LINKEDIN (n.d.), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/orlando-r-serrano-jr-ph-d-16426771/> (last accessed Apr. 23, 2026).
- ²⁰⁴ Megan Linchan & Orlando Serrano, *To Reimagine the Future, Start by Expanding the Stories of Our Past*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Dec. 1, 2022), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/smithsonian-education/2022/12/01/2022-national-youth-summit/>.
- ²⁰⁵ Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service (Anthea Hartig)*, (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 32:00, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=1920>.
- ²⁰⁶ Orlando R. Serrano, Jr., Ph.D., LINKEDIN (n.d.), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/orlando-r-serrano-jr-ph-d-16426771/> (last accessed Apr. 23, 2026).
- ²⁰⁷ See *Becoming US: Essential Understandings*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/essential-understandings> (last accessed Apr. 7, 2026); *Becoming US: A Dream Deferred*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/policy/dream-deferred> (last accessed Apr. 9, 2026).
- ²⁰⁸ Orlando R. Serrano, Jr., Ph.D., LINKEDIN (n.d.), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/orlando-r-serrano-jr-ph-d-16426771/> (last accessed Apr. 23, 2026); see Orlando R. Serrano, Jr., *There are Different Suns: Learning, Restorative History, and Finding Ground*, JOURNAL OF MUSEUM EDUCATION (July 4, 2023), 346–360, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10598650.2023.2286178#abstract>.
- ²⁰⁹ Orlando R. Serrano, Jr., *There are Different Suns: Learning, Restorative History, and Finding Ground*, JOURNAL OF MUSEUM EDUCATION (July 4, 2023), 346–360, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10598650.2023.2286178>.
- ²¹⁰ *Id.*
- ²¹¹ *Id.*
- ²¹² *Id.*, at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10598650.2023.2286178#inline_frontnotes.
- ²¹³ *Bibliography for Further Reading and Listening*, NMAH (n.d.) <https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/CRH%20Website%20Bibliography.pdf>, at 7 (last accessed June 26, 2026).
- ²¹⁴ See *Survival, Compassion, and Connection: Jung Woo Kim on Organizing through Mutual Aid*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://web.archive.org/web/20230201233112/https://americanhistory.si.edu/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like/jung-woo-kim> (last accessed Apr. 15, 2026) (showing a *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like* video of illegal alien activists holding banners and wearing shirts calling for “CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL” and to “ABOLISH ICE.”); NMAH’s “Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like” graphic, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20240701064456/https://www.americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like> (depicting illegal aliens wearing shirts with phrases like NO “287g,” referring to the primary program that allows local law enforcement to partner with ICE to identify and deport criminal illegal aliens).
- ²¹⁵ *Id.*, at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10598650.2023.2286178#inline_frontnotes
- ²¹⁶ *Everyday Practices of Transformative Justice*, BARNARD CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN (n.d.), <https://bcrw.barnard.edu/videos/everyday-practices-of-transformative-justice/> (last accessed Apr. 23, 2026).

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- ²¹⁷ See *Wanting More and Finding Disability Justice*, OBAMA WHITE HOUSE (May 13, 2013), <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2013/05/13/wanting-more-and-finding-disability-justice>.
- ²¹⁸ See Lorraine Boissoneault, *Ancient Humans Mastered Fire. Now, Burning Fossil Fuels and Blazing Landscapes Threaten to 'Undo the World'*, SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE (Apr. 16, 2026), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/ancient-humans-mastered-fire-now-burning-fossil-fuels-and-blazing-landscapes-threaten-to-undo-the-world-180988531/> (quoting Mia Mingus).
- ²¹⁹ See *Everyday Practices of Transformative Justice*, BARNARD CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN (n.d.), <https://bcrw.barnard.edu/videos/everyday-practices-of-transformative-justice/> (last accessed Apr. 23, 2026) (including a video featuring Mia Mingus, among others).
- ²²⁰ Mia Mingus, *Transformative Justice: A Brief Description*, (Jan. 11, 2019), https://transformharm.org/tj_resource/transformative-justice-a-brief-description/.
- ²²¹ See, e.g., *Survival, Compassion, and Connection: Jung Woo Kim on Organizing through Mutual Aid*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://web.archive.org/web/20230201233112/https://americanhistory.si.edu/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like/jung-woo-kim> (last accessed Apr. 15, 2026) (showing a *Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like* video of illegal alien activists holding banners and wearing shirts calling for “CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL” and to “ABOLISH ICE.”); NMAH’s “Tell Me What Democracy Looks Like” graphic, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20240701064456/https://www.americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/tell-me-what-democracy-looks-like> (depicting illegal aliens wearing shirts with phrases like NO “287g,” referring to the primary program that allows local law enforcement to partner with ICE to identify and deport criminal illegal aliens); Anthea Hartig, *In Slavery’s Shadow: George Floyd and American Legacies*, Anthea M. Hartig, Elizabeth MacMillan Director, National Museum of American History, NMAH (May 31, 2020), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/slaverys-shadow-george-floyd-and-american-legacies-anthea-m-hartig-elizabeth> (where Hartig states that “The killing of George Floyd is the latest chapter of violently policing the movement, action, and freedom of African Americans” and that “slave patrols lasted for over 150 years and are part of the foundation of the modern-day police force.”).
- ²²² Orlando R. Serrano, Jr., *There are Different Suns: Learning, Restorative History, and Finding Ground*, JOURNAL OF MUSEUM EDUCATION (July 4, 2023), 346–360, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10598650.2023.2286178>.
- ²²³ *Id.*
- ²²⁴ Orlando R. Serrano, Jr., *There are Different Suns: Learning, Restorative History, and Finding Ground*, JOURNAL OF MUSEUM EDUCATION (July 4, 2023), 346–360, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10598650.2023.2286178>.
- ²²⁵ *Id.*
- ²²⁶ *Id.*
- ²²⁷ See *id.*; Puawai Cairns, *Decolonisation: we aren’t going to save you*, AM. ALLIANCE FOR MUSEUMS (Dec. 17, 2018), <https://www.aam-us.org/2018/12/17/decolonisation-we-arent-going-to-save-you/>.
- ²²⁸ *Restorative History [explained]*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY (n.d.), [https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative History-explained_2.pdf](https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf), at 11 (last accessed Apr. 23, 2026).
- ²²⁹ Orlando R. Serrano, Jr., *There are Different Suns: Learning, Restorative History, and Finding Ground*, JOURNAL OF MUSEUM EDUCATION (July 4, 2023), 346–360, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10598650.2023.2286178>.
- ²³⁰ *Id.*
- ²³¹ *Id.*
- ²³² Press Release, Dept. of Justice Office of Public Affairs, Federal Grand Jury Charges Southern Poverty Law Center for Wire Fraud, False Statements, and Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering (Apr. 21, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/federal-grand-jury-charges-southern-poverty-law-center-wire-fraud-false-statements-and>.
- ²³³ *Id.*
- ²³⁴ *Becoming US: Preparing to Teach*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/preparing-teach> (last accessed Apr. 24, 2026).
- ²³⁵ See *id.* (linking to a page on SPLC’s “Learning for Justice” website featuring SPLC’s *Let’s Talk!* Report, available at <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/reports/lets-talk/>).

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- ²³⁶ See NMAH's page featuring SPLC's *Let's Talk* guide, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/sites/default/files/downloads/TT-Lets-Talk-December-2019.pdf>.
- ²³⁷ *National Education Summit: Towards A More Equitable Future (Transcript)*, SMITHSONIAN OUR SHARED FUTURE: RECKONING WITH OUR RACIAL PAST (n.d.), <https://web.archive.org/web/20240607142320/https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/events/national-education-summit-towards-more-equitable-future#transcript> (last accessed Apr. 25, 2026).
- ²³⁸ Mark Mills, *2024 Education Impact Report Released*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Apr. 2, 2025), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/smithsonian-education/2025/04/02/2024-education-impact-report-released/>.
- ²³⁹ *National Education Summit: Towards A More Equitable Future (Transcript)*, SMITHSONIAN (2023), <https://web.archive.org/web/20240607142320/https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/events/national-education-summit-towards-more-equitable-future#transcript> (where Dr. Monique M. Chism notes that "I missed a lot during my, K through 12 years. In terms of Asian American history, there was never introduced Native American Indian history, never introduced or talked about, never learned anything about Latino, Mexican American. I mean, **the whole construct was primarily white**. And at times, there was a construct around blackness with Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks. But I never learned about any of the other contributions of people of color in my formal learning at all. So there was a huge absence in every aspect, and women never heard about the contributions of women. So big gaps." Emphasis added.).
- ²⁴⁰ See *Issue Brief: Southern Poverty Law Center's "Teaching Tolerance" Project*, FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL (n.d.), <https://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF14C22.pdf> (last accessed Apr. 26, 2026).
- ²⁴¹ Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan. 26, 2022) at 35:30, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=2130.
- ²⁴² See Megan Linehan & Orlando Serrano, *To Reimagine the Future, Start by Expanding the Stories of Our Past*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Dec. 1, 2022), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/smithsonian-education/2022/12/01/2022-national-youth-summit/>.
- ²⁴³ Megan Linehan & Orlando Serrano, *To Reimagine the Future, Start by Expanding the Stories of Our Past*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Dec. 1, 2022), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/smithsonian-education/2022/12/01/2022-national-youth-summit/>.
- ²⁴⁴ *Id.*
- ²⁴⁵ *Id.*
- ²⁴⁶ *Id.*
- ²⁴⁷ *Smithsonian Hosts National Youth Summit on Elections and Politics*, NMAH (Aug. 20, 2024), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/releases/youth-summit-2024> (noting that "Since the program was launched in 2011, the museum has created vigorous programming with detailed curricula, websites and outreach opportunities for students and teachers across the nation through which the National Youth Summit has engaged more than 70,000 live viewers and many more through the archived programs.").
- ²⁴⁸ See *id.*
- ²⁴⁹ Megan Linehan & Orlando Serrano, *To Reimagine the Future, Start by Expanding the Stories of Our Past*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Dec. 1, 2022), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/smithsonian-education/2022/12/01/2022-national-youth-summit/>.
- ²⁵⁰ *National Youth Summit – Join the Conversation*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), <https://affiliations.si.edu/national-youth-summits/> (last accessed Apr. 26, 2026).
- ²⁵¹ See *Smithsonian Hosts National Youth Summit on Elections and Politics*, NMAH (Aug. 20, 2024), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/releases/youth-summit-2024>; The Preamble Podcast, *How ICE Is Mimicking 19th Century Slave Patrols, and What AI Tech Billionaires Really Want* (Feb. 2, 2026), <https://podscan.fm/podcasts/the-preamble/episodes/how-ice-is-mimicking-19th-century-slave-patrols-and-what-ai-tech-billionaires-really-want>.
- ²⁵² See *Smithsonian Hosts National Youth Summit on Elections and Politics*, NMAH (Aug. 20, 2024), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/releases/youth-summit-2024>; Jahnvi Rao, LINKEDIN (n.d.), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jahnvirao/details/experience/> (last accessed May 5, 2026).
- ²⁵³ See *Smithsonian Hosts National Youth Summit on Elections and Politics*, NMAH (Aug. 20, 2024), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/releases/youth-summit-2024>; Sydney Fahn, LINKEDIN (n.d.), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sydney-fahn/details/experience/> (last accessed May 5, 2026).
- ²⁵⁴ Nancy Bercaw & Patricia Arteaga, *Redefining 'American'*, AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS (Sept. 1, 2020), <https://www.aam-us.org/2020/09/01/redefining-american/> (noting that "'Undocumented Organizing' material will be

on view this fall in the ‘Girlhood (It’s Complicated)’ exhibition at the National Museum of American History and will be part of the opening exhibition of the Smithsonian Latino Center’s Molina Gallery in 2021.”).

²⁵⁵ See display case featuring “DACA Wings” in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit.

²⁵⁶ See “DACA Wings, 2018” display in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

²⁵⁷ *Id.* Highlights added.

²⁵⁸ See “Raising Citizens” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit.

²⁵⁹ See “Schooled for the Nation” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit.

²⁶⁰ See *id.*

²⁶¹ *Id.*

²⁶² See “Claiming Citizenship: Freedom Schools” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit.

²⁶³ See the “Claiming Citizenship: Freedom Schools” didactic facing toward the “DACA [Butterfly] Wings,” which symbolizes the activist movement to grant 11 million+ illegal aliens U.S. citizenship and voting rights, in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

²⁶⁴ See *Becoming US: Essential Understandings*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/essential-understandings> (last accessed Apr. 4, 2026).

²⁶⁵ See didactic entitled “Language Matters” in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

²⁶⁶ See “Demanding Inclusion: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

²⁶⁷ See “Demanding Inclusion: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” didactic and “DACA Wings” didactic and display case in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

²⁶⁸ See “When the Rules Don’t Fit, Many Girls Take Action” wall message in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

²⁶⁹ Megan Smith, *Why Did the Smithsonian Create an Exhibit About Girlhood?* SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Aug. 9, 2021) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-history/2021/08/09/why-girlhood/>; see also Kathleen Franz, *Girlhood (It’s complicated)*, SMITHSONIAN DIGITIZATION PROGRAM OFFICE (Mar. 29, 2021), <https://dpo.si.edu/blog/girlhood-its-complicated>.

²⁷⁰ See NMAH Collections Plan (Jan. 2021),

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Collections_Plan.pdf, at 1, 3 (noting that “The NMAH Collections Plan Working Group is: Benjamin Filene, Josh Gorman, and Diane Wendt (co-chairs), Stephanie Fares, Kathleen Franz, Steve Hemlin, Claire Jerry, Ken Kimery, Scott Nolley, Alison Oswald, Abby Pfsterer, Carlene Stephens, Steve Velasquez, Hillery York” and that NMAH is “constantly building and rebuilding the collection of our moment, making choices in response to the needs and knowledge of our time, with an eye toward shaping new futures.”).

²⁷¹ See *NMAH Interpretative Plan*, NMAH (Jan. 2021),

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Interpretive_Plan.pdf, at 6.

²⁷² Megan Smith, *Why Did the Smithsonian Create an Exhibit About Girlhood?* SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Aug. 9, 2021) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-history/2021/08/09/why-girlhood/>.

²⁷³ See “Education (being schooled)” wall and didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

²⁷⁴ *Transcript: From ‘Our Divided Nation’ to ‘Our Shared Future’: Museums and the Advancement of Equity and Understanding*, OUR SHARED FUTURE (Oct. 27, 2021),

<https://web.archive.org/web/20250328103327/https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/events/our-divided-nation-our-shared-future-museums-and-advancement-equity-and-understanding#transcript>.

²⁷⁵ See the Smithsonian’s 2023 tax filing (Form 990, Schedule J),

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/530206027/202542239349300544/full> (listing \$515,671 as Gover’s total compensation in 2023).

²⁷⁶ *Transcript: From ‘Our Divided Nation’ to ‘Our Shared Future’: Museums and the Advancement of Equity and Understanding*, OUR SHARED FUTURE (Oct. 27, 2021),

<https://web.archive.org/web/20250328103327/https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/events/our-divided-nation-our-shared-future-museums-and-advancement-equity-and-understanding#transcript>.

²⁷⁷ *Id.*

²⁷⁸ *Id.*

²⁷⁹ *Id.*

²⁸⁰ *Id.*

²⁸¹ At least a half dozen current and former Smithsonian employees and consultants contributed to the drafting of the toolkit, including Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell, “an education specialist with the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture,” Makeba Clay, a consultant for “the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of African Art,” V. Gina Díaz, a former employee of the “Smithsonian Institution Latino Center,” Omar Eaton-Martínez, an employee of “the Smithsonian National Museum of American History,” Sage Morgan-Hubbard, the former “youth programs coordinator at the National Museum of American History,” Evelyn Orantes, a consultant for “The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian,” and Toni Wynn, who is working on a project for the “Smithsonian’s Anacostia Community Museum.” See *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 220-222, 226-227, 231.

²⁸² See *Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: Fiscal Year 2023*,

https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 41. MASS Action stands for “Museums as a Site for Social Action.” The toolkit outlines the three-year roadmap to “truly transform the museum space” that “privileges dominant Western ideals of race, class, and gender” and is linked “with white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, abuse of labor, colonization, imperialist theft of art and artifacts, destruction or absencing of alternative ways of interpreting or representing art and artifacts, structural racism and other oppressions.” *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 12-13.

²⁸³ See *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 201 (cleaned up).

²⁸⁴ *Id.*

²⁸⁵ See, e.g., *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 147.

²⁸⁶ See *About*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/about> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026); AASLH, *Reframing History: A Conversation at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History*, at 1:55 (YouTube, Mar. 1, 2022), https://youtu.be/IQv2tN9p5_E?t=115 (where Hartig notes that “We’ve dedicated ourselves and my incredible staff and board and volunteers to becoming the most inclusive, relevant, accessible, and sustainable museum in the nation.”); see also Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let’s Bring Them Back before It’s Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179> (noting that “As we move toward and through the semiquincentennial toward realizing our vision in 2030 to be the most inclusive, accessible, relevant, and sustainable history museum in the nation...”); *Strategic Plan 2020-2030*, NMAH (Feb. 2020) (on file with author), at 1 (citing NMAH’s new mission: “Empowering people to create a more just and compassionate future by exploring, preserving, and sharing the complexity of our past.”).

²⁸⁷ *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 147.

²⁸⁸ *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 148-149.

²⁸⁹ *Id.* at 149.

²⁹⁰ *Id.*

²⁹¹ *NMAH Interpretative Plan*, NMAH (Jan. 2021),

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Interpretive_Plan.pdf, at 6. See also Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan. 26, 2022) at 50:23

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HERz54an_-c&t=3023s (showing Hartig highlighting how NMAH will share histories that “illuminate how power works.”).

²⁹² See *NMAH Collections Plan* (Jan. 2021),

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Collections_Plan.pdf, at 5.

²⁹³ AASLH, *Reframing History*, (YouTube, June 15, 2022) at 1:42, <https://youtu.be/A0qv7DVXBvw?t=102> (where Hartig notes that “Just thinking about the ways in which history is animated—history has its eyes on you, history is watching—history doesn’t do anything. Historians do. Thinkers do. Teachers do. Archivists do. We are the ones who engage with the past who put the clues and the pieces together to understand in an ever-shifting landscape of knowledge what has happened so that then we can turn that into a tool of utility. [...] I like to think of democracy

and history as verbs, right? They should be animated and active and alive and the [Reframing History] report lays out a blueprint for us to expand the power of our own engagement to then ignite civic engagement.”).

²⁹⁴ See NMAH Collections Plan (Jan. 2021),

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Collections_Plan.pdf, at 4 (noting that NMAH’s “Decolonization/Restorative History plan” was “called for in the Strategic Plan”); See *Restorative History [explained]*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY (n.d.)

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf, at 10 (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026); see also Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan 26, 2022) at 50:23, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HERz54an_-c&t=3023s (where Hartig references the existence of the Decolonization Plan); Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future*, (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 9:49, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=589> (where Hartig notes that the Strategic Plan “called out for three subsequent plans: Collections Plan, Interpretive Plan, and a Decolonization Plan”). However, to date, the Smithsonian has failed to produce NMAH’s “Decolonization Plan” to the White House.

²⁹⁵ NMAH Collections Plan (Jan. 2021),

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Collections_Plan.pdf, at 19.

²⁹⁶ Alice George, *Why Museums Are Primed to Address Racism, Inequality in the U.S.*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/why-museums-are-primed-address-racism-inequality-us-180978992/>.

²⁹⁷ *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 41.

²⁹⁸ See *Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: Fiscal Year 2023*, THE SMITHSONIAN (2023), https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 41; (noting that Magdalena Mieri and Leslie Poster are both NMAH IDEA Council representatives.)

²⁹⁹ *Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: Fiscal Year 2023*, THE SMITHSONIAN (2023), https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 3.

³⁰⁰ *Id.* at 4.

³⁰¹ See *Facts About the Smithsonian Institution*, THE SMITHSONIAN (Apr. 7, 2026), <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/factsheets/facts-about-smithsonian-institution-short> (noting that “The Smithsonian’s current federal appropriation is more than \$1 billion. The Institution is about 62% federally funded (an annual congressional appropriation and federal grants and contracts).”).

³⁰² *Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: Fiscal Year 2023*, THE SMITHSONIAN (2023), https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 3.

³⁰³ See *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 201.

³⁰⁴ See *Restorative History [explained]*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY (n.d.) https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf, at 9-10 (last accessed Mar. 30, 2026).

³⁰⁵ See generally *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf.

³⁰⁶ Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service (Anthea Hartig)*, (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025), <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=181>.

³⁰⁷ See *Transcript: From ‘Our Divided Nation’ to ‘Our Shared Future’: Museums and the Advancement of Equity and Understanding*, OUR SHARED FUTURE (Oct. 27, 2021), <https://web.archive.org/web/20250328103327/https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/events/our-divided-nation-our-shared-future-museums-and-advancement-equity-and-understanding#transcript> (where Smithsonian Under Secretary for Museums and Culture Kevin Gover asks Director Hartig “And is that why you came to the Smithsonian, Anthea?”—referring to Dr. Mack’s previous explanation that she “got into the museum business in order to be an agent of social change” and Hartig replies, “It is, actually!”).

³⁰⁸ *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 34, 35, 40.

³⁰⁹ *Id.* at 34-35.

³¹⁰ *Id.* at 35.

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- ³¹¹ *Restorative History [explained]*, NMAH CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE HISTORY (n.d.) https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/Restorative%20History-explained_2.pdf, at 10.
- ³¹² *MASS Action Toolkit*, INCLUSEUM (Oct. 2017), https://incluseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/df17e-toolkit_10_2017.pdf, at 40-41.
- ³¹³ *Id.*
- ³¹⁴ See Marina Watts, *In Smithsonian Race Guidelines, Rational Thinking and Hard Work Are White Values*, NEWSWEEK (July 17, 2020), <https://www.newsweek.com/smithsonian-race-guidelines-rational-thinking-hard-work-are-white-values-1518333>.
- ³¹⁵ See Chacour Koop, *Smithsonian museum apologizes for saying hard work, rational thought is 'white culture'*, MIAMI HERALD (July 17, 2020), <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/national/article244309587.html>.
- ³¹⁶ Allison Keyes, *In the Home, a Woman's Work Is Never Done, Never Honored and Never Paid For*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Mar. 18, 2019), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/home-womans-work-never-done-never-honored-and-never-paid-180971703/>.
- ³¹⁷ *Id.* (noting that “Black women, Asian women and Latinos are at the lower end of the wage scale, and we have a nice quote in this exhibition from (activist) Angela Davis because she is really part of the debates in the 1960s and 70s to value women’s work. What she points out is, that black women are like Sisyphus. They’ve labored in a double invisibility in the home working in other people’s homes and working in their own homes and their wages are the lowest,” says [exhibit co-curator Kathleen] Franz. ‘So, we really wanted to pull that out as well so that people see that women are not all the same.’”); Beth Potier, *Abolish prisons, says Angela Davis*, THE HARVARD GAZETTE (Mar. 13, 2003), <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2003/03/abolish-prisons-says-angela-davis/>; *An Initiative for Social Change*, <https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/> (last accessed Apr. 2, 2026) (showing a photo of Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch just above a quote by Angela Davis, stating, “You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.”). In addition to NMAH and the Smithsonian more broadly, Angela Davis is also beloved by other individual Smithsonian museums, such as NMAL, NMAAHC, SAWHM. See NMAAHC (@nmaahc), INSTAGRAM (June 4, 2022), <https://www.instagram.com/p/CeYfCltrCr/> (where NMAAHC honors Angela Davis in an Instagram post and notes that she was “the vice-presidential candidate of the U.S. Communist Party” in 1980); *Upcoming Events: Connecting our Past & Present with Thread: Angela Davis*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), <https://www.si.edu/events/hispanic-heritage-month?page=2&trumbaEmbed=view%3Devent%26eventid%3D181031307> (last accessed Apr. 2, 2026) (noting that NMAL will be hosting a “virtual embroidery workshop honoring the legacy of Angela Davis” for Women’s History Month in March 2025); *Angela Davis*, NMAAHC, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/angela-davis> (praising Angela Davis for “tackl[ing] oppression faced by the black community, women, and the LGBTQ+ community,” founding “Critical Resistance, an organization working to abolish the prison-industrial complex,” and authoring books like “*Are Prisons Obsolete?*” (2003)); Smithsonian, *How Did Angela Davis Inspire a Movement?*, (YouTube, Mar. 9, 2020), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBNZo_joB-E (highlighting Angela Davis as an inspiring figure in American women’s history who provided “national attention for prisoners’ rights,” “social and human rights activism,” “black girl magic,” and “black pride” and noting that any person of color who is incarcerated is a “political prisoner” because “the system itself is oppressive”).
- ³¹⁸ See “The Wage Gap, 2018” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.
- ³¹⁹ *Id.*
- ³²⁰ See *Our Shared Future: 250 | Exhibitions*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), <https://www.si.edu/250/exhibitions> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).
- ³²¹ See didactics currently on display at NMAH’s *Entertainment Nation* exhibit.
- ³²² *Id.*; *NMAH Interpretative Plan*, NMAH (Jan. 2021), https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Interpretive_Plan.pdf, at 7 (cleaned up).
- ³²³ *NMAH Interpretative Plan*, NMAH (Jan. 2021), https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Interpretive_Plan.pdf, at 7.
- ³²⁴ In all fairness to NMAH, multiple other Smithsonian museums—including the Smithsonian’s American Women’s History Museum (SAWHM), National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), NMAL, and National Portrait Gallery (NPG)—also allege that biological males can be women. See, e.g., *Photographic slide of Marsha P. Johnson at a New York City Gay Pride Parade*, NMAAHC, https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc_TA2019.38.1.1.1.14 (describing Marsha P. Johnson, a biological male, with

the pronouns “she herself”); *Sylvia Rivera*, NMAL (n.d.), <https://latino.si.edu/exhibitions/presente/latino-identity/sylvia-rivera> (highlighting three biological males—Sylvia Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson, and Adela Vázquez—as women and noting Vázquez’s efforts to support “trans women”); Smithsonian NPG (@smithsoniannpg), INSTAGRAM (Mar. 11, 2022), <https://www.instagram.com/p/Ca9xvoPMQDm/> (highlighting Sylvia Rivera, a biological male, as “a transgender woman” for Women’s History Month). SAWHM’s website features an “Adult Learners” page, linking to a Smithsonian podcast about Lucy Hicks Anderson, a biological male who “owned brothels.” *Adult Learners*, SAWHM (n.d.), <https://womenshistory.si.edu/learn/adult-learners> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026); *Lucy Hicks Anderson*, SMITHSONIAN SIDEDOOR (Nov. 30, 2022), <https://www.si.edu/sidedoor/lucy-hicks-anderson>. In the podcast, Ashleigh Coren, then-Acting Head of Education for the Smithsonian American Women’s History Initiative, called Anderson “the coolest woman ever.” *Season 8, Episode 13 Lucy Hicks Anderson Final Transcription*, Smithsonian (Nov. 2022), https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/season_8_episode_13_lucy_hicks_anderson_final_transcription.pdf.

³²⁵ *Becoming US - About*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/about> (last accessed June 11, 2026).

³²⁶ *Becoming Us – Glossary of Terms*, NMAH (n.d.), https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/sites/default/files/downloads/NMAH_Becoming%20Us_Glossary.pdf (last accessed June 11, 2026), at 13.

³²⁷ *Id.*

³²⁸ *Id.*

³²⁹ *Id.*

³³⁰ *Id.*

³³¹ See the “A Girl’s Life” display dedicated to Jazz Jennings in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

³³² See *Girlhood: Virtual Gallery Tour*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).

³³³ See “‘Glorious Day’ By Jazz Jennings” display in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

³³⁴ See “Not Checking the Boxes” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

³³⁵ *Id.*

³³⁶ *Id.*

³³⁷ See Ryan’s quote beside the “Not Checking the Boxes” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

³³⁸ *Id.*

³³⁹ Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let’s Bring Them Back before It’s Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179>, at 436 (where Hartig highlights how the exhibit was “traveling across the country” after having been on display at NMAH between autumn 2020 and January 2023, adding that “The exhibition was organized around the thesis that, for many, growing up female in the United States since the early republic in the face of patriarchal oppression did not mean they lacked political awareness or agency. Moreover, as the crack curatorial team led by the project director Kathleen Franz posited, ‘As historians, we don’t want to reconstruct entrenched gender binaries, but rather provoke a thoughtful discussion of gender as having a long and complicated history.’ Exploring the themes of news and politics (in the section ‘Girls on the Front Line of Change’), education (in ‘Getting Schooled’), work (in ‘Hey, Where’s My Girlhood?’), wellness (in ‘Body Talk’), and fashion (in ‘Remix’), in corresponding sections of the exhibition design, with spotlights on individuals in ‘A Girl’s Life.’”).

³⁴⁰ *Id.* at 439.

³⁴¹ See, e.g., NMAH’s *We Belong Here*, *Change Your Game*, and *Illegal to Be You: Gay History Beyond Stonewall* exhibits.

³⁴² See wall art in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit (stating “In school, we learn who gets to be a girl...”), available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

³⁴³ Exactly Agency, *NMAH Presents: Girlhood (It’s Complicated) Virtual Opening Event*, (YouTube, Oct. 8, 2020) at 4:10, <https://youtu.be/GVYesfMeMOc?t=250>.

³⁴⁴ See “Is Gender Testing Fair?” didactic on display at NMAH’s *Change Your Game* exhibit. A now-taken down didactic previously asked visitors to ponder whether college swimmer Lia Thomas, who “was assigned male at

birth” and began his “swimming career on the men’s team,” should be allowed to switch to the women’s team. See David Scott, *Trans athlete exhibition sparks outrage at Smithsonian museum as Donald Trump orders review*, THE SUN (Aug. 15, 2025), <https://www.the-sun.com/sport/14983781/trans-athlete-exhibition-smithsonian-outrage-donald-trump/>.

³⁴⁵ *We Belong Here: Explore Online*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/we-belong-here/online>.

³⁴⁶ See “Dangerous Girls” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

³⁴⁷ See “Fashion (remix)” wall and didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>. Italics added.

³⁴⁸ See “Dear Diary...” display with Ryan’s diary pages in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

³⁴⁹ *Id.*

³⁵⁰ See “What is love?” movie theater video and other videos in NMAH’s *Entertainment Nation* exhibit.

³⁵¹ See photo of the display case of NMAH’s *Illegal to Be You: Gay History Beyond Stonewall* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/gay-history-beyond-stonewall>; objects on display on NMAH’s online *Illegal to Be You: Gay History Beyond Stonewall* exhibit, under the heading “How far will you go to express who you are?”, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/gay-history-beyond-stonewall/online/how-far-will-you-go>.

³⁵² *Music HerStory: Changemakers*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://library.si.edu/exhibition/music-herstory/changemakers> (last accessed May 8, 2026).

³⁵³ Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let’s Bring Them Back before It’s Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179> (quoting Hartig’s presidential address from the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians on April 13, 2024: “When I was determining the topic for this address, the days immediately after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* played across my mind’s eye. Along with my announcement of a significant reorganization of the National Museum of American History and my diagnosis with COVID-19 for the first time, the release of the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision closed out the week on June 24, 2022. Already tracking and participating in analyzing the *Dobbs* decision in both OAH and national museum capacities, we immediately went to work crafting statements. The OAH’s was released along with those of the American Historical Association, the National Council of Public History, and countless others. Mine and the museum’s were not made available, but I shall share much of it tonight, with assistance from my colleagues.”). See also OAH and AHA’s joint statement on the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision here: *OAH and AHA Issue Joint Statement on the U.S. Supreme Court Dobbs v. Jackson Decision*, OAH (July 6, 2022), <https://web.archive.org/web/20240415081125/https://www.oah.org/2022/07/06/joint-oah-aha-statement-on-the-dobbs-v-jackson-decision/> (stating that the “decision erodes fundamental rights and has the potential to exacerbate historic injustices and deepen inequalities in our country” and has “established a flawed and troubling precedent.”).

³⁵⁴ Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let’s Bring Them Back before It’s Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179>, at 439.

³⁵⁵ *Id.*

³⁵⁶ *Id.*, at 439-440.

³⁵⁷ *Id.*, at 441.

³⁵⁸ *Id.*, at 441-442.

³⁵⁹ *Girls talk back on questions of body autonomy*, NMAH (Oct. 26, 2022), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/girls-talk-back>.

³⁶⁰ *Id.*

³⁶¹ *Id.*

³⁶² See Megan Lasher, *Toni Morrison Explains Why White Supremacy Is Spiking*, TIME (Nov. 22, 2016), <https://time.com/4579856/toni-morrison-trump-white-crime/>.

³⁶³ Toni Morrison, *Making America White Again*, THE NEW YORKER (Nov. 14, 2016), <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/11/21/toni-morrison-trump-election-making-america-white-again>.

³⁶⁴ See wall featuring “News and Politics (girls on the front lines of change)” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

³⁶⁵ See “News and Politics (girls on the front lines of change)” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit, available at <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/girlhood/gallery>.

³⁶⁶ See “Naomi Wadler” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit (“Speaking before hundreds of thousands of people can be nerve-racking. But you’d never guess that watching Naomi Wadler. At age 11, she rose to national prominence as a leader in the 2018 March for Our Lives to end gun violence. She remembers becoming politically aware at age 5 when George Zimmerman fatally shot Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old African American high school student”).

³⁶⁷ *It Ends with Us: A Plan to Reimagine Safety and End Gun Violence*, MARCH FOR OUR LIVES (2024), <https://marchforourlives.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/MFOL-Policy-Agenda-2024.pdf>.

³⁶⁸ *Id.*

³⁶⁹ *Id.*

³⁷⁰ See “Naomi Wadler, March 24, 2018” didactic in NMAH’s *Girlhood (It’s Complicated)* exhibit (“My friends and I might still be in . . . elementary school, but . . . we know life isn’t equal for everyone and we know what is right and wrong. We . . . stand in the shadow of the Capitol and we know that we have seven short years until we too have the right to vote. So I am here today to honor the words of Toni Morrison, ‘If there’s a book that you want to read but it hasn’t been written yet, you must be the one to write it.’”).

³⁷¹ *Id.*

³⁷² See Exactly Agency, *NMAH Presents: Girlhood (It’s Complicated) Virtual Opening Event*, (YouTube, Oct. 8, 2020) at 12:08, <https://youtu.be/GVYesfMeMoc?t=728>.

³⁷³ See *Becoming US: Essential Understandings*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/becoming-us/essential-understandings> (last accessed Apr. 4, 2026) (noting “There is no single American culture, language, or narrative.”).

³⁷⁴ AASLH, *Reframing History*, at 1:42 (YouTube, June 15, 2022), <https://youtu.be/A0qv7DVXBvw?t=102> (where Hartig notes that “Just thinking about the ways in which history is animated—history has its eyes on you, history is watching—history doesn’t do anything. Historians do. Thinkers do. Teachers do. Archivists do. We are the ones who engage with the past who put the clues and the pieces together to understand in an ever-shifting landscape of knowledge what has happened so that then we can turn that into a tool of utility. [...] I like to think of democracy and history as verbs, right? They should be animated and active and alive and the [Reframing History] report lays out a blueprint for us to expand the power of our own engagement to then ignite civic engagement.”).

³⁷⁵ See, e.g., *Transcript: From ‘Our Divided Nation’ to ‘Our Shared Future’: Museums and the Advancement of Equity and Understanding*, OUR SHARED FUTURE (Oct. 27, 2021), <https://web.archive.org/web/20250328103327/https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/events/our-divided-nation-our-shared-future-museums-and-advancement-equity-and-understanding#transcript> (in which Gover asks Hartig, “do you think it’s even possible to construct an American narrative upon which we all agree?”).

³⁷⁶ *Transcript: The Path Forward: Museums with Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution Lonnie G. Bunch III & Director of the National Museum of American History Anthea M. Hartig, PhD*, WASH. POST (May 12, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/washington-post-live/2021/05/12/transcript-path-forward-museums-with-secretary-smithsonian-institution-lonnie-g-bunch-iii-director-national-museum-american-history-anthea-m-hartig-phd/>.

³⁷⁷ *Id.*

³⁷⁸ See “Declaring Independence” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit.

³⁷⁹ See generally didactics in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit, including Thomas Paine’s quote “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.”

³⁸⁰ See wall with “PRIVILEGE,” “SLAVERY,” and “RIGHTS OF WOMAN” in very large lettering in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit.

³⁸¹ *Id.*; See “Justice & Dignity For All US Immigrants” poster description.

³⁸² See “Revolution and the National Story” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit (“How should Americans remember their Revolution and the founding of the nation? Was it a complete, perfect, sacred event led by a great patriot who, as American children would learn, never told a lie? Or was it part of a wider, unfinished movement for liberty—deeply imperfect but with sacred aspirations open to all people? Americans disputed the issue within decades of the Revolution itself.”).

³⁸³ See “Do We Need a Shared National Identity?” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit (“Following independence, citizens of the new nation sought to forge their own identity and create a

unique history. They established holidays such as the Fourth of July and later Thanksgiving Day and chronicled the story of America from the landing at Plymouth Rock through the Founding Fathers and the Revolutionary War. In part Americans did so not only for themselves, but also to instill in future generations a shared ideal of citizenship. An ongoing debate resulted: if there were to be common beliefs and a national narrative that expressed the values of the nation, what should be included?”).

³⁸⁴ See “Teaching American History” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit. Italics added.

³⁸⁵ See *id.*

³⁸⁶ See “Creating the Father of Our Country” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit.

³⁸⁷ See “Assimilation through Public Schools” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

³⁸⁸ See “Emblem of America Pitcher, around 1800” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

³⁸⁹ See “The Pledge of Allegiance” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit (“Francis Bellamy wrote the original Pledge of Allegiance. It was first published in *The Youth’s Companion* to coincide with the dedication of the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago on October 21, 1892, as a way to instill American nationalism through flag ceremonies.

³⁹⁰ See “Independence Day” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit.

³⁹¹ See “Abraham Lincoln in the Classroom” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit.

³⁹² *Id.*

³⁹³ See “What are the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens?” didactic in NMAH’s *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit.

³⁹⁴ *Id.*

³⁹⁵ *Id.*

³⁹⁶ *Id.*

³⁹⁷ *Id.*

³⁹⁸ *Id.*

³⁹⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰⁰ *Id.*

⁴⁰¹ *Id.*

⁴⁰² See “Hamilton” didactic in NMAH’s *Entertainment Nation* exhibit (“Featuring performers of color in the roles of the nation’s all-white founders, *Hamilton* struck a chord that reverberated far beyond Broadway. Lin-Manuel Miranda told the story of influential and flawed founding father, Alexander Hamilton. Through rap and hip-hop-and non-white casting—*Hamilton* made this history accessible and relatable to audiences of color and gave more people a sense of ownership of American history.”).

⁴⁰³ *Race and Antebellum New York City: The New York Manumission Society*, NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY (n.d.), <https://www.nyhistory.org/web/africanfreeschool/history/manumission-society.html> (last accessed May 11, 2026) (noting that “‘The New York Society for the Manumission of Slaves and the Protection of such of them as had been or wanted to be Liberated’ was created in 1785 by some of New York’s most wealthy and influential white citizens. Its members included luminaries such as John Jay and Alexander Hamilton. Their work on behalf of black New Yorkers began with protesting the widespread practice of kidnapping black New Yorkers (both slave and free) and selling them as slaves elsewhere. Later they lobbied to pass the 1799 law which granted gradual manumission to New York’s slaves. The organization provided legal assistance to both free and enslaved blacks who were being abused.”).

⁴⁰⁴ Craig A. Landy, *When Men Amongst Us, Shall Cease to Be: Emancipation of Slaves in the State of New York*, 12 *Judicial Notice* 42 (2017), <https://racism.org/articles/citizenship-rights/21-slavery-to-reparations/2003-emancipation-of-slaves-in-the-state-of-new-york> (noting that “In 1811, the Manumission Society petitioned the New York legislature for an end to slavery. Governor Tompkins, a longtime member of the Society, called in his 1812 annual message to that body for the ‘gradual and ultimate extermination amongst us, of slavery, that reproach of a free people.’”).

⁴⁰⁵ *Hamilton Education Program – Founding the New-York Manumission Society, 1785*, THE GILDER LEHRMAN INST. OF AM. HISTORY (n.d.), <https://hamilton.gilderlehrman.org/event/founding-new-york-manumission-society-1785> (last accessed May 11, 2026) (noting that “In 1785, Alexander Hamilton and 31 other prominent New Yorkers

founded the New-York Manumission Society. In their charter, the founders declared that ‘those, among us, who are held as Slaves ... are by Nature, as much entitled as ourselves’ to liberty. The Society supported the gradual abolition of slavery and focused on education for African American children and adults, founding African Free Schools. The members also worked to defend Black New Yorkers (enslaved and free) who were kidnapped to be sold elsewhere into slavery. Many of the men who founded the Manumission Society were slaveholders themselves who rejected Alexander Hamilton’s proposal that all members manumit the men, women, and children they enslaved. Slavery, Hamilton wrote as early as 1774, ‘relaxes the sinews of industry, clips the wings of commerce, and introduces misery and indigence in every shape.’”).

⁴⁰⁶ Olivia B. Waxman, *Land Deed for Pioneering School Sheds Light on an Early American Anti-Slavery Effort*, TIME (Feb. 26, 2020), <https://time.com/5790341/alexander-hamilton-african-free-school/>.

⁴⁰⁷ *Franklin’s Electrical Years: Enslaved People in Franklin’s Research?*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/electric-dr-franklin/online/enslaved-people> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).

⁴⁰⁸ *The Electric Dr. Franklin: Explore Online*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/electric-dr-franklin/online> (last accessed Apr. 15, 2026).

⁴⁰⁹ *Id.*

⁴¹⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹¹ *Id.*

⁴¹² *Id.*

⁴¹³ See the current didactic accompanying the 1840 Horatio Greenough statue of George Washington on display at NMAH. Italics added.

⁴¹⁴ In a 2016 baccalaureate address entitled “Choosing our Histories,” Smithsonian Under Secretary for Museums and Culture Kevin Gover told Brown University students that he supports replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples’ Day, arguing that Columbus was a “slaver” and “killer,” and says Americans should reconsider our origin stories with “Indians in them,” such as the “pilgrims, Plymouth, and the first Thanksgiving, the Jamestown colony and Pocahontas, Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery and Sacajawea, and the Trail of Tears.” *Baccalaureate address: “Choosing our Histories” by Kevin Gover*, BROWN UNIV. (May 28, 2016), <https://www.brown.edu/news/2016-05-28/gover>. In 2021, Gover stated that the traditional understanding of Thanksgiving as a “day where the Indians and the Pilgrims came together and there was this wonderful giving of thanks and all this racial harmony...works to the disadvantage of Native people.” *Transcript: Race in America: History Matters with Angeline Bouley & Kevin Gover*, WASH. POST (Nov. 19, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/washington-post-live/2021/11/19/transcript-race-america-history-matters-with-angeline-bouley-kevin-gover/>. In 2024, Gover added new descriptors to his list for Columbus, calling him a murderer, slaver, and thief. See Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums, *Kevin Gover, Keynote Address at the 2015 ATALM Conference* (YouTube, Sept. 28, 2024), <https://youtu.be/H78cppVUxTw?t=912> (“...everybody started going, well, what about this Columbus guy? And then they learned he was a murderer and a slaver and a thief.”).

⁴¹⁵ *Upending 1620: Where Do We Begin*, NMAH (n.d.) <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/upending-1620-where-do-we-begin> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).

⁴¹⁶ See *Visual Description | Many Voices, One Nation*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/visual-descriptions/visual-description-many-voices-one-nation> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).

⁴¹⁷ See “Unsettling the Continent, 1492-1776” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴¹⁸ Anthea Hartig et al., *Modern American History and the Smithsonian*, 6 MOD. AM. HIST. 244, 250 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1017/mah.2023.30>.

⁴¹⁹ Ryan P. Smith, *Lonnie Bunch Sizes Up His Past and Future at the Smithsonian*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Sept. 23, 2019), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/lonnie-bunch-sizes-his-past-and-future-smithsonian-180973198/>.

⁴²⁰ *Id.*

⁴²¹ See *Our Shared Future: 250 | Exhibitions*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), <https://www.si.edu/250/exhibitions> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026); Kevin Gover, *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations*, AM. INDIAN, Summer/Fall 2014, <https://www.americanindianmagazine.org/story/nation-nation-treaties-between-united-states-and-american-indian-nations> (noting that the exhibit highlights “from a Native perspective” the “American acceptance of tribal self-government and nation-to-nation diplomacy through treaty making” that

“quickly morphed into disaster through broken and coercive treaties that promoted Indian removal and tribal land loss, as well as government policies that dismantled tribes as political institutions, obliterated tribal land ownership and fostered the forced assimilation of Native people into white culture.”).

⁴²² See Smithsonian NMAI, *The “Indian Problem”*, (YouTube, Mar. 3, 2015) at 10:51, <https://youtu.be/if-BOZgWZPE?t=651>.

⁴²³ Smithsonian NMAI, *Nation to Nation*, (YouTube, Mar. 12, 2015) at 0:10, <https://youtu.be/gNlI8ZWQPkl?t=10>.

⁴²⁴ Smithsonian NMAI, *The “Indian Problem”*, (YouTube, Mar. 3, 2015) at 10:51, <https://youtu.be/if-BOZgWZPE?t=651> (“When you move a people from one place to another, when you displace people, when you wrench people from their homelands, wasn’t that genocide? We don’t make the case that there was genocide. We know there was.”) The video begins with a quote attributed to a Native American tribal leader, stating, “They [the U.S.] made us many promises, more than I can remember. But they kept but one. They promised to take our land and they took it.” Smithsonian NMAI, *The “Indian Problem”*, (YouTube, Mar. 3, 2015) at 0:09, <https://youtu.be/if-BOZgWZPE?t=9>.

⁴²⁵ See, e.g., Smithsonian Education, *Towards A More Equitable Future*, (YouTube, July 25, 2023) at 0:21, <https://youtu.be/g7ea-eIRitg?t=21> (where Smithsonian Under Secretary for Education Monique Chism states, “I wanna first offer a land acknowledgement to say we gratefully acknowledge the native peoples on whose ancestral homelands we gather, and to say that we’re just so thankful to be able to host our event here and also to honor the native communities across the nation.”); LemelsonCenter, *Welcome to Black Inventors and Innovators: New Perspectives 2020*, (YouTube, Nov. 13, 2020) at 0:15, <https://youtu.be/wEKnrZcMPHc?t=15> (where NMAH Director Anthea Hartig states, “I’m honored to join you today and to acknowledge the precedents of the Piscataway, Pamunkey, and Nacotchtank peoples here, as I am in Washington, D.C. Wherever you are, at this moment, give thanks to the First People on whose land we live, love, struggle, and work.”). There is no guessing about Hartig’s belief that America’s existence is a testament to its participation in an ongoing, centuries-old theft of land from Native Americans. On at least 10 occasions during her tenure as NMAH Director, Hartig has claimed that the United States rests on stolen land. In addition to the above, see University of California Riverside, *Chancellor’s Distinguished Lecture Series: Anthea M. Hartig*, (YouTube, Nov. 16, 2020) at 6:34, <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=394> (where Hartig states that “I, too, am honored to join you and acknowledge the precedents, the ancestors, and the descendants of the Piscataway, the Pamunkey, and the Nacotchtank tribes as I join you from Washington, D.C. So wherever you are at this moment, give thanks to the First Peoples on whose land we’re honored to live, love, struggle, and work.”) National Museum of American History, *Chancellor’s Distinguished Lecture Series: Anthea M. Hartig*, (YouTube, Nov. 16, 2020) at 6:34, *Smithsonian Power of Giving 2020 | Educational Equity – Symposium Welcome, Day 1*, (YouTube, Mar. 23, 2021) at 1:03, <https://youtu.be/ivhpLjRrSsQ?t=63> (where Hartig states that “I’d like to first acknowledge that the Smithsonian is on the native lands shared by the Piscataway, the Pamunkey, and the Nacotchtank, and their descendants are with us today. Wherever we’re viewing this, let us acknowledge and give our respect and gratitude to native peoples for the opportunity to work and live in their territories.”); Norfolk Society of Arts, *2022 NSA | Lecture Four | Anthea M Hartig*, (YouTube, Jan. 26, 2022) at 18:00, https://youtu.be/HERz54an_-c?t=1080 (where Hartig states that “I’m honored to acknowledge the precedents and the ancestors and the descendants of the Piscataway, Pamunkey, and Nacotchtank tribes here as I join you from Washington D.C.’s Capitol Hill neighborhood. So wherever you are at this moment, give thanks to the First Peoples on whose land we’re honored to live, love, struggle, work, preserve, care, and do our work.”); AASLH, *Reframing History: A Conversation at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History*, (YouTube, Mar. 1, 2022) at 0:46, https://youtu.be/IQv2tN9p5_E?t=46 (where Hartig states that “Let us acknowledge the precedents of the Piscataway, Pamunkey, and Anacostine tribes and their descendants. As we know, the Chesapeake Bay area is rich indigeneity and is still home to many indigenous peoples from all over the hemisphere. We give our respect and our gratitude to all of them for the opportunity to work and to live in their territories.”); National Museum of American History, *Smithsonian Institution Constitution and Citizenship Day | Dr. Anthea Hartig*, (YouTube, Sept. 16, 2022) at 0:21, <https://youtu.be/1H50ppqv8vs?t=21> (where Hartig states that “I’d like to first gratefully acknowledge the precedents of the Piscataway peoples on whose land this museum sits. They shared this greater Washington, D.C., area with the Anacostine and the Pamunkey tribes. Wherever we are today, let us acknowledge and give our respect and gratitude for the opportunity to work and live in their territories.”); *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future*, (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 2:15, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNU4?t=135> (where Hartig states that “I’m honored to first recognize that I’m here in the museum on the ancestral lands that were shared by the broader Algonquian peoples, in particular the

Piscataway, the Pamunkey, the Nacotchtank. Their descendants and so many native peoples still live and work here in the District of Columbia, and we're deeply grateful and want to acknowledge and give our respects and gratitude to them and to their ancestors for the opportunity to work in this territory.”); TDC, *The Power of Giving: Philanthropy's Impact on Social Justice*, (Vimeo, Sept. 21, 2023) at 1:34, <https://vimeo.com/1054649094?fl=pl&fe=cm#t=1m32s> (where Hartig states that “Before we begin, let us pause to acknowledge with gratitude the native peoples on whose land we gather today. These are the ancestral homes of the Piscataway people joined by the Nacotchtank and the Pamunkey tribes and, of course, their descendants. We acknowledge the native peoples of more broadly the Americas. And this is a humble and incomplete acknowledgement, but it reminds us of the significance of place, the continued persistence and lives of indigenous peoples and our work to build respectful relationships.”); Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let's Bring Them Back before It's Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaac179> (quoting Hartig's presidential address from the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians on April 13, 2024: “As we gather here in this layered and complicated place, we acknowledge that the land upon which the colonial city of New Orleans sits has been and remains known as Balbanca, a Choctaw word for “a place of other languages.” Many nations since time's beginning have and continue to live here—currently including but not limited to the Isle de Jean Charles Band of the Chitimacha, Choctaw, Biloxi Tribe, the United Houma Nation, and Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe. These incomplete but heartfelt acknowledgements remind us not only of the depth of our histories but also of our collective and ongoing work to uplift and honor each other. In this complex space, I so hope that you have found engagement, meaning, and inspiration in both the offerings and the opportunities to come together at the conference.”); Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service* (Anthea Hartig), (YouTube, June 17, 2024) at 0:37, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=37> (where Hartig states that “I want to acknowledge with humility and in incompleteness that we're here, of course, in what we know is Washington, in the District of Columbia, but I speak to you on the, from the unseated lands of the Piscataway people who were joined by the Nacotchtank and Pamunkey tribes is part of the broader Algonquin Alliance that really still shapes this region today. And so wherever we call home, let us join and acknowledging the layered complexities of our place, give our respect and gratitude to Native local peoples and the opportunity to live, and to work, and to study in their territories.”); *What is the role of a public historian?: A Conversation with Anthea Hartig*, (YouTube, Mar. 11, 2025), at 8:20, <https://youtu.be/-hiEA5hVMaM?t=500> (where Hartig states that “To this day, I'm here in Washington, D.C. I'm on the ancestral lands that were shared by the Piscataway, the Nacotchtank, and they, you know, as you know, the descendants are here, our communities are, are very rich with native peoples from all over the continent, especially here in Washington and in Los Angeles, and, but yet we still, I think, struggle to recognize that.”).

⁴²⁶ See “Land and Opportunity in the Midwest” didactic in NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴²⁷ See “Incorporating Western Lands” didactic in NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴²⁸ See the introductory didactic in NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴²⁹ *Id.*

⁴³⁰ *Id.*

⁴³¹ See *Our Shared Future: 250 | Exhibitions*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), <https://www.si.edu/250/exhibitions> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026). In fact, the *American Democracy* exhibit was selected as the exhibit representing the other America 250 related exhibitions on the Smithsonian's *Our Shared Future: 250* homepage. See *Our Shared Future: 250*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), <https://www.si.edu/250> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).

⁴³² See Anthea M. Hartig, *In Slavery's Shadow: George Floyd and American Legacies*, NAT'L MUSEUM OF AM. HIST. (May 31, 2020), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/slaverys-shadow-george-floyd-and-american-legacies-anthea-m-hartig-elizabeth>.

⁴³³ *Strategic Plan 2020-2030*, NMAH (Feb. 2020) (on file with author), at 1.

⁴³⁴ *Making History Matter: From Abstract Truth to Critical Engagement*, AASLH (Feb. 2022), <https://download.aaslh.org/Research/FWI-Reframing-History-Report.pdf>, at 12, 15.

⁴³⁵ E.g., NMAH and NMAL. See AASLH, *Reframing History*, (YouTube, June 15, 2022) at 4:43, <https://youtu.be/A0qv7DVXBvw?t=283> (where Hartig notes that “The report lays out a blueprint for us to expand the power of our own engagement to then ignite civic engagement”); AASLH, *Reframing History*, (YouTube, June 15, 2022) at 1:03, <https://youtu.be/A0qv7DVXBvw?t=63> (where NMAL Founding Director Jorge Zamanillo notes that “I think now we have this framework and a toolkit that we can share with the staff and the educators that work on these programs every day, and that's going to be a great resource.”).

⁴³⁶ See AASLH, *Reframing History*, (YouTube, June 15, 2022) at 4:43, <https://youtu.be/A0qv7DVXBvw?t=283> (where Hartig notes that “The report lays out a blueprint for us to expand the power of our own engagement to then ignite civic engagement”); AASLH, *Reframing History*, (YouTube, June 15, 2022) at 1:03, <https://youtu.be/A0qv7DVXBvw?t=63> (with NMAL Founding Director Jorge Zamanillo noting, “I think now we have this framework and a toolkit that we can share with the staff and the educators that work on these programs every day, and that’s going to be a great resource.”).

⁴³⁷ AASLH, *Reframing History: A Conversation at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History*, (YouTube, Mar. 1, 2022) at 1:42, https://youtu.be/IQv2tN9p5_E?t=102.

⁴³⁸ See, e.g., the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Smithsonian Learning Lab’s poster on display, stating “DOWN WITH THE WHITENESS.” Smithsonian American Art Museum, *Smithsonian Learning Lab Resource: Down with the Whiteness*, SMITHSONIAN LEARNING LAB (Feb. 6, 2022), <https://learninglab.si.edu/q/r/6186305>. And NMAH Director Hartig has made statements like, “Pausing, I acknowledge openly the privilege and dominance of my whiteness and the comfortable cushion my class affords me.” See, e.g., Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let’s Bring Them Back before It’s Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179>. Following January 6, Hartig issued a press release, stating that “This week reminds us of the long and deep history of white supremacy and the hatred and privilege it affords.” Anthea M. Hartig, *Statement from the Elizabeth MacMillan Director Anthea M. Hartig*, NAT. MUSEUM OF AM. HIST. (Jan. 8, 2021), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/statement-elizabeth-macmillan-director-anthea-m-hartig>.

⁴³⁹ See “Incorporating Nez Perce Lands” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴⁴⁰ See “Tataviam Sandstone Mortar and Pestle, used in the 1800s” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴⁴¹ See “Indian Removal in the Midwest” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴⁴² See “Helmet” didactic in NMAH’s *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴⁴³ See, e.g., *Westward Expansion*, HISTORY.COM (n.d.), <https://www.history.com/articles/westward-expansion> (last accessed June 13, 2026).

⁴⁴⁴ See Rory Wilson, *Úuyitpe hiwééke c’liqin: The Creation and Reception of Written Nez Perce in the 19th Century*, COLUMBIA UNIV. IN THE CITY OF N.Y. (Apr. 3, 2023), https://sites.asit.columbia.edu/historydept/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2024/05/Wilson-Rory_Final-thesis.pdf, at 9-11 (noting that “from the very beginning, it was Native interest and initiative that brought both formal instruction in writing and Christianity to the tribe”).

⁴⁴⁵ See, e.g., William Wilberforce, *A Letter on the Abolition of the slave trade, Addressed to the Freeholders and Other Inhabitants of Yorkshire* (1807), <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/wilberforce/> (noting that “God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners”).

⁴⁴⁶ See, e.g., Irene Ludji et al., *Frederick Douglass: Christianity of Slaveholders vs. Christianity of Christ* (Dec. 2014), <https://ejournal.iftkledalero.ac.id/index.php/JLE/article/download/75/59> (noting that “In New Bedford [Douglass] started to read the *Liberator*, a paper edited by William Lloyd Garrison, a white abolitionist. [...] Douglass claimed Garrison as the messenger from God who came to deliver colored people from the bondage of slavery. Garrison himself relied on the Scripture and his interpretation of it in order to build his argument. Therefore, Douglass’ encounter with Garrison added a new side to the development of his thinking of abolitionism in America. [...] Only six years after his first encounter with Garrison, Douglass published his first autobiography *Narrative of the Life*. In this first autobiography, Douglass[] [...] by using his understanding of Christian teaching, challenged the injustice of the slavery and showed the misleading deeds of a Church that was proslavery. A church in union with slaveholders was standing against Christ because ‘slavery is a crime against God.’ Douglass’ close interpretation of the Scripture proved his compatibility as the follower of the Garrisonian movement. [...] Here, Douglass’ faith became a foundation for his criticism of the hypocrisy of the proslavery Christianity. [...] Douglass also spoke about what he thought Christianity should look like in America. In his reception speech on May 1846 he stated: ‘I love that religion that comes from above, in the Wisdom of God ... I love that religion that sends its votaries to bind up the wounds of him that has fallen among thieves. I love that religion that makes it the duty of its disciples to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction. I love that religion that is based upon the glorious principle of love to God and love to man.’ This was what Douglass pictured of how Christianity should look. This showed Douglass’ Christian beliefs. Douglass, by using his knowledge of scripture, wanted to show that it is easy for the true followers of Christ to see that slavery and Christianity were not compatible. [...] Douglass almost always referenced Christian scriptures and interpretation to elaborate his passion for bringing freedom for slaves. He was a “democratic as well

as Christian idealist” according to Martin. Abolitionism was an integral part of Douglass’ vision and Christianity was the basis he used to expand this vision. [...] Douglass’ argument on uplifting the oppressed also demonstrated his Christian understanding of grace. Grace always comes first. It is because of God’s grace that we were created equal in God’s image. When this equality is not granted because of a system such as slavery then it is a Christian’s duty to win it back. When we choose to be what God created us to be, it will be counted as an achievement in God’s eye. For Douglass, to be free and to bring freedom for others were his Christian duties. [...] ‘The Christian story informed his understanding of his own life, his estimates of human good and evil, and his verdicts regarding slavery and quality. Christianity was an inheritance he received and interpreted, a faith system that shaped him, and that he shaped.’”).

⁴⁴⁷ See, e.g., Harriet Beecher Stowe, 8 *The Writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe: Household Papers and Stories* (Riverside ed., Houghton Mifflin and Company 1896), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/31217/31217-h/31217-h.htm> (noting that “Mrs. Stowe, speaking of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, said: ‘I wrote what I did because, as a woman, as a mother, I was oppressed and heartbroken with the sorrows and injustice which I saw, and because, as a Christian, I felt the dishonor to Christianity.’”).

⁴⁴⁸ See, e.g., Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (Apr. 16, 1963), https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html (explaining how segregation is “morally wrong and sinful” because it does not accord with “the moral law or the law of God” and noting that “I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle”; that “there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire”; that “Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their ‘thus saith the Lord’ far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid”; that “though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: ‘Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.’ Was not Amos an extremist for justice: ‘Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.’ Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: ‘I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.’ Was not Martin Luther an extremist: ‘Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God.’ And John Bunyan: ‘I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience.’ And Abraham Lincoln: ‘This nation cannot survive half slave and half free.’ And Thomas Jefferson: ‘We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal . . .’ So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary’s hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime--the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment”; and that “I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.”).

⁴⁴⁹ See, e.g., *Christianity and the Declaration of Independence*, CHRISTIAN LAW ASSOCIATION (July 11, 2024), <https://christianlaw.org/christianity-and-the-declaration-of-independence/> (noting that “The Declaration, of course, asserts that all people are created equal. Even though they did not fully live out this idea in regards to slavery at the time, the Christian idea about the equality of humans would eventually be adopted more and more in the American system of government, culminating in a time when slavery would be abolished. [...] In 1890, historian Richard Frothingham wrote, ‘[A] low view of man was exerting its full influence when Rome was at the height of its power and glory. Christianity then appeared with its central doctrine, that man was created in the Divine image, and destined for immortality; pronouncing that, in the eye of God, all men are equal. This asserted for the individual an independent value. It occasioned the great inference, that man is superior to the State, which ought to be fashioned for his use. This was the advent of a new spirit and a new power in the world.’ Ultimately, the eradication of slavery in the United States is rooted in the Christian ideal of the equality of mankind. [...] Jefferson drew many of his ideas

from John Locke and William Blackstone, both Biblical Christians. He also reflected the work of a group of twenty-seven Scotch-Irish church elders in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, who drafted their own Declaration in May 1775, under the direction of Elder Ephraim Brevard, a graduate of Princeton. A comparison of the Declaration of Independence with the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence reveals many similar phrases. In declaring the endowment of these unalienable rights, Jefferson was also influenced by George Mason's "Virginia Declaration of Rights" [...] Much of the wording of the Declaration itself is rooted in the work of Christian ideas as expressed by Godly people of Jefferson's generation.").

⁴⁵⁰ See, e.g., Barbara J. Elliott, *Faith, Civil Society, & the American Founding*, THE IMAGINATIVE CONSERVATIVE (Jan. 31, 2025), <https://theimaginativeconservative.org/2025/01/faith-civil-society-american-founding-barbara-elliott.html>.

⁴⁵¹ See *1620 Display at National Museum of American History Asks "Where Do We Begin?"*, THE SMITHSONIAN (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/1620-display-national-museum-american-history-asks-where-do-we-begin>; *Upending 1620: Where Do We Begin?*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/upending-1620-where-do-we-begin> (last accessed Apr. 7, 2026).

⁴⁵² *Id.*; *Upending 1620*, SMITHSONIAN LEARNING LAB (n.d.), <https://learninglab.si.edu/collections/upending-1620/QTpjC87EvKW3dxIA> (last accessed Apr. 7, 2026).

⁴⁵³ *Upending 1620: Where Do We Begin?*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/upending-1620-where-do-we-begin> (last accessed Apr. 7, 2026).

⁴⁵⁴ See *1620 Display at National Museum of American History Asks "Where Do We Begin?"*, THE SMITHSONIAN (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/1620-display-national-museum-american-history-asks-where-do-we-begin>.

⁴⁵⁵ See *1620 Display at National Museum of American History Asks "Where Do We Begin?"*, THE SMITHSONIAN (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/1620-display-national-museum-american-history-asks-where-do-we-begin>; *Upending 1620: Where Do We Begin?* NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/upending-1620-where-do-we-begin> (last accessed Apr. 7, 2026).

⁴⁵⁶ *1620 Display at National Museum of American History Asks "Where Do We Begin?"*, THE SMITHSONIAN (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/1620-display-national-museum-american-history-asks-where-do-we-begin>. Emphasis added.

⁴⁵⁷ See "Negotiating Inclusion" didactic in NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴⁵⁸ See "Chinese Exclusion" didactic in NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴⁵⁹ See "How Diverse Should the Citizenry Be?" didactic in NMAH's *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit.

⁴⁶⁰ See "Negotiating Inclusion" didactic in NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴⁶¹ See "Chinese Exclusion" didactic in NMAH's *Many Voices, One Nation* exhibit.

⁴⁶² See "How Diverse Should the Citizenry Be?" didactic in NMAH's *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit.

⁴⁶³ See "Love It or Leave It" didactic in NMAH's *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* exhibit.

⁴⁶⁴ Anthea M. Hartig, *Where Have All the Women Gone? Let's Bring Them Back before It's Too Late*, THE J. OF AM. HIST. (Dec. 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaae179>, at 429-430. Emphasis added.

⁴⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶⁶ Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future* (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 11:38, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=698>.

⁴⁶⁷ *Reckoning with Remembrance: Explore Online*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/reckoning-with-remembrance/online> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).

⁴⁶⁸ *An Initiative for Social Change, OUR SHARED FUTURE* (July 25, 2023), <https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/> (last accessed Mar. 31, 2026).

⁴⁶⁹ Mahader Tamene, et al., *COVID-19, police violence, and the historical thread that binds them: Structural racism as a public health issue*, NMAH (Aug. 27, 2020), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/covid-19-police-violence-and-historical-thread-binds-them-structural-racism-public>.

⁴⁷⁰ Katherine Ott, *Racism is a public health crisis*, NMAH (Aug. 21, 2020), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/racism-public-health-crisis>. Ott has been a curator at the National Museum of American History for 20+ years and curated NMAH's *Illegal to Be You: Gay History Beyond Stonewall*

exhibit. *Smithsonian Online Event! Illegal to Be You: Gay History Beyond Stonewall with Katherine Ott*, ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOC. (June 11, 2020), <https://arizonahistoricalsociety.org/events/smithsonian-online-event-illegal-to-be-you-gay-history-beyond-stonewall-with-katherine-ott/>.

⁴⁷¹ Modupe Labode, *Black Life in Two Pandemics: Histories of Violence*, NMAH (Aug. 25, 2020), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/black-life-two-pandemics-histories-violence>. Labode has been a curator at NMAH since August 2019, concentrating on “African American social justice history.” Krystal Klingenberg & Modupe Labode, *An Inside Look at Smithsonian’s ‘Collected’ Podcast Season Two: The Musical Genius of Black Women*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (June 4, 2025), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/smithsonian-american-womens-history-museum/2025/06/04/an-inside-look-at-smithsonians-collected-podcast-season-two-the-musical-genius-of-black-women/>. “She is the chair of the African American History Curatorial Collective and is on the staff of the Center for Restorative History, where she is the lead of the Emmett Till Historic Marker Project.” *Modupe Labode*, GRADFUTURES (n.d.), <https://gradfutures.princeton.edu/ModupeLabode> (last accessed Apr. 3, 2026).

⁴⁷² Joseph McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, *Challenging the Narrative Landscape of the Past to Create a More Just Future* (YouTube, Sept. 20, 2022) at 14:53, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=893>.

⁴⁷³ *Id.* at 15:32, <https://youtu.be/CVpbfZnBNu4?t=932>.

⁴⁷⁴ See U.S. Gov’t Accountability Off., GAO-18-258, *K-12 Education: Discipline Disparities for Black Students, Boys, and Students with Disabilities* (Mar. 2018), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-18-258.pdf>, at 24-26 (listing trauma, mental health issues, social media, gang involvement, drug use, lack of parental guidance or support, and situational barriers, among others, as behavior challenges that impact school discipline decisions).

⁴⁷⁵ *In Pursuit of Life, Liberty & Happiness*, SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), <https://www.si.edu/exhibitions/pursuit-life-liberty-happiness%3Aevent-exhib-6778> (last accessed May 26, 2026).

⁴⁷⁶ See *In Pursuit of Life, Liberty, and Happiness*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/in-pursuit> (last accessed May 26, 2026) (stating that “*In Pursuit* is a museum-wide exhibition that spans the full 250,000 square feet of our building’s three floors” that “opened on May 14, 2026.”).

⁴⁷⁷ See Anthea M. Hartig, *In Slavery’s Shadow: George Floyd and American Legacies*, NAT’L MUSEUM OF AM. HIST. (May 31, 2020), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/slaverys-shadow-george-floyd-and-american-legacies-anthea-m-hartig-elizabeth>.

⁴⁷⁸ Robin Pogrebin, *Curating in the Cross Hairs: Is This the Smithsonian Chief’s Last Show?*, N.Y. TIMES (May 28, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/28/arts/design/lonnie-bunch-smithsonian-american-aspirations.html>.

⁴⁷⁹ *American Aspirations*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), <https://www.si.edu/exhibitions/american-aspirations%3Aevent-exhib-6813> (last accessed June 20, 2026).

⁴⁸⁰ *Smithsonian Exhibition: American Aspirations*, THE SMITHSONIAN (n.d.), https://www.si.edu/castle/american-aspirations?utm_campaign=MyVisitSI&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=si.edu (last accessed June 20, 2026); see “American Aspirations” didactic in the Smithsonian’s *American Aspirations* exhibit at the Smithsonian Castle.

⁴⁸¹ See “American Aspirations” didactic in the Smithsonian’s *American Aspirations* exhibit at the Smithsonian Castle (noting that “The United States has been shaped by aspirational ideals, often shared but sometimes in conflict and contested since its founding. [...] America’s challenge and obligation is to fulfill, to expand access to, and to make concrete these founding ideals.”).

⁴⁸² See “In Pursuit of New Horizons” didactic in the Smithsonian’s *American Aspirations* exhibit at the Smithsonian Castle (noting that “According to oral tradition, the merchant ship the *Mayflower* landed on or near Plymouth Rock in 1620. The romantic story of the Pilgrims at Plymouth has had lasting effect on Americans’ identity. Set against the harsh realities of carving out a settlement in a new frontier and the impact of displacing native communities, is the tale of discovery, opportunity, and religious freedom. Pieces of Plymouth Rock became keepsakes and relics of America’s mythic past.”).

⁴⁸³ See “In Pursuit of Fairness” didactic in the Smithsonian’s *American Aspirations* exhibit at the Smithsonian Castle (noting that “The struggle to extend the benefits of freedom to all Americans has been the source of conflict, war, protest, and human loss. Yet in the struggle to make a freer and fairer America, many have found both inspiration and tragic irony in the phrase ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal....’ Since the inception of the nation, African Americans fought to abolish slavery, achieve equality and freedom, and overcome segregation through a variety of means: legal recourse, political persuasion, public protests, and non-violent

demonstrations. The African American struggle provided plans and strategies for others to follow to ensure that American freedom was available to all.”)

⁴⁸⁴ *NMAH Interpretative Plan*, NMAH (Jan. 2021),

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Interpretive_Plan.pdf, at 7.

⁴⁸⁵ See *Hands-on history: Folding a national symbol*, NMAH (Nov. 14, 2011),

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/hands-history-folding-national-symbol>; *Folding a full-size replica of the Star-Spangled Banner*, NMAH (Nov. 7, 2011), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/folding-full-size-replica-star-spangled-banner>.

⁴⁸⁶ *PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: U.S. Territories Will Be Honored in Flag-Raising Ceremony June 14*, NMAH (June 13, 2022).

⁴⁸⁷ See *Calendar of Exhibitions and Events: June 2025*, NMAH (May 7, 2025),

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/June-2025-calendar>.

⁴⁸⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁸⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁹⁰ Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service* (Anthea Hartig), (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025) at 48:53, <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=2933>.

⁴⁹¹ See NMAH’s 2026 Event Calendar for June 14, 2026, available at <https://tinyurl.com/5fhpzsma> (last accessed May 8, 2026) (showing no flag-related programming or celebrations for Flag Day).

⁴⁹² See *Calendar of Exhibitions and Events: June 2025*, NMAH (May 7, 2025),

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/June-2025-calendar>; *Calendar of Exhibitions and Events: July 2025*, NMAH (Jun 12, 2025), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/July-2025-calendar>.

⁴⁹³ See *Calendar of Exhibitions and Events: July 2025*, NMAH (Jun 12, 2025),

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/July-2025-calendar>.

⁴⁹⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁹⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁹⁶ See *Civic Season*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/topics/civic-season> (last accessed Apr. 15, 2026) (noting that the programming seeks to help participants “pursue historically informed civic action” after exploring NMAH exhibits like *Many Voices, One Nation* and *American Democracy* and educational videos entitled, “Young People Shake Up Elections (History Proves It)”).

⁴⁹⁷ See *Calendar of Exhibitions and Events: July 2025*, NMAH (Jun 12, 2025),

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/July-2025-calendar>.

⁴⁹⁸ *Civic Season 2025*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/topics/civic-season/2025> (last accessed Apr. 15, 2026).

⁴⁹⁹ See *Celebrate the Nation’s 250th in 2026*, NMAH (n.d.),

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/celebrate-the-nations-250th-in-2026> (last accessed May 8, 2026);

Smithsonian Launches “Our Shared Future: 250” Programming To Commemorate America’s Birthday,

SMITHSONIAN (Mar. 23, 2026), <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/smithsonian-launches-our-shared-future-250-programming-commemorate-america>.

⁵⁰⁰ See Anthea M. Hartig, *In Slavery’s Shadow: George Floyd and American Legacies*, NAT’L MUSEUM OF AM. HIST. (May 31, 2020), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/press/releases/slaverys-shadow-george-floyd-and-american-legacies-anthea-m-hartig-elizabeth>.

⁵⁰¹ University of California Riverside, *Chancellor’s Distinguished Lecture Series: Anthea M. Hartig*, (YouTube, Nov. 16, 2020) at 1:03:31, <https://youtu.be/QxKVJ1pYcEw?t=3811>.

⁵⁰² Anthea Hartig et al., *Modern American History and the Smithsonian*, 6 MOD. AM. HIST. 244, 250 (2023),

<https://doi.org/10.1017/mah.2023.30>.

⁵⁰³ GlavasC, *5 Questions With Barbara Clark Smith*, SMITHSONIAN AFFILIATIONS (Oct. 29, 2019),

<https://affiliations.si.edu/5-questions-with-barbara-clark-smith/> (Smith: “I am working with my colleague Kenneth Cohen on a small exhibition case that treats the encounter between Wampanoag people and the Separatists (or ‘Pilgrims’) who landed at Patuxet / Plymouth in 1620. The 400th anniversary of that encounter offers an opportunity to revisit and rethink those extraordinary events.”).

⁵⁰⁴ See *NMAH Interpretative Plan*, NMAH (Jan. 2021),

https://americanhistory.si.edu/sites/default/files/NMAH_Interpretive_Plan.pdf, at 2 (noting that “The NMAH Interpretive Plan Committee is: Benjamin Filene and Christopher Wilson (co-chairs), Amanda Bowen, Nigel Briggs,

Barbara Clark-Smith, Jordan Grant, Michael Johnson, Jocelyn Knauf, Magdalena Mieri, Christine Russo, Margaret Salazar-Porzio”).

⁵⁰⁵ Barbara Clark Smith & Caroline Klibanoff, *Made By Us Q&A Series: Barbara Clark Smith*, NMAH (n.d.), <https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/projects/made-by-us/qa> (last accessed Apr. 3, 2026).

⁵⁰⁶ *Id.* Channeling Hartig, Smith also noted that “this anniversary should be a catalyst for increased civic engagement and understanding of our collective history.” *Id.*

⁵⁰⁷ See *National Education Summit: Towards A More Equitable Future (Transcript)*, SMITHSONIAN OUR SHARED FUTURE: RECKONING WITH OUR RACIAL PAST (n.d.),

<https://web.archive.org/web/20240607142320/https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/events/national-education-summit-towards-more-equitable-future#transcript> (last accessed Apr. 25, 2026) (noting that “as part of our Shared Future initiative, we [the Smithsonian] have an initiative that is entitled Reckoning with Our Racial Past.”).

⁵⁰⁸ See Alice George, *Why Museums Are Primed to Address Racism, Inequality in the U.S.*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/why-museums-are-primed-address-racism-inequality-us-180978992/>; *Our Shared Future: 250*, The Smithsonian, <https://www.si.edu/250>; *From ‘Our Divided Nation’ to ‘Our Shared Future’: Museums and the Advancement of Equity and Understanding*, Our Shared Future (Oct. 27, 2021), <https://oursharedfuture.si.edu/events/our-divided-nation-our-shared-future-museums-and-advancement-equity-and-understanding>.

⁵⁰⁹ *Id.*

⁵¹⁰ *Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: Fiscal Year 2023*, THE SMITHSONIAN (2023), https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oema/diir_fy2023.pdf, at 34.

⁵¹¹ *Id.*

⁵¹² Exec. Order No. 14,253, 90 Fed. Reg. 14,563 (Apr. 3, 2025) (Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History).

⁵¹³ *Id.*

⁵¹⁴ *National Museum of American History – Strategic Plan: 2013-2018*, NMAH (2013), https://amhistory.si.edu/docs/nmah_strategicplan_2013.pdf (showing NMAH’s previous mission statement).

⁵¹⁵ See Luskin Center for History and Policy, *Doing History Now Musings on Relevance, Impact, and Service (Anthea Hartig)*, (YouTube, Feb. 25, 2025), <https://youtu.be/WaxpiAFKW8o?t=181> (with Hartig noting that “History as a practice...is for me a prime tool of social justice.”).

⁵¹⁶ Exec. Order No. 13,958, 85 Fed. Reg. 70,951 (Nov. 5, 2020) (Executive Order on Establishing the President’s Advisory 1776 Commission).

⁵¹⁷ *Id.*

⁵¹⁸ David K. Allison & Hannah Peterson, *Exhibiting America: The Smithsonian’s National History Museum, 1881-2018* (Feb. 18, 2021), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-SI-PURL-gpo152991/pdf/GOVPUB-SI-PURL-gpo152991.pdf>, at 50.

⁵¹⁹ *Id.*

⁵²⁰ *Id.* a 54.

⁵²¹ *Id.* at 44.

⁵²² *Id.* at 44-45.