



American History Workshop
588 Seventh Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215

American History Workshop produces public programs to connect Americans with their past. Among our clients are museums, historical societies, historic districts, parks and gardens, filmmakers, public agencies, businesses, citizens' groups, television stations, and others involved in interpreting history.

We produce: full development plans for young or growing museums; collections production of multi-media management and public program evaluations; script design

and technical presentations; interpretive exhibits and educational programs; evaluations of public programs; guidebooks, catalogues, local histories and other publications; and historical research reports in American politics and society, business and labor, families and communities, ethnic groups, cities and regions, and the development of art and architecture.

Point of View

The interpretive arts — storytelling, theater, exhibitry — connect people to ideas and images that enrich their lives. When the subject matter is historical, interpretation ought to let people understand that the traditions of space, time, objects, and social processes are alive in their own minds. History isn't told so that minds can be furnished with the places, names, and dates of battles. It is told so that we can learn how modern life is rooted in the past. The history we tell is an honest one, unvarnished by boosterism or by

nostalgia for a doubtfully golden age. We strive to locate and depict the human issues — the passions and the actions — of each generation of Americans that speak most forcefully to our own age. We especially want to recover the forgotten voices in the American past, and to show that life in the most ordinary circumstances and the most local places can be connected to the larger stories of the American people.

The Work Process

We are often called when an organization has seen the possibility for growth, or when it wants to connect itself more strongly to its community of visitors, viewers, or supporters. Moments like these are important occasions in the histories of organizations, and they often result in innovative work, new methods of inquiry, and new modes of interpretation. We begin each project by assembling members of our staff, scholars, and technical consultants whose skills and

experience particularly qualify us to understand the challenges of the work. The client's own leadership is essential to the collaborative process. We do not wish to duplicate skills the institution already has, but rather to form a capable task force to define problems and solutions, and shape programs that can be funded, built, and maintained within the resources of the institution.

American History Workshop projects always include a plan for proceeding. If the scope of our collaborative work does not include day-to-day involvement to the completion of the program, we leave the organization with a clear idea of what it can do the next week, and the next month, to make the vision real.



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RICHARD RABINOWITZ

Biographical

Richard Rabinowitz is one of the leading public historians in the United States, with over 50 years of experience in creating new museums and exhibitions on every aspect of American history and culture.

As founder and president since 1980 of AMERICAN HISTORY WORKSHOP, Dr. Rabinowitz has led the creative work of scholars, curators, educators, artists, architects, designers, and institutional planners in fashioning over 500 successful and innovative history programs at sites like the New-York Historical Society, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York; the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute; the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati; and state heritage parks and local and regional historical societies in 33 states and the District of Columbia.

He has organized exhibitions and media presentations on immigration and ethnic community histories in Seattle, Tucson, and Wheeling; on urban and suburban development in Boston, Phoenix, Portland, Chicago, and Albany; on legal and constitutional history in Philadelphia; on the encounter of natives and newcomers in Ogalala and Spokane; and on American popular culture in Orlando and New York; among many others.

Over the course of seven years, from 2005 to 2012, Dr. Rabinowitz served as senior project historian for the New-York Historical Society. During that time, he curated and wrote six enormously successful blockbuster exhibitions at N-YHS: *Slavery in New York*; *New York Divided: Slavery and the Civil War*; *French Founding Father: Lafayette Returns to Washington's America*; *Grant and Lee* (co-curator); *Lincoln and New York*; and *Revolution! The Atlantic World Reborn*. Each incorporated new research, new ways of interpreting the material evidence of the American past, and new methods of interactive design and pedagogy. His article, "Eavesdropping at the Well: Interpretive Media in the Slavery in New York Exhibition," published in *The Public Historian* (August 2013), was awarded the G. Wesley Johnson Award of the National Council on Public History for 2013.

In addition, in 2010-2011, Dr. Rabinowitz led the content and interpretive development of the "Slavery and Freedom" gallery at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington.



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A scholar of American social and religious history, Dr. Rabinowitz has taught at Harvard, Skidmore, and Scripps colleges, and lectured and led seminars at dozens of universities and museums around the United States. His book, *The Spiritual Self in Everyday Life: The Transformation of Personal Religious Experience in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Northeastern University Press, 1989), has been recognized as a “subtle and thoughtful analysis of what it has meant to be religious in America.” His second book, *Curating America: Journeys through the Storyscapes of the American Part* (University of North Carolina Press, 2016) traced the evolution of his approach to experiential learning, public scholarship about local and global history, and the links of cultural institutions to their communities. His most recent book, *Objects of Love and Regret: A Brooklyn Story* (Harvard University Press, 2022), is a pathbreaking rendering of one family’s American experience over a century, built on the exploration of a dozen objects of ordinary life. He has also written historical books and articles for children and for museum professionals.

He began his professional career, from 1967 to 1975, at Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, where he led the development of an innovative hands-on learning program that has had enormous influence in the museum education field. From 1977 to 1980 he served as a special assistant to the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities on policy and program development.

Dr. Rabinowitz has been active in professional service. For five years, he initiated and directed the New York Institute for Public History Interpretation, a two-week-long seminar on interpretive philosophies and methods for mid-career professionals. He has served on numerous boards and advisory committees and on the editorial boards of *The American Quarterly* and *The Public Historian*. He chaired the program committee of the board of the Museum at the Eldridge Street Synagogue in New York City for many years. He co-chaired the Working Group on Slavery and Public History at the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale.

He has won awards in museum and exhibit planning from the American Association for State and Local History, the New York City Landmarks Conservancy, the Civil War Roundtable of New York City, and the Victorian Society of New York; for film and multi-image work from the New York Association for Multi-Image and the International Film & TV Festival of New York; for educational media from the Houston International Film Festival; for historical scholarship



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from the American Society of Church History, the Danforth Foundation, and many others; and for historic preservation work from the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. He was elected a Member of the American Antiquarian Society in 2003, and to the Council of the Society in 2010. He was also elected a Member of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 2017. He has been awarded research fellowships by Yale's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition in 2012, by the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, Australia in 2014, and by the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 2017.

Dr. Rabinowitz was awarded the 2012 Herbert Feis Award by the American Historical Association for his distinguished contributions to public history. In 2015-2016, he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in the Humanities.

Education: A.B., *summa cum laude*, Harvard College, 1966. Ph.D., History of American Civilization, Harvard University, 1977.



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LYNDA B. KAPLAN

Biographical

Lynda B. Kaplan is a media producer and exhibition planner with a special interest in bringing narratives to life. As a documentary film and video producer and director she has organized corporate communication campaigns, produced fundraising films, and managed the research and writing for news and information programming. As an exhibition planner she has worked in collaboration with teams of designers and interpretive researchers to tell stories that engage and expand public understanding of historic issues.

As a principal at AMERICAN HISTORY WORKSHOP for over twenty years, Ms. Kaplan served as Co-Curator, Project Manager, and Media Producer for six pathbreaking exhibitions at the New-York Historical Society in 2005-11: *Slavery in New York*; *New York Divided: Slavery and the Civil War*; *French Founding Father: Lafayette's Return to Washington's America*; *Grant and Lee*; *Lincoln and New York*; and *Revolution! The Atlantic World Reborn*. In Ms. Kaplan's work with interpretive media on these exhibits, including original videos and interactives, she promoted the use of audio installations to assist with storytelling. A significant challenge in the exhibit work to date has been how to give voice to the voiceless — how to provide insight into the experience of those who historically had no power to create their own documentary records.

As a principal at American History Workshop, Ms. Kaplan was the project director for AHW's prototype digital history project, *Telling Lives*. Installed at the New-York Historical Society for five years, the model software and hardware collected over 10,000 video responses to AHW's exhibitions.

Among other curatorial and media projects for AHW were interpretive exhibitions at the Arizona Historical Society in Tempe; and at Chesterwood in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. In New York City, Ms. Kaplan helped create the *Constitution Works* program at Federal Hall. She also produced *People Make Parks*, an interactive exhibition at the Municipal Art Society; thematic exhibits for the Luce Center for the Study of American Culture at the New-York Historical Society; and audio interpretive elements at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum.



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Ms. Kaplan produced and directed a documentary film, *Du Bois in Our Time*, for the University Museum of Contemporary Art at UMASS, Amherst, which received two film festival awards, and a video for the Mellon Foundation, *Our Compelling Interests*, which accompanied an initiative about diversity in democracy.

Ms. Kaplan worked for several years in theatrical management before she began working in film and video. She was an associate producer for two Emmy award-winning programs at WCBS-TV. She also worked at ABC's *Good Morning America* both as a researcher and field producer. Her film work in the corporate world includes film projects for *The Wall Street Journal*, International Paper Company, The Girl Scouts of America, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and Ogilvy & Mather Advertising, among others. Before joining American History Workshop, Ms. Kaplan was a researcher for several PBS programs and served as Producer / Director for *Adam Smith's Money World* on PBS.

Education: B.A., Speech and Theater, University of Illinois.



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SELECTED PROJECTS

Interpretive and Operational Plans

James J. Hill House, Minnesota Historical Society, 1980-81

Fall River (MA) State Heritage Park, 1980-81

Piscataqua Regional Interpretive Project (NH, ME), Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1980-81

Higgins Armory Museum, Worcester (MA), 1982-84

American Museum of the Moving Image, NYC, 1982-85

Massachusetts State Archives Museum, Boston, 1983-85

National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., 1983

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., 1983

Mütter Museum, Philadelphia, 1984-86

Albany (NY) Urban Cultural Park, 1985-87

Lower East Side Tenement Museum, NYC, 1987-98

Birmingham (AL) Civil Rights Institute, 1987

Ropewalk Museum, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities,
Boston, 1988-89

Arizona Historical Society, Tempe, 1989-96

Arnold Arboretum, Boston, 1991-94

Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, WA, 1992-93

Allegheny Ridge State Heritage Park, PA, 1993-94



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Interpretive and Operational Plans, continued

Orange County Historical Society, Orlando, FL, 1993-95

Wheeling (WV) National Heritage Area, 1993-94

Gardens in Human Culture, New York Botanic Garden, 1994-95

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Cincinnati, 1995-2000

New-York Historical Society, Luce Center for the Study of American Culture, 1998-2000

International Museum of African American History, Charleston, SC, 2000-03

Historical Exhibitions and Multi-Media Presentations

"12 Elm Street" Orientation Program, National Museum of American History,
Washington, 1980-82

"The South Street Experience," South Street Seaport Museum, 1982-83

"Family Album," Broome County (NY) Immigration History Project, 1982-83

"The Rim of Empire," Colonial Monterey (CA), 1984

"Miracle at Philadelphia," The Bicentennial Exhibition on the US Federal Constitutional
Convention, Independence National Historical Park, 1984-86

"Providence Visionaries," Providence, RI, 1985-86

"Breaking Traditions: Portland," Oregon Historical Society, 1994

"Salmon Stakes," Seattle Museum of History and Industry, 1995

"Slavery and Freedom" core exhibition, National Museum of African American History
and Culture, Washington, 2010-2011



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Historical Exhibitions and Multi-Media Presentations, continued

In 2005-11, AHW curated, wrote, and produced the following exhibitions for the New-York Historical Society: "Slavery in New York" (2005); "New York Divided: Slavery and the Civil War" (2006); "French Founding Father: Lafayette Returns to Washington's America" (2007); "Grant and Lee" (2008); "Lincoln and New York" (2009); "Revolution! The Atlantic World Reborn" (2011-12).

Urban Design and Outdoor Interpretive Elements

NYC Harbor Park, 1985

Historic St. Mary's City, MD, 1993

Illinois and Michigan Canal Corridor, Chicago, 1997-99

Origins Park, Chicago, 1999

Boston Wharf District Park, North End Parks, Rose Kennedy Greenway,
Boston, 2004-05