

The Neighborhood History Project



The St. Louis Association of Community Organizations (SLACO) is sponsoring this program in partnership with the Missouri Humanities Council and with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Activating History to Promote Resilient Communities: The Importance of Neighborhood Histories

A neighborhood history is not only a tool for knowing about your community's past. It is the first step in charting your neighborhood's future. SLACO has just received a grant from the Missouri Humanities Council to deliver a series of workshops and individual assistance to neighborhoods interested in undertaking some type of neighborhood history project.

Schedule Overview

Feb. 13 – Mar. 20	Neighborhood Workshops 1 – 6
Mar. 22	RFP Request Release
Apr. 19	RFP Submission
Apr. 29	Two neighborhood finalists announced
May – Aug.	Neighborhood History Assistance
Dec.	Neighborhood History Presentations
March 2020	Presentation on Project Outcomes / Toolkit Launched

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Part I: Neighborhood History Workshops

Part II: Neighborhood History Assistance (2 neighborhoods)

Part III: SLACO Neighborhood Conference / Neighborhood History Toolkit

Part I: Neighborhood History Workshops

February 13 – March 20

Workshop Schedule

Feb. 13

Wed 6:00-7:30

Workshop 1: Neighborhood History: What does it entail?

Michael Allen

Feb 21

Thurs 6:00-7:30

Workshop 2: Gathering Information for Your Neighborhood History: Where to look?

Emily Jaycox

Feb 25

Mon 6:00-7:30

Workshop 3: Analyzing Your Information: What does it mean?

Andrew Hurley

March 4

Mon 6:00-7:30

Workshop 4: Using Your Neighborhood History: How do you maximize its potential impact?

Jasmin Aber

March 14

Thurs 12:00-1:30

Workshop 5: Framing the Key Issues: What is important?

Nini Harris

March 20

Wed 6:00-7:30

Workshop 6: The Writing Process: Where do I start?

Kristine Runberg Smith and Jeffrey Smith

Neighborhood History Workshops

This series of workshops will guide SLACO members through the process of developing a neighborhood history. While for many residents it may simply be a matter of curiosity, a neighborhood history can also be an important tool to help guide decision-making and planning in a neighborhood by providing a clear sense of identity, assets and challenges.

These workshops led by local humanities scholars aim to foster collaborative, community-led neighborhood histories in order to create stronger, more resilient communities. Each session will involve a presentation and hands-on experience on how to develop a neighborhood history.

Workshop 1: Neighborhood History: What does it entail?

Michael Allen

This workshop will present the fundamentals of what constitutes neighborhood history, and how that is distinct from other geographic history as well as from other information about place. Participants will learn foundational methods that distinguish history from other research fields as well as the common ways that historians research and report the histories of neighborhoods. The workshop will include an overview of the types of documentation that is produced by historians, ranging from official historic preservation reports to social media and website projects.

SPEAKER BIO: Michael Allen is a senior lecturer in architecture and landscape architecture and lecturer in American Culture Studies at Washington University in St. Louis. He is also director of Preservation Research Office.

Workshop 2: Gathering Information for Your Neighborhood History: Where to look? *Emily Jaycox*

This workshop will introduce key sources, strategies and locations to use when gathering information about a neighborhood. Whether starting the search in a library or online, it is important to understand the basic “building blocks” that help in exploring a neighborhood’s history – and then where to find them and whether there is an associated cost. This workshop will explain the different types of information that can be found in five key sources of historic neighborhood data sources: city directories, fire insurance maps, plat books, newspapers and the census. The presentation will also provide an overview of three local archival institutions and their sources.

SPEAKER BIO: Emily Jaycox is head librarian at the Missouri Historical Society’s library, where she has been providing research strategy advice and assisting patrons with the use of historic sources for neighborhood and house research since 1989.

Workshop 3: Analyzing Your Information: What does it mean? *Andrew Hurley*

This workshop will focus on strategies to select and analyze historical data that support broader community goals and agenda. In order to interpret historical data, it is important to first identify what the neighborhood wants to accomplish by studying and disseminating local history. This connection between historical questions and community objectives will be explored through recent examples of community-based historical inquiries in St. Louis.

SPEAKER BIO: Andrew Hurley is Professor of History at University of Missouri-St. Louis. His research focuses on the history of the urban environment in both its physical and natural aspects. His current project explores the historical relationship between climate change and urbanization and seeks to engage communities in historically-informed neighborhood planning.

Workshop 4: Using Your Neighborhood History: How do you maximize its potential impact? *Jasmin Aber*

This workshop will present innovative ways neighborhoods can capitalize on their history. Looking at several case studies, the workshop will focus on the role of art and culture in potentially informing and acting as tools to re-envision, redesign, reinvent and rebrand neighborhoods, equitably and strategically. The workshop will build on and cover foundational data collection and analysis methodologies.

SPEAKER BIO: Jasmin Aber is an architect and urbanist. She is the co-founder of the Creative Exchange Lab (CEL), and the director for the Center for Architecture and Design Saint Louis. Her research and practice focus on the role that human capital, creativity, culture, local assets, and technology can play as a catalyst in stimulating urban redevelopment in shrinking cities. Currently, Aber is facilitating the formation of an Art and Cultural District in East St. Louis, with support by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Workshop 5: Framing the Key Issues: What is important?

Nini Harris

This workshop will look at how to organize and prioritize information gathered in the process of researching neighborhood history. Sometimes researching local history is like foraging or scrounging for facts. Other times it requires combing through masses of information. It always demands an almost quixotic search for the truth. The workshop will discuss the importance of letting research findings shape the narrative in determining what is important in a neighborhood's history.

SPEAKERS BIO: Nini Harris is a historian and author of many books on St. Louis, including “Remembering the Gateway Arch,” “A History of Carondelet,” “Holly Hills” and most recently “Downtown St. Louis.” Born, raised and still living in the same South City home, Harris’ love for the city started at a very young age and has continued through to the present. Her research and writing on the history of the Gateway city has been widely recognized. Harris' work focuses on uncovering the history of landmarks and neighborhoods in St. Louis.

Workshop 6: The Writing Process: Where do I start?

Kristine Runberg Smith and Jeffrey Smith

This workshop will explore ways to present neighborhood history to broad audiences in both print and beyond. It will discuss how to identify current and potential audiences for neighborhood history and explore different formats and platforms for sharing a community's heritage and resources. This workshop will be filled with examples, prototypes, and resources to help participants understand the array of tools and ideas for presenting neighborhood history.

SPEAKERS BIOS: **Kris Runberg Smith** is Professor of History at Lindenwood University in St. Charles. She has approached local history as a scholar and as a museum professional, including former Director of Education at the Missouri History Museum. She enjoys the challenges of engaging a broad range of audiences in the rich possibilities of local history. **Jeffrey Smith** is Professor of History at Lindenwood University and editor of *The Confluence*, a regional studies journal in a magazine format. Smith has more than three decades of experience in local history through writing, publications, programs, exhibits, and online tools.

Part II: Neighborhood History Assistance

March 22 – April 29

Neighborhood Assistance Schedule

Feb. 13- Mar. 20	Neighborhood Workshops / Neighborhood RFP Strategy
Mar. 22	RFP Request Release
Apr. 19	RFP Submission
Apr. 29	Two neighborhood finalists announced
May – Aug.	Neighborhood History Assistance
Dec.	Neighborhood History Presentations

Neighborhood Assistance

Following the workshop series, two neighborhoods will be selected through an RFP process to receive additional assistance and a small budget to develop their neighborhood history.

Stay tuned for more information!

Part III: Sharing Project Outcomes

December 2019 – March 2020

Neighborhood History Project

- ❑ Neighborhood History Presentations to Communities
- ❑ Neighborhood History Toolkit Launch
- ❑ SLACO Neighborhood Conference March 2020 – Project Outcomes & Neighborhood History Presentations