

Sources for Alternative Careers for Historians

Compiled by Karen Phoenix

Places to start:

- “Versatile Ph.D.” <http://versatilephd.com/> This is a great resource for community and information about transitioning careers and what sorts of questions to ask when you do informational interviews. You have free access to it if you are a member of the AHA (see: <http://blog.historians.org/news/1813/versatile-phd-the-newest-aha-member-benefit>)
- Beyond Academe (created by Historians for Historians): <http://www.beyondacademe.com/> This is a *wonderful* resource, created by Alexandra Lord.
- The AHA has a good publication *Careers for Students of History*, which is available on-line even without an AHA membership: <http://www.historians.org/pubs/careers/index.htm> . It outlines several different fields: Historians in Classrooms; Historians in Museums; Historians in Editing and Publishing; Historians in Archives; Historians in Historic Preservation; Historians in Federal, State and Local History; and Historians as Consultants and Contractors. Their “Resources” page at the end has links, which I have included below (I have noted them with an ○ bullet point).
- Grad College Career Center: <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/careerservices> This is a great resource, particularly for getting specific advice about your resume (and C.V.) and includes a list of workshops that might be of interest.
- Sellout: A resource for Humanities PhDs Considering Careers Beyond the University: <http://www.ironstring.com/sellout/>

Books of Interest:

Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius, *“So What Are You Going to Do with That?”: Finding Careers Outside Academia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Richard N. Bolles, *What Color Is Your Parachute? 2010: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers* (Ten Speed Press, 2009).

James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia, eds. *Public History: Essays from the Field*. Rev. ed. (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Pub. Co., 2004).

Lois P. Frankel, *Nice Girls Don’t Get the Corner Office: 101 Unconscious Mistakes Women Make That Sabotage Their Careers* (2004).

General Job Search Sites with Multiple Types of Listings

- Inside Higher Ed: <http://www.insidehighered.com/career/seekers>
- Higher Education Jobs: <http://www.higheredjobs.com/>
- Chronicle of Higher Education: <http://chronicle.com/section/Jobs/61/>
- Academic Careers Online: <http://academiccareers.com/index.html>
- USA Jobs: www.usajobs.com is the comprehensive list for jobs with the federal government and armed forces (including consulting jobs). Once you enter your information into the data base, applying is very easy. Some jobs require Knowledge and Skills Assessment (KSAs), which can range from selecting one answer from a list to longer essay questions. Be sure you

look at this: <http://www.usajobs.gov/infocenter/resumetips.asp> for more info on KSAs. In terms of figuring out where you stand on the government scale, I have found this useful: <http://govcentral.monster.com/benefits/articles/1757-what-determines-where-you-stand-on-the-gs-scale#Education>

Teaching in Non-Four-Year Institutions

General Information:

- The [Society for History Education](http://www.csulb.edu/~histeach/) (<http://www.csulb.edu/~histeach/>) is dedicated to promoting the teaching of history at all levels; its quarterly journal, *The History Teacher*, addresses itself to pedagogical issues and techniques of interest to historians.
- [History Matters](#), a special joint project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities at the City University of New York and [George Mason University](#), provides a web site designed for high school and college teachers of U.S. history survey courses that gives additional insight into use of electronic resources in the teaching of history.

Community Colleges:

- The [Community College Humanities Association](http://www.ccha-assoc.org) (<http://www.ccha-assoc.org>) and the [American Association of Community Colleges](http://www.aacc.nche.edu) (<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>) contain more general information about the two-year and community college system in the United States and publish job advertisements for a variety of disciplines, including history.
- California Community Colleges Registry: <http://www.cccregistry.org/jobs/index.aspx> (this is separated into regions, which you can select on the left side of the page). The CCC system is unionized, and the pay scale is very competitive for people with PhDs.

Primary and Secondary Education:

- The [National Council for Social Studies](http://www.socialstudies.org) (<http://www.socialstudies.org>) has chapters or members in every state, the District of Columbia, and many foreign countries. Its local chapters can provide up-to-date information about social studies career opportunities in history and other related disciplines. The National Council for History Education is a national coalition of educators that works to ensure quality history education in classrooms throughout the nation and across all grade levels.
- National Association of Independent Schools <http://www.nais.org/career/index.cfm?ItemNumber=146045&sn.ItemNumber=142458> These are private schools, which do not generally require teachers certification. Job listings are from around the world

Museums

- For some insight from those working in the museum field, consult the essays by Anne Woodhouse, Barbara Franco, and Lonnie Bunch in *Public History: Essays from the Field*. For more information about the scope of museum employment, see the [Museum Job Resources Online](http://www.algonquincollege.com/museum/jobres/index.html) web site (<http://www.algonquincollege.com/museum/jobres/index.html>). The bible for new museum openings is the newsletter of the [American Association of Museums](#), *AVISO*, which is alone worth the price of membership in the association (<http://www.aam-us.org>). Another important organization for museum professionals is the [American Association for State and Local History](http://www.aaslh.org) (<http://www.aaslh.org>).
- The largest museum employers in the United States are the [Smithsonian Institution](http://www.si.edu) (<http://www.si.edu>) and the [National Park Service](http://www.nps.gov) (<http://www.nps.gov>). Both advertise salaried positions as well as volunteer and internship opportunities. Other helpful

publications include *Museum Jobs from A–Z: What They Are, How to Prepare, And Where to Find Them* (G. W. Bates, Batax Museum Publishing, 1994) and *1999–2000 Guide to Museum Studies and Training in the United States, Resource Report* (American Association of Museums, 1999). [The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works](http://aic.stanford.edu/) (<http://aic.stanford.edu/>) is another good resource for those considering the field.

- Public History Resource Center: <http://www.publichistory.org/> They have a job listserv that sends out a digest of new postings every two weeks.
- Museum Jobs.com: <http://www.museumjobs.com/us/> is “The Jobsite for Museums, Galleries, Libraries & Archives.” Viewing the job announcements requires that you log in as a jobseeker.

Editing and Publishing

- For general introductory material, consult the essays by Candace Falk and Daniel Greer in *Public History: Essays from the Field*. A general introduction to the topic of documentary editing can be found in Mary-Jo Kline’s *A Guide to Documentary Editing* (2nd ed., Johns Hopkins, 1998). For information on a variety of subjects relating to editing, consult the bibliography compiled by Beth Luey in *Editing Documents and Texts* (Madison House Publishers, 1990) and Michael E. Stevens and Steven B. Burg’s *Editing Historical Documents: A Handbook of Practice* (Alta Mira Press, 1997).
- The professional association for documentary editors is the [Association for Documentary Editing](http://etext.virginia.edu/ade) (<http://etext.virginia.edu/ade>). Its quarterly journal, *Documentary Editing*, reviews recently published editions as well as available jobs in the field. Announcements may also be found in *Perspectives* and the *OAH Newsletter*.
- For documentary editing in an electronic format, view the examples at the [Model Editions Partnership](http://adh.sc.edu) (<http://adh.sc.edu>). For publishing, check out the [Association of American Publishers](http://www.publishers.org) (<http://www.publishers.org>), [Association of American University Presses](http://aaupnet.org) (<http://aaupnet.org>), and [Society for Scholarly Publishing](http://www.sspnet.org) (<http://www.sspnet.org>). The latter also offers several continuing education workshops throughout the year. Publishers and presses are listed in *Literary Marketplace* (published annually by R. R. Bowker). Job listings for editors can be found in [Publishers Weekly](http://www.publishersweekly.com) (<http://www.publishersweekly.com>).

Archives

- For general introductory material beyond what is given in this chapter, consult the essays by Roy Tryon and Deborah Newman Ham in *Public History: Essays from the Field*. The national organization for archivists is the [Society of American Archivists](http://www.archivists.org) (<http://www.archivists.org>), which publishes *American Archivist*, a biannual scholarly journal; *Archival Outlook*, a bimonthly magazine that includes recent events and job listings; and a wide variety of manuals and monographs. Its web site includes more introductory material on archives, information on continuing education, and a list of schools that offer archival programs, as well as links to regional and state archival associations. Those interested in an introductory look at the archival profession will want to check out the *Archival Fundamentals Series*, a multi-volume set that explores many aspects of archival work.
- The [American Library Association](http://www.ala.org) (<http://www.ala.org>) accredits schools offering library science degrees, and maintains a list of such schools across the nation, in addition to a wealth of additional information for librarians and information managers. The [Academy of Certified](http://www.academyofcertified.com)

Archivists' web site (<http://www.certifiedarchivists.org>) describes the steps necessary for the certification process and the benefits of certification. The web site of the Institute of Certified Records Managers (<http://www.icrm.org>) provides a similar service for records managers.

- The National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (<http://www.nagara.org>) serves the needs of archivists and records managers who work for local, state, and national archives. Its web site includes links to member organizations, which may have job opportunities available.
- Those interested in corporations should also see *Corporate Archives and History: Making the Past Work*, edited by Arnita A. Jones and Philip L. Cantelon (Krieger Publishing Company, 1993).

Historic Preservation

- For a good overview of the field see articles by George W. McDaniel and Antoinette J. Lee in *Public History: Essays from the Field*. CRM, the monthly National Park Service publication that serves as a forum for national, state, and local preservation institutions, is one of the best methods for getting a picture of the types of people and the kinds of work that make up the field of cultural resource management. It is available in both paper and digital versions (<http://www.cr.nps.gov/crm>). For information on the National Park Service's abundant source of training opportunities offered in CRM fields, see <http://www.cr.nps.gov/training.htm>. This site offers information on such subjects as internships, disaster training, and preservation seminars. A number of excellent training opportunities can also be found at the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training site (<http://www.ncptt.nps.gov>). The National Trust for Historic Preservation (<http://www.preservationnation.org/>) maintains an excellent site that contains information on training opportunities, national programs, recent preservation activities, and, on its membership "Forum" site, a listing of job opportunities.
- The National Trust also produces the *Preservation Yellow Pages*, edited by Julie Zagars (Wiley & Sons, 1997), an excellent source of information on CRM, including a wealth of contact information and summaries of federal standards and regulations. Additional job openings can be found in the AASLH's *Dispatch*.
- National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers: <http://www.ncshpo.org/> See particularly the "Professional Development" section: <http://www.ncshpo.org/professional/index.htm>

Federal, State and Local History

- For history within the federal government, consult the essays by Sylvia Kraemer and Jesse Stiller in *Public History: Essays from the Field*. The federal government makes current job listings available online at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/index.htm>. Most jobs of interest will be listed under category GS-0170, "Historian." Individual jobs will have their own requirements, and information at the same web site will explain the process for applying for federal employment. Those interested in working for the National Park Service will want to consult <http://www.nps.gov/personnel/> for available careers.
- Historians are employed by the government in agencies such as the Senate Historical Office (http://www.senate.gov/learning/learn_history_about.html), Naval Historical Center (<http://www.history.navy.mil>), and Department of State Office of the Historian (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/>). Individual states may make job listings available online or

through a state personnel office. Your college's career counselor should know how to access this information for your state. The professional organization for historians employed in the federal government is the [Society for History in the Federal Government](http://www.shfg.org) (<http://www.shfg.org>). The organization serves as an advocate for federal historians. It also publishes a *Directory of Federal Historical Programs and Activities*, which lists addresses for all federal agency history offices.

- The [American Association for State and Local History](http://www.aaslh.org) (<http://www.aaslh.org>) is the main organization for state and local historical institutions in the United States. The association's monthly newsletter, *Dispatch*, is published in print and online, with job listings and information of importance to the community. The association also sponsors a yearly conference for continuing education and lists other continuing education opportunities on the web site, and its *Directory of Historical Organizations* lists thousands of state and local history organizations, and can be an excellent resource if you are looking for volunteer work, internships, or just want a sense of the variety of positions available.
- For further information, see Carol Kammen's book *On Doing Local History* (AASLH, 1986), which provides a good introduction to the field of local history. Kammen has also recently edited a volume of useful essays in *The Pursuit of Local History* (AltaMira, 1996). You may also want to consult Robert Patterson's essay in *Public History: Essays from the Field*.
- Jobs with the NPS: see www.usajobs.org.
- Victoria A. Harden's Article: "What Do Federal Historians Do?"
<http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/issues/1999/9905/9905pub4.cfm>

Other Work in Academia

- You can check the listings on the general academic job boards (at the top of the handout).
- The Higher Education Recruiting Consortia were created in order to help dual-academic career couples find jobs in many of the larger cities in the U.S. They are compendiums of job listings for schools in that given area, and have to be searched by the individual city or region.
 - National: http://www.hercjobs.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=793
 - New England: http://www.newenglandherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=660
 - Metro New York & Southern Connecticut:
http://www.mnyscherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=672
 - Upstate New York: http://www.unyherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=671
 - New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware:
http://www.njepadeherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=685
 - Mid-Atlantic: http://www.midatlanticherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=4076
 - Upper Midwest: http://www.uppermidwestherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=4166
 - Greater Chicago: http://www.gcherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=1684
 - Michigan: http://www.michiganherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=1915
 - St. Louis: http://www.stlrherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=1916
 - Northern California: http://www.norcalherc.org/c/search.cfm?site_id=730
 - Southern California: http://www.socalherc.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=761
- National Academic Advising Association:
<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/PositionAnnouncements/index.htm> Positions are listed by region. We have a lot of student advising experiences, although there are some important key words

to be sure you include in cover letters. You may find the following useful:

<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/AboutNACADA/index.htm>

Jobs with NGOs in the U.S. and abroad

As specialists in the history of different geographic areas, we are uniquely placed to offer insight to a variety of organizations that work with people in those areas.

General:

- U.S. Department of State: <http://www.state.gov/p/io/empl/>
- Idealist.org, a compendium of volunteer and job listings: <http://www.idealist.org/>
- Council on Foundations:
<http://www.cof.org/programsandservices/jobs/index.cfm?navItemNumber=14858>
- Opportunity Knocks: <http://www.opportunityknocks.org/>
- Philanthropy News Digest: <http://foundationcenter.org/pnd/jobs/>
- Foreign Affairs Job Board: <http://jobs.foreignaffairs.com/default.asp>
- Foreign Affairs Online: <http://people.virginia.edu/~rjb3v/rjb.html> This is a useful place to start for foreign affairs jobs because it covers a variety of types of organizations including: U.S. Government; Foreign States; UN; NGOs and IGOs; International Law; Human Rights; International Relations; Think Tanks; and Digital Divides (digital information and the internet)
- Academic jobs in the EU: <http://www.academicjobseu.com/>

International Non-Governmental Organizations

- The United Nations: <https://jobs.un.org/Galaxy/Release3/Vacancy/Vacancy.aspx>
 - Salaries, classifications, etc. that are specific to the U.N.:
http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/salaries_allowances/salary.htm
- Ford Foundation: <http://www.fordfound.org/employment>
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/jobs/Pages/job-search.aspx>
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland, but job listings include other locations):
<http://www.ifrc.org/jobs/geneva.asp>

International Studies and Foreign Relations Think Tanks:

- Kellogg Institute for International Studies: <http://kellogg.nd.edu/about/employment.shtml>
- Foreign Policy Research Institute, Directory of Security and International Affairs Think Tanks: <http://www.fpri.org/research/thinktanks/directory/about.html>

Historians as Consultants and Contractors

- The perspective of the active historical consultant can be found in essays by Philip Cantelon and Janelle Warren-Findley in *Public History: Essays from the Field*. Also see the [Directory of Historical Consultants](http://www.ncph.org/consultants.htm) produced by the National Council on Public History at <http://www.ncph.org/consultants.htm>. One of the best sources for general information in the area of historic preservation is the web site of the [Association of Cultural Resource Agencies](http://www.acra-crm.org) (<http://www.acra-crm.org>). This web site lists consultants by type, offers summer jobs and internships, and provides contact information for its member institutions and independent consultants. It may be helpful to contact some of these agencies and individuals in order to get more specific information about career opportunities in the field. Some of the larger historical firms in the country are [The History Factory](#) in Chantilly, Virginia

(<http://www.historyfactory.com>); [History Associates](http://www.historyassociates.com) in Rockville, Maryland (<http://www.historyassociates.com>); [Historical Research Associates](http://www.hrassoc.com) (<http://www.hrassoc.com>); and [PHR Environmental Consultants](http://www.a2s-phr.com) (www.a2s-phr.com), now part of [The IT Group](http://www.theitgroup.com) (<http://www.theitgroup.com>). These sites give good examples of some specific work done by contract historians, and also include a number of useful links and contacts. For an example of some of the Requests for Proposals submitted by federal agencies, try the [Commerce Business Daily](http://cbd.savvy.com/) site at <http://cbd.savvy.com/>.

Job Transition Sites (from a handout by the UIUC Graduate College Career Services Office)

- The Riley Guide <http://www.rileyguide.com/> a comprehensive site for transitioning to other types of jobs. The tab “Career Research Center” has charts of Job Salaries, Growth, and Education Data
- The Vault: <http://www.vault.com/wps/portal/usa> has a lot of resources. Membership is required for some of them, but the basic membership is free.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics “Occupational Outlook Handbook” <http://www.bls.gov/OCO/>