Making Space for Women's History

The Digital-Material Rhetoric of the National Women's History (Cyber)Museum

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved March 2017 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2017

ABSTRACT

The struggle of the National Women's History Museum (NWHM) to make space for women's history in U.S. culture is in important ways emblematic of the struggle for recognition and status of American women as a whole. Working at the intersections of digital-material memory production and using the NWHM as a focus, this dissertation examines the significance of the varied strategies used by and contexts among which the NWHM negotiates for digital, material, and rhetorical space within U.S. public memory production. As a "cybermuseum," the NWHM functions within national public memory production at the intersections of material and digital culture; yet as an activist institution in search of a permanent, physical "home" for women's history, the NWHM also counterproductively reifies existing gendered norms that make such an achievement difficult.

By examining selected aspects of this complexly situated entity, this dissertation makes visible the gendered nature of public memory production, the digital and material components of that production, and the hybrid nature of emerging public memory entities which operate simultaneously in multiple spheres. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach and guided by Carole Blair's work on rhetorical materiality, this dissertation explores key aspects of the NWHM's process of becoming, including an examination of the centrality of the interpellation of publics to the rhetorical materiality of public discourse; an analysis of the material state of public memory production in national history museums in the U.S.; and an exploration of the embodied engagement that undergirds all interaction with and presentation of historical artifacts and narratives, whether digital, physical, or both at once. In a synthesis of findings, this dissertation describes a set of key

characteristics through which certain hybrid digital-material entities (including the NWHM) enact increasingly complex variations of rhetorical agency. These characteristics suggest a need for a more flexible analytic framework, described in the final chapter. This framework takes shape as an heuristic of functions across which digital-material entities always already enact a situated, active, embodied, and simultaneous agency, one that can account fully for the rhetorical processes through which space is "made" for women in U.S. public memory.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to my committee for their continued support and encouragement: Dr. Maureen Goggin, my committee chair; Dr. Shirley Rose; and Dr. Elenore Long. My most sincere thanks to them for helping me step into the unknown and thrive.

I also want to thank my children, who remain an infinite source of inspiration and motivation. Uncomplaining, they have endured the upheavals of graduate school life with resilience and humor, and kept me going in ways they might never know. I am also thankful for my parents, who never gave voice to the misgivings they no doubt felt. Their love and support has never wavered.

Finally, I would like to thank the Writing Programs staff and my peers and colleagues at Arizona State University. I have gained much by being a member of such an extraordinary academic community.

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INTRODUCTION: DIGITAL-MATERIAL MEMORYSCAPES

Anna Julia Cooper "believed that the nation should see, nurture, and honor all of its human potential, including the potential of women, because she believed that this equity brought balance and clarity to the world and to our capacity to make it a better place" (Royster and Kirsch, 68). As admirable as these sentiments are, they indicate a deficiency in the visibility and veneration of (particularly women's) potential in the United States that remains problematic to this day: equal space is not automatically granted to all comers in our national narratives, memory sites, and commemorative practices. Instead, an exclusive few hold the national spotlight while the histories of women, people of color, and other historically marginalized groups are relegated to the margins, if they are acknowledged at all. Such practices have led to the absence of an accessible and usable past that supports notions of (in this case) women's value, contributions, and achievements and thus, by extension, to the devaluing of women more generally across popular media and among the general public.

Given the rarity and exclusivity of officially sanctioned "space," proponents of a more accessible women's history have recognized a need to make their own spaces via rhetorical, material and digital means. This dissertation centers one organization active in such making, the National Women's History Museum (NWHM), in an effort to more fully investigate the consequentiality of doing so. Implicated in social, cultural, and political asymmetries of power, and part of the foundations from which collective understandings of citizenship, identity, and sociopolitical status arise, organizations such as the NWHM aspire to enact a complex and substantial rhetorical agency and enact

widespread, paradigmatic shifts in national historical narratives. Due to the potential impact of these aspirations, such agency requires meticulous re-examination. The agency currently enacted by the NWHM operates at the center of rhetorical functions that span discourse, media, and physical and digital space, necessitating an interdisciplinary approach to investigation. Bringing together scholarly strands from history, museum studies, computer science, feminist theory, archaeology, the digital humanities, rhetorical studies, and in particular, digital and material rhetorical theory, I organized and conducted a series of three "multivariant and polylogical" rhetorical analyses (Royster and Kirsch 90) designed to examine particularly salient aspects of the NWHM's rhetorical agency.

The chapters that follow describe these aspects via an examination of the discourse generated by and about the National Women's History Museum's push for an approved building site on the National Mall, selected exhibits from the National Museum of American History, and selected exhibits from the National Women's History Museum's digital museum and its corresponding website. Working across digital and material platforms, these chapters explore the significance of the relationships among a nascent counter-museum and supportive publics, the presence of women in current national history museum space, and the affordances and constraints of the "cyber" museum. The insights gleaned from these investigations converge in the final chapter, which describes in more detail the defining characteristics of complex and multimodal entities like the NWHM and outlines the functionality of a theoretical framework capable of accounting for the same. By considering the typically exclusive spheres of the digital

and the material together, my research makes visible the interpenetration of digital and material artifacts in our contemporary processes of public memory production.

In this chapter, I introduce the National Women's History Museum and the cultural and historical narratives in which it is currently embroiled. My initial research on the emergence and rhetorical interaction of the NWHM produced a series of research questions which are detailed, below, questions that provided the organizing core of this project. After a brief discussion of the guiding rhetorical theories used to focus my investigation, I provide a review of some of the scholarship I have found most relevant to my investigation. I conclude with a brief summary of each chapter, laying the groundwork to support the foci and methods employed in each.

History, Publics, Space

By and large, Americans do not know their own history. In a recent poll, the majority of college students at Texas Tech University were unable to provide correct answers to such fundamental questions as "Who did we gain our independence from?" and "Who won the Civil War?" Perhaps this is unsurprising, given the fact that the 2014 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report found that roughly 18 percent of 8th graders tested at or above proficiency in U.S. History (Naseem). As museum scholar Mike Wallace has observed, most Americans "know relatively little about their past and have an underdeveloped sense of how history happens" (160). This is not due to a lack of intelligence or interest, Wallace is careful to note, but rather symptomatic of encounters with cultural institutions, including museums, that contribute to an "impoverished historical consciousness," diminishing the public's ability to find relevance in the exhibits and narratives on display (160). Efforts to create more diverse

and inclusive monuments and museum exhibits has been met with strong resistance. For example, in 1994 the Smithsonian planned to exhibit the Enola Gay, the B-29 bomber tasked with dropping a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima during World War II. Attempting to contextualize the airplane, curators prepared narratives describing the artifact's role, the aftermath of the bomb, and the postwar nuclear race that followed. After receiving heavy criticism from veterans groups and members of Congress, the exhibit was altered to omit all mention of the destruction and loss of life in which the plane was implicated (Linenthal and Engelhardt).

For some, this lack of relevance (and information) is further exacerbated by exclusion from or misrepresentation in those same cultural institutions. For example, despite comprising roughly fifty percent of the nation's population, women are rarely included in national historical museum exhibits, and when they are present, tend to be notable for accomplishments overtly domestic in nature. Institutions or other commemorative places focusing solely on women are equally scarce: of the thousands of historical landmarks in the United States, "[l]ess than 4 percent of National Park cultural sites and less than 5 percent of all National Historic Landmarks focus primarily on women" (Sherr and Kazickas x). While the academic discipline of Women's History has been instrumental in addressing the imbalance of historical accounts themselves, this wealth of information rarely seems to find its way out of the discipline's scholarship and into mainstream representations of our nation's past. While many historians argue that mainstream distribution is at best a secondary concern, the exclusion of women's contributions and experiences from the national narrative has had an indelible effect on the gendered nature of public memory production in the United States. Missing from

public memory, women find themselves without encouragement to engage in certain areas of public life. To a significant degree, women are routinely excluded from public forums and political arenas in which their lives and bodies are debated, legislated, and regulated. Activists discover that an entire history of women's advocacy has been withheld from them; business students may realize, too late, that the histories of enterprising women who have gone before them have been left out of their textbooks and, perhaps, shaped the possibilities they envision for future careers. The exclusion of women from public commemoration is then regularly justified by the lack of contributions recorded in these partisan histories.

Responding to the situation, a small group of activists and legislators successfully convinced Congress in 1996 to allow them to move a granite monument featuring Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony back to the site of its original installation in the rotunda of the United States Capitol building. For seventy-five years, the Portrait Monument had been sitting in the U.S. Capitol Crypt, defaced and unlabeled, moved there in 1920 shortly after its unveiling as part of the celebration of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

The successful restoration of the Portrait Monument in the rotunda marks the beginning of the National Women's History Museum (NWHM), a "nonpartisan, nonprofit educational institution dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and celebrating the diverse historic contributions of women, and integrating this rich heritage fully into our nation's history" (NWHM.org, "About Us"). For the NWHM, this integration will only happen when a women's history museum is constructed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. According to rhetorical scholar Megan Irene Fitzmaurice, "[b]y

maintaining property ownership as their ultimate goal," the organization "arguably reifies the privilege of material memory sites" and insinuates that in its present form, as a "cybermuseum," the organization "insinuates that the cybermuseum is either not effective enough on its own, or less prestigious than traditional places of memory" (522). In its digital displays, the NWHM website offers viewers a glimpse into women's national efforts as "spies, soldiers, entrepreneurs, and labor activists," complicating "traditional ideas of gender and citizenship" (521). It is situated as a corrective to existing national historical narratives, offering a view of women and women's contributions to their nation as a rich and varied tradition upon which women today can draw for inspiration and strength. "Indeed," argues Fitzmaurice, "the NWHM's digital exhibits rhetorically expand 'what' and 'whose' historical contributions are deemed worthy of public commemoration" (521).

In one sense, then, from its inception the aim of the NWHM has been to "make space" for women's history. Like the field of women's history more generally, the NWHM aspires to correct androcentric accounts of history that focus on business and politics and military conquest, all areas of collective life from which women were effectively barred until relatively recently. Such narratives inform collective understandings of citizenship, civic identity, and public participation; such narratives also guide the selection and presentation of the materials we use to educate and socialize ourselves and future generations into a particular mode of collective life. Although by far not the only group to experience marginalization, fetishization, or outright exclusion, feminist activists, scholars and women's historians have been among the most determined

to directly challenge these narratives and create a rich and visible past for their peers and successors.

For this reason, the status and the ongoing struggle of the NWHM to make women's history visible is in important ways emblematic of the larger struggle to gain visibility for women's leadership, achievements, and civic, cultural, and economic contributions – past, present and future. As a growing number of scholars have convincingly shown, women have always worked alongside men in political and cultural projects large and small, from grassroots organizing seeking to improve the material circumstances of particular groups to sweeping regional or national paradigm shifts concerning notions of and relationships to government, citizenship, and civil and cultural status. As effective organizers and active contributors, women have significantly shaped the national past as they made and recorded and commemorated the histories of their families, their communities, their regions and their nation.

Yet as scholars in diverse fields have also realized, contribution and participation do not automatically equate to veneration, commemoration, or citation in history narratives, not to mention representation in popular cultural media. For this reason, space must be "made" for women's history if it is to become an integral part of our national past, and the NWHM is one organization whose declared mission is to secure a permanent place for it on the most venerated, perhaps even most sacred, location in the United States: the National Mall. Despite this admirable goal, however, Fitzmaurice cautions that the seemingly innocuous political and material goals of the NWHM in effect "cast[…]s the cybermuseum, and the women who have willingly shared their stories for its circulation, into a second-class commemorative status" (522). The apparent

contradiction between their digital inclusivity and participatory approach to museum exhibits and their organization's drive for material legitimacy and presence on the National Mall creates an opportunity for a rhetorical study able to engage with and challenge existing boundaries around the material and the digital.

Rarely does the opportunity to study a complex, inherently rhetorical agent like an emergent feminist museum arise; as a modern feminist project, the NWHM is complexly rhetorical as it advocates for existence, identity, permanence, and official sanction. Situated at the intersections of public policy, public memory, material culture, memorial culture, and newly ubiquitous digital culture, the National Women's History Museum is implicated in matters of representation, gender and racial equality, systems of power, and the asymmetries of social, cultural and political logics in the United States. This complexity presents a number of difficulties to the researcher, who must choose carefully among the many possible approaches to investigation. For the purposes of this dissertation, I selected three particular aspects of the NWHM – public discourse, museum representation, and its cybermuseum – and explored them by asking a series of four related questions:

- How is space "made" – rhetorically, digitally, and materially – for women's history in the United States? Why is this necessary?
- What does a material-digital rhetorical analysis of national history museums and their corresponding museum websites reveal about the consequentiality of digital-material commemorative space?
- In what ways can we understand the rhetorical agency of the National Women's History Museum? Of national history museums in the United States in general?

- How do understandings of this agency inform other aspects of digital-material life in the U.S.?

To maintain the integrity of each chapter's case study, these questions are fully but subtly explored across the breadth of this dissertation and then more specifically taken up in the final chapter, where a detailed discussion of the insights each study has raised can be found.

Guiding Framework

In asking questions about space and space-making, agency, and the affordances of digital and material rhetorical theory, my goal is to produce not only a clear view of the rhetorical processes in which the NWHM is itself entangled but to begin to formulate a theoretical framework capable of accounting for the kind of complexity that surrounds entities that function across diverse spheres. Royster and Kirsch argue that feminist rhetorical inquiry can and often does require "combining various inquiry mechanisms," a range of tools which "facilitate the interrogation and interpretation of a wider variety of rhetorical contexts and performances that we have in the past" (43). As an overtly feminist project, this dissertation is informed by a wide range of scholarship, organized through an adaptation of the analytic framework first outlined by Carole Blair in her analysis of memorial sites. Blair's framework takes shape around five analytic questions (Blair, 30), which I have adapted to the particular analysis of the National Women's History Museum:

1. What is the significance of the museum's material existence?
2. What are the apparatuses and degrees of durability displayed by the museum?
3. What are the museum's modes or possibilities of reproduction or preservation?

4. What does the museum do to (or with, or against) other cultural institutions/memory places?
5. How does the museum act on people?

By exploring these questions in light of Royster and Kirsch's four critical terms of engagement (critical imagination, strategic contemplation, social circulation, and globalization) (19), in this project I have sought not only to begin to uncover the potential of the NWHM to set a precedent for further paradigmatic shifts in public memory production, but also to explore the influence and agency of entities which, like this particular organization, function complexly and rhetorically at the intersections of any number of cultural and political processes. By investigating the manner in which space is "made" for women's history by the NWHM via these five questions, my goal is to more adeptly account for the hybrid rhetorical processes by which material and digital space are conceptualized, constituted, and simultaneous.

Review of Literature

Rhetoric, Memory, Place

As durable and unwieldly as it may appear, the national historical narrative of the United States is nonetheless a cultural construct, one that is constituted and re-constituted via the complex interworkings of history texts and, more powerfully, material artifacts that establish and emphasize particular historical narratives over a vast selection of others. Grounded in monuments, memorials, history museums, commemorative performances, and national holidays, to name a few, such "master narratives" (Hooper-Greenhill) disseminate through our media and popular culture indelibly marked by heavily inflected modes of embodiment that privilege presence and continuity over

diversity and inclusivity. Emerging from the effects of scientific professionalization of the field of history itself, master narratives of U.S. national history overwhelmingly demonstrate the field's unacknowledged biases toward presenting nationality as the story of elite white men and their well-documented political and military endeavors (Smith), narratives concretized in public memory places such as war memorials, monuments to political leaders, and a distinct preference for the display of artifacts symbolizing both in national history museums.

To address the resulting exclusion, misrepresentation, and stereotypification of women, people of color, and other marginalized groups in both written record and public memory places, parallel disciplines in women's history, ethnic history, and feminist and critical race theory launched critical recovery projects aimed at correcting the situation. In one sense, scholars in these fields sought to address the problem of presence: in order to effect the kind of paradigm shift necessary to guarantee more inclusive, more authentic representation in national historical narratives and their correlated public memory places, new histories, new narratives needed to be created and fully incorporated into the fabric of the whole. As scholars in diverse fields soon discovered, however, simply adding new narratives to existing ones, or adding new statues or memorials or exhibits, did nothing to shift the underlying cultural logics that gave rise to the chronically asymmetrical presence of women and other historically marginalized groups in the first place. The field of women's history remains distinct from simply "history"; the public commemoration of women remains a rare and contested occurrence. Unsurprisingly, the wealth of new knowledge and new potential honorees produced by historians, historiographers, and feminist and rhetorical scholars has rarely found its way into mass media and popular

culture, thus reifying and justifying their continued invisibility in innumerable other spaces as well.

Contemporary public culture and that culture's memory places are noteworthy not only for the significant contributions that they make toward popular – and even official – understandings of group identity, but also because such culture and places have inspired an impressive range of scholarship from diverse fields of study asking an equally impressive list of questions. How is identity constructed? Why is cultural or national identity important? What role does history play in identity formation? In what way are notions of culture, history and identity political and, as such, implicated in virtual and material projects that include nation-building, national histories, museums, ethnic and local histories, memorials, notions of citizenship, group membership, history sites, representation, and systems of commemoration and technologies of power? Because of the complex nature of such questions, unilateral approaches tend to fall short: interdisciplinary problems require interdisciplinary approaches.

Rhetorical theory, and material rhetorics in particular, offers one such approach; uninhibited by discipline-specific methodologies, it yet maintains specificity by focusing on the relations among and between the many moving parts and practices of contemporary culture. In their introduction to an anthology of scholarship on public memory places, Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson and Brian L. Ott describe the unique affordances of a rhetorical approach in doing cultural research; in exploring the relations among rhetoric, memory, and place, they argue, understandings of public memory places as fundamentally and powerfully rhetorical quickly emerge (2).

In making such a claim, Blair, Dickinson and Ott rely on a definition of rhetoric built on the legacy of New Rhetorics and, at the same time, participate in a tradition of exceeding it. Rhetoric, the authors claim, “is the study of discourses, events, objects, and practices that attends to their character as meaningful, legible, partisan, and consequential" (2). More than anything, though, rhetoric is concerned with the question of "what it means to be 'public'" (3).

This question has been taken up in a range of productive ways, from philosophical studies examining the notion of “a public” and tracing the evolution of the concept across the rise and fall of a bourgeois public sphere (Habermas) to the rise of memory studies as a field concerned with the creation and dissemination of public memory within and across various cultures (Halbwachs, Nora, Young). For Jurgen Habermas, the meaning of being public has undergone significant structural transformations since the inception of a “public sphere,” or civil space in which people come together to debate and negotiate culture and politics, in antiquity. At its height, the bourgeois public sphere was a space claimed by the middle classes to discuss governance and business and political relations (27). Implicated across Habermas’s definition and analysis of the public sphere is a notion of “public” as propertied white men; women, people of color, and other marginalized groups were, by definition, excluded. As the social and the private realms polarized in the nineteenth century, and as consumer culture rose to prominence in the United States, Habermas suggests that the public sphere he discusses disappeared from civil society. As it did so, the meaning of “public” itself underwent a series of transformations, so much so that to be “public” today can mean in any number of ways.

In taking up the study of publics and public spheres, Gerard A. Hauser critiques Habermas's disintegration model, arguing that from a rhetorical perspective, Habermas's "idealized vision [of a public sphere] is at odds with the rhetorical features of discourse as it is practices in a democracy" (55). Rather than attempt to fit the complexities of discourse to a universal definition, Hauser suggests that we are better served to recognize the existence of "a *plurality of publics* located in the multiple arenas of a *reticulate public sphere* in which strangers develop and express public opinions by engaging one another through *vernacular rhetoric*" (12). A public sphere, in Hauser's view, is "the locus of emergence for rhetorically salient meanings" (61). At the intersections of discourse, then, emerge possibilities for examining the way that public discursive practices shape our lives "as citizens, neighbors, and cultural agents" (11) in both conceptual and material ways.

At the root of public discursive practice, functioning as the "cultural bedrock" of civil society, are that society's narratives (Hauser 160). The stories that we tell ourselves as a pubic, stories that help us to formulate and maintain certain identities, affiliations, and memberships in collectives such as region, nation, political party, family, heritage, and so on – these stories form the background and impetus for the rhetorical practices out of which meaning emerges. These stories circulate via complex rhetorical processes of public memory, which John Bodnar has defined as "a body of beliefs and ideas about the past that help a public or society understand both its past, present, and by implication, its future" (15). As members of a public create, participate in and share public memory, either implicitly or explicitly, they also participate in and shape structures of power because, as Bodnar explains, "cultural understanding is always grounded in the material

structure of society itself. Memory adds perspective and authenticity" to views of the past and the beliefs and values of the present (15); in fact, for esteemed memory scholar Maurice Halbwachs, the past itself is a social construction heavily shaped by the concerns of the present (25). These social constructions may be conceptual or material; physical memory sites are of particular interest to memory scholars because of the way that they tend to collect histories of their own, forming a landscape of material presence that continues to feed and sustain national narratives and the memory of commemoration that tends to accrue around them (Halbwachs 34).

One scholar noted for his early exploration of memory sites is Pierre Nora, who described *lieux de memoire* as places "where memory crystallizes and secretes itself," connected to particular historical moments, and narrowed to embody history (and memory) in ways that encourage a sense of historical continuity (7). For Nora, memory is a living thing, suspended in permanent evolutions as the societies who sustain it engage in dialectics of remembering and forgetting, manipulation and appropriation, dormancy and revitalization (8). Memory sites, on the other hand, including "museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, fraternal orders" are the "boundary stones" of the past, no longer alive, but not quite dead; they are the remains, "the ultimate embodiment of a memorial consciousness" that Nora fears no longer survives in contemporary society (12).

In more recent years, a growing number of memory scholars have convincingly disagreed with Nora's rather mournful view. Barbie Zelizer, James Young, and more recently Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchell Reyes note the continued vibrancy of a memorial consciousness in contemporary culture, a vibrancy that often expresses itself

materially in what memory scholar Erika Doss describes as a kind of “memorial mania” (2). In her survey of Memory Studies at the end of the twentieth century, Zelizer notes that public, or collective, memory “presumes activities of sharing, discussing, negotiation, and often, contestation” (214), which by extension requires active contributions by members of the collective (or public). Complicated by popular culture, collective memory presents a challenge to the idea that “history occupies a privileged place in telling the story of the past” (216), keeping historical narratives alive through “new impulses of appropriation” and on “remaking the residue of past decades into material with contemporary resonance” (217). As it circulates via popular culture and media, "[i]ssues of historical accuracy and authenticity are pushed aside to accommodate other issues, such as those surrounding the establishment of social identity, authority, solidarity, political affiliation" (217). It could be said, then, that experience and meaning have taken precedence in contemporary culture over historical facticity or diversity: that which is most visible tends to be most prominent in our narratives.

This is partially why Zelizer argues that collective memory is inescapably material. Memory, she argues, “exists in the world rather than in a person’s head, and so is embodied in different cultural forms. We find memory in objects, narratives about the past, even the routines by which we structure our day” (232). Our collective memories tend to accrue in and around artifacts, memorials, and other cultural forms, making such forms “a necessary part of memory’s analysis” (232). In his study of Holocaust memorials, James Young agrees with Zelizer’s assertions and extends them, offering a glimpse into "the fundamentally interactive, dialogical quality of every memorial space" (xii). Preferring the term “collected memory” over public or collective memory, Young

insists that once created, “memorials take on lives of their own, often stubbornly resistant” to the creators’ original intentions (3). Particular places, his study concludes, shape our memory of a particular time, which in turn shapes our understanding of the present moment. Memory places become repositories of history and memory, bearing the burden of remembering no longer required of their visitors (5). Additionally, in creating common spaces for memory, monuments, museums and other memory sites “propagate the illusion of common memory” where common memories may not actually exist (6). In this way, national historical narratives themselves can be considered memory sites, “common loci around which national identity is forged” (6).

The work of national identity creation, and nation-building in general, is inherently rhetorical, a connection made explicit by Phillips and Reyes in their work on global “memoryscapes” (2). Just as memories are “constructed, disseminated, challenged, and reformulated by rhetorical means,” so too are rhetorical gestures “made both sensible and persuasive by an underlying foundation of collective, cultural remembrance” (1). Rhetorical claims cannot function without some notion of a shared past, they argue, but at the same time “our experience of the past is framed so heavily by collective social structures as to make each instance of [collective] remembrance…an essentially rhetorical act” (1). In this way, Phillips and Reyes conclude, “rhetoric and memory often become so fused as to be indistinguishable in practice” (1); in other words, to speak of one is, more often than not, to speak of both. In this way, the authors support their claims that important interconnections exist, and have existed, “between public memory and the nation-state. The vast majority of holidays, parades, monuments, and historical documents involve foundational myths related to the development of the nation” (3), a

process so implicated in systems of politics and power that these interconnections are impossible to ignore. As "various publics seek to make their memories 'public' before others" (2), negotiation and contestation inevitably ensue, making such efforts fraught and, in some cases, vital to the continuance and survival of particular cultures, groups, and identities. More and more, these fraught conflicts are playing themselves out amidst local, national and global forces, on "global memoryscapes," as digital technologies bring us ever closer and into contact with publics profoundly different from our own (2). Such encounters challenge notions of citizenship and nationality, and may cause us to "rethink both national and local identities and cultures" (8) as well.

In evoking a "memoryscape," Phillips and Reyes tap into geographical metaphors that are often used in rhetorical theory to facilitate the discussion of difficult concepts. Such metaphors work well because, as Yi-Fu Tuan has argued, space and place are "basic components of the lived world" (3). As living entities engage in and gather experience, they do so through various sensory and conceptual modes that range from "the more direct and passive senses of smell, taste, and touch, to active visual perception and the indirect mode of symbolization" (8). Designed environments, as most memory places are, make direct appeals to the senses, "to feeling and the subconscious mind" (114); because of this, they also serve an educational purpose. As the body responds to a natural or architectural space, we are instructed in codes of conduct, socially acceptable modes of historical representation, which persons are worthy of veneration, and how we are expected to honor them. Tuan insists that this is because architectural space "articulate[s] the social order," exerting a direct impact as the "body responds, as it has always done, to

such basic figures of design as enclosure and exposure, verticality and horizontality, mass, volume, interior spaciousness, and light" (116).

Blair, Dickinson and Ott offer further theorization on the importance of space and place in understanding contemporary public culture, asserting simply that “memory places are rhetorical” (2). Like objects, places define space, often standing metonymically for “grand ideas, satirical commentary, geopolitical histories, horrifying or scandalous events, idealized community, maligned political stances, and so forth” (23). As physical situatedness is experienced, particular kinds of places become more closely associated with public memory than others, “for example, museums, preservation sites, battlefields, memorials, and so forth. These 'memory places'…enjoy a significance seemingly unmatched by other material supports of public memory, at least in the United States" (24). As recognized “memory apparatus” (24), Blair, Dickinson and Ott suggest that place making could be considered a *techne* of public memory, and thus an important process for more sustained rhetorical study.

As scholars including Carole Blair, Carol Mattingly, Elizabethada Wright and others have convincingly argued, exploring the rhetoricity of monuments and museums is important because memorial sites and memory places act on us in ways that are inherently rhetorical, ways that exceed our ability to explain via semiotics or oral or written language. According to Carole Blair, rhetoric itself can be considered material due to its capacity for consequence and its partisanship (Blair, 20). When applied to memorial sites, historic sites, museums and other memory places, the materiality of rhetoric invites us to consider dimensions of rhetorical significance and social, political, cultural, and historical consequence that may otherwise remain closed off.

Museums and the State of Women's Material History

From the perspective of feminist recovery projects, a separate women's history museum appears to be a next step in the process; just as national history texts undergird and support the artifacts and narratives present in our national history museums, so, too, should women's history find expression the same way. Of course, even proponents of both feminist recovery projects and women's history as a field recognize that the questions raised by such assumptions warrant far more attention than they have perhaps been given to date. Historian Gerda Lerner, working in the early days of the field of women's history, questioned whether we should support separate, gender-based histories at all; as an integral part of the United States, its history and citizenry, why wouldn't women be an integral part of its historical narratives and memory places? "Women are not a marginal 'minority,' and women's history is not a collection of 'missing facts and views' to be incorporated into traditional categories" argues Lerner; "the overriding fact is that women's history is the history of the *majority* of humankind" (132).

Yet somehow, Lerner explains, they are not. At least not in terms of presence and visibility in U.S. material and memorial cultures, and certainly not in popular culture either. In Lerner's estimation, early reclamation projects aimed at writing women back in to U.S. history lacked the necessary power to shift existing narratives enough to secure women's place at the center of public memory and memory places with (mostly white) men. As further evidence of the insufficiency of the "add-and-stir" approach to women's public commemoration, Carol Mattingly's study of commemorative public fountains and buildings shows that even building public memorials to women aren't enough to guarantee women an honored place in public memory, either. As Mattingly documents,

the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was one of the largest and most influential activist movements of women in the early twentieth century; as part of their activist agenda, the WCTU made public tributes to women "one of its primary objectives" (133). Constructing a number of highly visible, deliberately placed memorial fountains and a large office building they named the Woman's Temple, the "members of the WCTU strove to create permanent testaments to their leaders and organization as well as to the significance of women" (134). Unlike the seemingly permanent monuments to other political or social leaders, however, within a matter of years the vast majority of public monuments constructed by early-twentieth-century activists had already been demolished; even the Woman's Temple fell under the pressure of developers seeking to re-form the urban landscape it occupied into something less redolent of women's powerful organizing capabilities.

The demolition of public memorials and buildings, accompanied by the widespread neglect of the histories of the women and organization that built them, is in one sense an overt rejection by official (and possibly vernacular) culture (Bodnar) of women's claims to full historical agency in the United States. The profound irony in this rejection is that, as women's historians Julie Des Jardins and Bonnie G. Smith have documented, women have historically made up the majority of scholars conducting historical research and writing in the United States. But women's exclusion from the field via professionalization efforts in the nineteenth century created a situation in which women's scholarship was viewed by the field as amateurish and, for the most part, dismissed (Smith). And efforts by professional historians themselves, who hoped that "the profession's rationality and fairness…would ultimately allow the findings of

women's history and the accomplishments of women historians their full influence and dignity in the academy" (Smith 1-2), were ultimately disappointed when their efforts continued to be dismissed. If a body of historical scholarship cannot guarantee women space at the center of national historical narratives, what will? What must women do to secure access to a "usable" past of their own making? to disseminate that past into popular culture and media in ways that support conceptions of them as full members of a nation?

Such scholarship also raises critical questions about a "usable" past, who has access to it, and why it may or may not have disseminated into popular historical narratives in ways that support the massive amounts of recovery that women scholars continue to do within the academy. Looking at women's history from rhetorical perspective of public memory may begin to answer some of these questions; looking at the relationship between women's history and the museum as a gendered cultural memory site with important cultural, social and political implications may raise even more.

Museums and Material Culture

One challenge facing proponents of a women's history museum is the availability of historical artifacts; as scholars working in women's material culture attest, the material traces of women's lives have typically been undervalued, mundane, and largely considered not worth saving. Unlike the vast repositories of personal items, papers, and other artifacts gathered and preserved for male political and social leaders, women's lives were much more likely to be marked with a materiality that was meant for use, not for show. But, as Beth Fowkes Tobin and Maureen Daly Goggin have argued, "material

culture is important in the writing of women's history" (3). In their volume of essays examining the "overlooked and often despised category of women's decorative arts and homecraft activities as sites of important cultural and social work" (1), Tobin and Goggin explore more fully gendered material practices and, at the same time, the "ways in which women engaged in meaning making, identity formation, and commemoration," (1) as well as the complex relationship between the (gendered) subject and object (2).

This relationship has been fruitfully explored by theorists including Arjun Appadurai, Ian Bogost and Bruno Latour, all of whom argue for a re-valuation of the meaning and "thing-ness" of objects and artifacts in an attempt to better understand the way that they enact a form of agency within social networks. Appadurai has explored the status and value of things as commodities, their "social potential" as they move in and out of systems of exchange and, most applicable to my current project, out of them: for example, Appadurai's work leads to questioning what happens to an object that has been saved, preserved, collected, labeled, described, and exhibited in a museum (6). Taking a more philosophical tack, Bogost argues that things are typically only considered in light of the way that "they relate to human productivity, culture, and politics" (3). Instead, he suggests that we consider what it is like to "be a thing" by using a process of "alien phenomenology" that recognizes states of being to objects, and not just subjects of U.S. culture (10).

In a related vein, Latour takes to the field of sociology to revamp our contemporary definitions of the social and our concept of social networks, which he argues do not consist solely of human subjects. According to Latour, the nature of objects, and the complex relationships between objects and subjects, illustrates the

different types of agencies at work in subject/object interactions, agencies that are important to engage with in our scholarship (22). One question to ask to determine agency, he argues, might be, “Does it make a difference in the course of some other agent’s action or not?” (71). If the thing under question does so, Latour concludes, then it is an actor or, “if it has no figuration yet, an actant” (71). He offers a long list of things that the non-human might do from the margins of the social order, “doing most of the work but never allowed to be represented as such" (73). Such arguments support the idea that the cultural, social and political work that objects perform necessitates their inclusion in our understandings of rhetoricity, identity and systems of power; but what Latour does not discuss is the role that gender and race play in such human/nonhuman networks.

Scholars in other fields have productively taken up such issues, however. Recognizing the need to engage critically with notions gender in her field in meaningful ways, archaeologist Marie Louise Stig Sorensen makes a strong case for the centrality of objects in gender construction. It is through materiality, she argues, that “gender gains substance, becomes tangible and has real effect upon people’s lives” (14). Further, she asserts that objects facilitate the gendering of political and economic life “in effective and hurtful ways” (14). For this reason, “those aspects of gender that can be understood as the material articulation and effects of difference…are central to the existence and reproduction of gender” and, by extension, to the practices and (social logics?) that govern gendered representation (14). This, in Sorensen’s view, is one of the most important potential contributions that the study of gender archaeology has to offer: “its insights into the manner in which material culture becomes partner in the structuring of

social relations," which include the processes of "assigning gender to individuals," and "presenting and preserving gender ideologies" (9).

Sorensen emphasizes the significance of the museum display in these processes, and particularly notes the problematic "invisibility of women in traditional museum displays" (32). "It is through men that history is articulated and they therefore become the history," she asserts (33). Centering the role of the museum narrative in this articulation process, Sorensen cites a range of scholarly sources who collectively find museum displays featuring "stereotypical depictions as mothers and housewives, cooking and caring through (pre)history, and the simultaneous downgrading of these activities" (32). Women are disconnected, peripheral to the museum narrative and its resulting displays, and thus relegated, materially and ideologically, to the merely ornamental (33).

Offering a rare feminist critique of museums in the 1990s, museum scholar Gaby Porter agrees with Sorensen's assessment of the state of women in museums. Although she recognized that the museum, as a social and cultural entity, is a "complex, layered text of space, things, texts, images and people" whose "sheer scale and persistent physical presence constantly threaten to topple fragile concepts of subjectivity and positionality" (63), her experience working in different museums also led her to conclude that the various displays and collections with which she was engaged "did not represent the histories and experiences of women as fully and truthfully as those of men" (62). In fact, in her reading across multiple museums, Porter found that as a whole, "[m]useums use sexual identity and difference as a firm and persistent referent on which to build the narratives of exhibitions" (65). In this way, the masculine and feminine, male and female become diametrically opposed within the construct of museum space and become the

common referent through which meaning, for museum visitors, emerges. Where narratives of men were continuous and congruent, narratives of women were fragmentary, incoherent , and in the background and at the edges of the overall picture of the past (66).

The question of how women, as a group, can and do "populate the museum" was also taken up at about this same time within museum studies as well (Butler, 20). Beverly Butler examined the representation and misrepresentation of women in museums, and found their presence rife with contradictions. In the museum space, Butler argues, "the poverty of representation of women is more pernicious" than in other forms of popular culture; pernicious, because where women are present, they "exist as stereotypes within the domestic sphere. Woman is ever the muse and never the historical 'subject'…Always she is objectified but we have few objects to interpret her own history" (21). The problem, Butler insists, is not that women are missing entirely; rather, it lies in the fact that women are "'put in' to exhibitions; exhibitions are rarely built around them" (25). When it comes to the meaning-making process, this problem bleeds into visitor interpretations and understandings of the material presented; if men are present at the center of history, visitors of both sexes tend to normalize this view, take it with them, and then disseminate it out into popular culture, where it influences attitudes, beliefs, and even economic disparities and policy creation (or lack thereof).

Museum scholar Eileen Hooper-Greenhill provides momentum toward responding to the issues Butler identifies with a collection of case studies which focus on "the complexity of the production of meaning in museums, which proceeds through the articulation of publicly displayed objects and collections with individual and social

processes of interpretation" (8). As social and political constructs, Hooper-Greenhill argues, museums have the ability to "enable or prevent equitable access to the construction of useful histories," a responsibility that museums need to take more seriously (8). Weaving together themes of narrative, difference, identity, interpretation and museum pedagogy, Hooper-Greenhill uses visual culture theory to investigate the manner in which museums are "deeply involved" in "[s]ubjectivity, meaning, knowledge, truth and history," or "the materials of cultural politics" (19). Because questions of meaning are questions of power, Hooper-Greenhill argues, museums are always already implicated in various powerful *techne* of U.S. culture: "the power to name, to represent common sense, to create official versions, to represent the social world, and to represent the past" (19). Museums also, she argues, "have the power to affect lives by opening up or closing down subjectivities, attitudes and feelings toward the self and others" (19), as well as "the power to remap cultural territories, and to reshape the geographies of knowledge" (21). Collectively, this power functions politically in that it directly affects civil or public life and the material realities of lived experience.

Such power also guarantees that museums will often be sites of contention: inherent in their agency is the potential for significant change (Hooper-Greenhill, 21). Philosopher Hilde Hein suggests that such change is already underway, changes that are both philosophical and situational (ix). Among the changes Hein describes, she claims that museums are working to "shift away from object centeredness to an emphasis on the promotion of experience," a shift with the potential to "shake the museum's foundations" (ix). This is due to the fact that if museums are no longer object-centered, they face a "fundamental reconstruction of the museums' identity" (x). But perhaps most poignantly,

Hein claims that museums are no longer seen "as sites that passively preserve and exhibit received cultural capital. They are active shapers and, indeed, creators of value" (xii), "world makers" that valorize certain objects, ideas, and experiences over others, and are increasingly subject to critique concerning the standards used to determine how that valorization takes place (16).

Of course, museums can no longer rely upon the singularity and authoritativeness of the object-centered exhibit, either. Unlike the museum culture of centuries past that museum historian Tony Bennett has creatively explored, "the museum" today is expanding into digital spaces in ways that necessitate the reconsideration of the systems of values and assumptions upon which they, as cultural institutions, rely. Jenny Kidd situates contemporary museums on a "new mediascape," describing these hybrid institutions as each "a complex of definitional, representational, philosophical, ethical aspirational, and economical dilemmas" (1). As sites of power, Kidd argues, museums share "a raft of responsibilities with media organizations and similar concerns" but, at the same time, they are not just "media makers; they are 'object' makers also" (4). Because of this element of materiality, museums maintain a distinct place within a national culture, and now, are attempting to evolve to secure and maintain a distinct place within a digital culture as well. Grappling with demands for new forms of participation and visitor experience, Kidd explains that contemporary museums face a confusing array of challenges and expectations, the least of which may be the blurring of "the boundaries between the digital and non-digital (not just analogue) aspects of museums' media 'work'" (17). Such blurring also raises questions about the importance and function of embodiment in the museum, both digital and non-digital, and how shifts in materiality

shift meaning-making processes both online and in real life, questions with which my project intends to engage.

New Directions for Rhetorical Theory

The blurring of boundaries between the digital and non-digital also necessitates a revaluation of the theories and methods that we have available to conduct studies on and about museums and their publics. As an increasing number of rhetorical scholars have argued, simply applying traditional rhetorical theory to expanded notions of human and non-human rhetorical agencies, matters, performances, intersubjectivities, etc. does not allow us the kind of flexibility necessary to create fully textured analyses of the same.

Attempting to bridge this gap, New Rhetorics aimed to offer rhetorical scholars a new perspective on rhetorical theory and practice. As a prominent scholar of the New Rhetorics movement, Kenneth Burke expanded upon the classical rhetorical canon by developing a philosophy of rhetoric that, fundamentally, involves the use of words to form attitudes or induce actions in others (41). Although for Burke such influence is inextricably tied to the symbolic, at the same time he is careful to describe the way in which the symbolic is rooted in shared substances (objects, activities, beliefs, values) and may thus, at times, exceed language itself. By alternatively defining rhetoric as a "body of identifications" (26), Burke gestures toward the rhetorical potential of non-human entities and provides the opening from which expanded definitions and new formulations of rhetoric have developed.

For example, Patricia Bizzell has argued that one of the most significant shifts in the field of rhetorical study since the 1990s is "the presence of women's rhetorics and rhetorics of color" (5). Significant, because feminist and other rhetorics have posed "the

most trenchant challenges to traditional scholarly practices, opening up exciting new paths not only in the material scholars can study, but also, and perhaps ultimately more significantly, in the methods whereby we can study it" (5). More recently, Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa E. Kirsch surveyed the major shifts in rhetorical inquiry and found feminist rhetorical practices to have been “instrumental in expanding the scope and range of factors that we now perceive as significant in determining the highest qualities of excellence in both performance and professional practice” (13). In what has proved to be an influential extension of such practices, Royster and Kirsch then propose a new “polylogical analytical model, an inquiry framework” that offers a “new possibilities for understanding rhetoric as a lived and thereby embodied experience" (42). Among those noted as examples of these new possibilities, Royster and Kirsch point to the work of Maureen Daly Goggin, whose work they argue “calls attention to material practices with rhetorical functions that are *not* text based yet reveal important aspects of rhetorical, cultural, and gender formations" (Royster and Kirsch, 61). As an emerging field with rich potential for rhetorical scholarship, material rhetorics challenges prior notions of rhetoricity, discourse, and meaning-making …

A shift toward materiality is visible across a number of sub-disciplines of rhetorical scholarship, most notably in visual rhetorics. Recent publications in this area show a distinct critical turn toward a more productive and sustained consideration of materiality as a vital component of rhetorical study. For example, Laurie E. Gries’ *Still Life with Rhetoric* explores the potential of a consequentialist methodology of material rhetorics by tracing the origins, production, dissemination, reappropriation, and reproduction of Shepard Fairey’s Obama Hope image. Engaging with the tenets of new

materialism, Gries argues that images including Obama Hope are rhetorical, material, temporal, and consequential – even as they circulate among various social and digital media.

A second new publication comes from Amy D. Propen in her book *Locating Visual-Material Rhetorics.* In this fascinating study, Propen attempts to weave together the fields of visual and material rhetorics with rhetorical geography, formulating and method for investigating artifacts as varied as maps, the GPS, and the Lowell Mills historical site. Working from the scholarship of Carole Blair and Michel Foucault, Propen develops a methodological framework for her case studies that engages with the rhetorical significance of experiencing and seeing places and things in person, rather than digital or other reproductions of it. The rhetorical significance of space, she argues, is rarely taken up in ways that recognize its materiality – a materiality that extends beyond the consequences of physical space on the body and into the relatively uncharted territory of accounting for materiality in visual and multimodal spaces as well (21).

Such claims stem from the early groundwork accomplished in material rhetorics by Carole Blair, whose assertion that rhetoric itself is material opened significant new terrain for rhetorical scholarship. According to Blair, rhetoric has a material character, most visible in "its capacity for consequence, and its partisanship" (20). Blair also argues that rhetoric has "material force beyond the goals, intentions and motivation s of its producers" (22); it doesn't just "mean," but actually does something (23); in Blair's view, rhetoric "acts on the whole person – body as well as mind – and often on the person situated in a community of other persons" (46). Texts and objects make physical demands

on us; memorials and other memory sites even more obviously so, and by so doing, significantly shaping the nature of the rhetorical experience that results (46).

Following the threads of space, materiality, and embodiment teased apart by these theorists, digital media is perhaps where rhetorical scholarship must assay next; as our digital technologies make demands on us, they become integral to the processes of rhetorical interaction characteristic of the material world. Royster and Kirsch have noted the rhetorical potentialities of technology and new media, citing the Internet as a "rich new site of rhetorical agency and intervention" (65), one that has the potential for "recasting the notion of authorship, genre, audience, and community" and for inviting democracy "quite boldly into the public sphere" of digital life (67).

Of course, with new sites of rhetorical agency come new reasons to reconceptualize rhetorical theory and practice, and the still-emerging field of digital rhetoric has attempted to do just that. As a still-emerging field, digital rhetorics has attempted to address digital objects as texts, and in modifying or reshaping rhetorical theories for the analysis of "new media" (Warnick 26). Barbara Warnick argues that Web-based discourse operates differently from other forms of discourse, demonstrating characteristics of "nonlinearity, differential access, instability, and dispersion" that she claims are not inherent to other discursive forms (27). Warnick's model attempts to foreground the medium as a way in to "the rhetorical critical study of online texts" (26), a move that attempts to attend to both medium and message as a "material apparatus" (27); however, in limiting her study to "born digital" texts, Warnick's model falls short of providing a means of understanding the profound interpenetration of digital and material collective life.

Alternatively, Collin Gifford Brooke attempts to “restore the dialectical character of the rhetorical canons,” rehabilitating and relabeling them to make them more applicable in the study of “new media” (xiii). By replacing invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery with the “updated” rhetorical concepts of proairesis, pattern, perspective, persistence, and performance, Brooke encourages rhetorical scholars to rethink the canons in terms of medial interfaces, rather than textual objects (xvi). Among the affordances envisioned for his new methodological framework, Brooke suggests reconceptualizing rhetorical effectiveness in terms of “ecologies,” or “vast, hybrid systems of intertwined elements” (28). The shift from context to ecology may seem largely semantic, but the affordances of an ecological approach does seem to offer the potential for more profound understandings of rhetorical entanglements among and between diverse and complex systems at work on and through one another.

In perhaps the most all-encompassing attempt to shift the paradigms of rhetorical theory in recent years, Thomas J. Rickert ‘s *Ambient Rhetoric* approaches rhetoricity from the perspective that “rhetoric is ambient” (xii), by which he means the "active role that the material and informational environment takes in human development, dwelling, and culture” (3). For Rickert, the notion of ambience grants “an interactive role to what we typically see as setting or context,” foregrounding materiality and the way that the material always already calls us to respond or to act (xv). In a culture in which “digital technologies are increasingly enmeshed with our everyday environment,” Rickert argues compellingly that in conceiving of rhetoric as ambient, we can better understand an age “in which boundaries between subject and object, human and nonhuman, and information and matter dissolve” (1).

Collectively, these new directions in visual, material and digital rhetorical theory do not, in fact, attempt to create new rhetorical methods; instead, this growing body of scholarship seeks to rework existing frameworks and commonplaces for rhetorical theory and practice (Rickert 3). As the rhetorical landscape upon which we work and live becomes increasingly complex and interdependent on various modes of knowing and being, it is imperative that our scholarly approaches attempt to keep pace by encouraging focused and productive transdisciplinary discussion and cooperation.

Summary of Chapters

Comprised of five chapters, this dissertation is divided into three distinct case studies and a summative analysis of the collective findings of each. The first of these case studies begins with Chapter 2, "Making Space for Women's History: Rhetorical Analysis of the Discourse of a Digital-Material Feminist Activist Initiative." In this chapter, I analyze the collective organizational discourse of the National Women's History Museum and that of its selected publics for its rhetorical features. In their struggle to manage their own paradoxical activities and goals, the NWHM has produced a body of discourse that spans twenty years of political, cultural and digital activism. This discourse is as enigmatic as the organization itself, and is an essential aspect of their emergence as a resilient public entity. In their efforts to negotiate an identity as a going concern, the NWHM has only recently recognized the critical role that a supportive public or publics play in political and cultural change. For this reason, the discourse of the NWHM offers a unique glimpse into this inherently rhetorical process, and is as yet a rich and as-yet untapped resource for analysis.

Beginning with Carol Blair's framework for rhetorical inquiry, I explore in Chapter 2 the discursive body of material I have collected in terms of the significance, apparatuses, modes of production, interaction with (or movement against) other discursive artifacts, and the manner in which such discourse acts on (and interacts with) people. I discuss the body of discourse I have compiled in three loosely bounded chronological segments, following distinct shifts in the tone and content of the materials collected. I then identify and trace the major themes that emerge from examining the material in this way and provide an analysis of it in terms of the framework outlined, above. Using selected examples pulled from a broad range of archival and media sources, I describe the strategies of materialization utilized by the NWHM over the last twenty years and examine the effectiveness of various rhetorical appeals through which it has attempted to interpellate a supportive public or publics.

Supportive publics are also a key consideration in the Chapter 3, "'A Sense of Place:' The National Mall and a Feminist Rhetorical Investigation of the National Museum of American History." In this chapter, I explore the rhetoricity of selected exhibits within the NMAH through a method of "strategic contemplation," a concept Royster and Kirsch advocate as useful to re-engaging with rhetoric "as an embodied, polylogical social practice" that, implicitly or explicitly, "recognizes the senses…as sources of information in rhetorical performance and in the analysis of performance" (94). In adopting such notions of rhetoric, rhetorical performance, and embodiment, the case study in this chapter explores the way in which "A sense of place – the physical, embodied experience of visiting places – can become a powerful research tool and an important dimension of strategic contemplation" (92). Continuing to employ Carol

Blair's notion of the materiality of rhetoric, I conducted an on-site investigation of the presence of women in the NMAH. An understanding of gendered representations in our nation's most revered national history museum is a crucial part of the rhetorical situation to which the NWHM response; describing this exigence is a significant aspect of the NWHM's identity, presence, and potential. If the occupation of public space is a requisite for full humanity in American culture and politics, as Hannah Arendt has suggested, then my detailed investigation and analysis of the gendered performances within the National Museum of American History offers critical insights into the current status and future strategy required for women to achieve that occupation.

One means of occupation currently available to historically marginalized groups is via cyberspace. Indeed, this is the method of choice for the NWHM, and in Chapter 4, "The Museum in Cyberspace: A Rhetorical Analysis of The National Women's History (Cyber)Museum," I explore the affordances and materiality of digital public memory production by conducting an analysis of six of the NWHM's digital exhibits. The NWHM has invested significantly in the development of its cybermuseum, which to date is the most comprehensive women's history museum at the national level (digital or otherwise). Support for and interest in the cybermuseum have grown exponentially in the last ten years, with some statistics currently reporting an average of nearly twelve thousand visitors each month. Yet at the same time, the organization's focus on and struggle for geographical placement of a women's history museum raise critical questions about the efficacy and status of the digital museum. The question of whether a digital museum can do the same work as a physical museum remains unasked by the NWHM itself.

To address this oversight, Chapter 4 examines the materiality of the born-digital artifact through the lens of the rhetoricity of public memory places, making visible the underlying cultural premises that support them both. Applying the same framework (Blair) used in chapters two and three, I demonstrate the manner in which digital artifacts are rhetorically material because of what they do, the work that they perform, the consequence that they offer to public memory production and, by extension, to national culture and the products of cultural frameworks, including policy, shared narratives, and notions of citizenship and patriotism.

These themes are brought forward into the final chapter of this dissertation, Chapter 5: "'Without Walls:' Accounting for the Digital-Material Entity." Drawing together the diverse elements and findings from my three case studies, in this chapter I concentrate on providing more focused responses for each of my initial research questions. Among the insights that emerged through my explorations of discourse, representation and digital exhibits, I describe the characteristics unique to a digital-material entity like the National Women's History Museum and theorize the functions of a framework capable of accounting for its particularities.

Ultimately, the contribution that this dissertation makes to the field of rhetorical studies lies in its willingness to challenge traditional rhetorical frameworks and traditional subjects of rhetorical inquiry by placing a complexly situated entity at the center of an extended research project. Through my research, I have sought to apply feminist methods and interdisciplinary scholarship in a wide-ranging exploration of the implications and significance of an organization founded on the determination to challenge the national historical status quo. In raising particular questions about

embodiment, materiality, space, discourse, public memory, and digital technologies, my goal is to inspire continued questioning and further re-adjustment of our understandings of the materiality and rhetoricity of the entities with which we, as scholars and as members of diverse publics, are always already entangled.

CHAPTER 2

"A BETTER WORLD AWAITS": RHETORICS OF MATERIALIZATION AND THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM

On September 28, 1998, the National Women's History Museum (NWHM) launched a new "historical CyberMuseum" of women's history. "The National Museum of Women's History (NWHM), an organization formed to celebrate the contributions of past generations of women, has taken on the challenge of educating America by launching a visual and interactive CyberMuseum at www.NWHM.org," founder and President Karen Staser is quoted as saying. "If we and future generations are to learn all the lessons of the past upon which to build the future, we must complete the historical record to include the experience and contributions of women…A better world awaits the generations that absorb what women and men have to share about life from a joint perspective" ("NWHM Educates America").

Tasked with "educating America" about women's history, this new cybermuseum and the organization behind it has raised some fascinating questions about just what this "better world" will look like, and how much of that world will occupy digital as opposed to physical space. On the one hand, as Megan Irene Fitzmaurice has argued, "the NWHM's digital exhibits rhetorically expand 'what' and 'whose' historical contributions are deemed worthy of public commemoration" (521), as well as "encourages female visitors to recognize their significant role in the nation's historical narrative" (522). On the other hand, the NWHM initiative is bigger than an online museum. As their mission statements, press releases, social media posts and other media collectively show, the organization is on a mission to build a physical museum on (or near) the National Mall in

Washington, D.C. Such a focus seems remarkably conventional for an organization determined to lead us to “a better world” of gender equity; by organizing themselves around the ultimate goal of property ownership, as Fitzmaurice has noted, the NWHM “insinuates that the cybermuseum is either not effective enough on its own, or less prestigious than traditional places of memory. This casts the cybermuseum, and the women who have willingly shared their stories for its circulation, into a second-class commemorative status" (522). Such a step backward seems completely at odds with the organization’s desire to see women’s history elevated to a status equal to that of political or military histories more common today, particularly as it pertains to mainstream media and culture.

In their struggle to manage their own paradoxical activities and goals, the NWHM has produced a body of discourse that spans twenty years of political, cultural and digital activism. This discourse is as enigmatic as the organization itself, and is an essential aspect of their emergence as a resilient public entity. In their efforts to negotiate an identity as a going concern, the NWHM has only recently recognized the critical role that a supportive public or publics play in political and cultural change. For this reason, the discourse of the NWHM offers a unique glimpse into this inherently rhetorical process, and is as yet a rich and as-yet untapped resource for analysis.

The discourse of the NWHM is also a unique case study in that it has developed in tandem with digital technologies but, as a nascent public organization, exhibits a relatively fraught relationship with the affordances and constraints of digital media. Enmeshed in the realities of material culture, the NWHM remains an entity operating at the intersection of the digital and the material, compelled to produce physical evidence of

their beneficent influence even in the absence of a more traditional museal existence. Unable to rely upon architecture and physical exhibits to interpellate a public or publics for themselves, the NWHM has turned to a rhetoric of materialization that attempts to accomplish a similar function.[1] Aided by digital texts, media objects and social media, the NWHM has worked to create a women's history museum as a reality for their publics, even in the absence of a physical site. The unique tensions that result from such a discourse provide a singular opportunity to bring the affordances of both digital and material rhetorics together into the same analytical space and show that, despite past characterizations of the two as mutually exclusive, the dichotomy of material versus digital is a false one. Digital culture is far more material and materially consequential than many are willing to admit, just as the virtual influences of the material world have long circumscribed our ability to conceive of and implement cultural and political paradigm shifts. If we are to gain a full understanding of the rhetorical processes at work in modern times, in the spaces in which they actually occur, we must do so at the intersection of the material and the digital and consider the two together.

In this chapter, I conduct the first of three focused studies on the NWHM, beginning with a study of the rhetorical features of its collected organizational and public discourse. It is important to begin with an analysis of organizational becoming for several reasons. First, by exploring the discursive strategies of the NWHM, the character and aspirations of the entity are made visible, as are the tensions within which the organization negotiated for presence. Second, focusing on discourse provides insight into the process of interpellating supportive publics, a process that is often overlooked in both digital and material rhetorical scholarship. Finally, an examination of discourse prepares

the groundwork for further exploration of the complex relationships among representation, material commemorative culture, and digital culture, where rhetorical performance is multiple and various, simultaneous and even contradictory. Beginning with Carol Blair's framework for rhetorical inquiry, I explore the discursive body of material I have collected in terms of the significance, apparatuses, modes of production, interaction with (or movement against) other discursive artifacts, and the manner in which such discourse acts on (and interacts with) people.[2]

First, however, I offer a brief overview of scholarship that collectively speaks to the materiality of discourse and the need for an approach like Blair's, in which any "readable" artifact is allowed to exist in its original context, spatially, rhetorically, and materially, enmeshed within ephemeral (but no less real) structures of culture and politics. Using selected examples pulled from archival and media sources, I describe the strategies of materialization utilized by the NWHM over the last twenty years and examine the effectiveness of various rhetorical appeals through which it has attempted to interpellate a supportive public or publics.[3] I discuss the body of discourse in three loosely bounded chronological segments, following distinct shifts in the tone and content of the materials collected. I then identify and trace the major themes that emerge from examining the material in this way and provide an analysis of it in terms of the framework outlined, above. In this way, this chapter introduces the tensions amidst which the cybermuseum, as a complex rhetorical entity, aspires to enact a distinctly hybrid, digital-material agency, tensions taken up in Chapter 3 as a focused study of the material affordances and constraints of traditional museum culture.

The Materiality of Discourse

In its most basic form, discourse is conversation, which is frequently tied to spoken and written language. This is where Gerard Hauser begins his definition of discourse, and adds: "As a social practice, discourse involves symbolic transactions that affect people's shared sense of the world" (13). At the same time, Hauser recognizes that discourse does not comprise solely of verbal, or even written statements; he expands his definition to include "symbolic exchanges," expressions that "advance meaningful claims about observations, thoughts, beliefs, opinion, or attitudes" (13). When addressed to others, such expressions are inherently rhetorical: they symbolically induce various kinds of social cooperation (Hauser 14). Despite the vast range of materials available for use in these symbolic interactions, however, most discourse analysis is still focused intently on the text as a privileged object of study. This Cartesian divide between discourse and the body or bodies producing it contributes to the illusion that speech and writing are (wholly) cognitive or intellectual, rather than inherently embodied and material practices.

The problem with such an approach is that it tends to exclude critical aspects of context that simply do not appear in textual form, but that still influence the meaningful claims at work and thus demand to be taken into account. There is ample precedent to support a more material approach to discourse analysis, scholarship that hails from a number of disciplines. For example, literacy scholar Christina Haas recognized the materiality of writing and writing technologies in the mid-1990s, including the materiality of digital technologies. Drawing from theorists as diverse as Mark Johnson, N. Katherine Hayles and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, she makes the fundamental but often overlooked claim that embodied practices, like thinking and writing, have "never been

and cannot be separate from technology," nor from the "tools of writing" (x-xi). This seems even more obvious today, given the relative ubiquity of touchscreen devices and wearable computers (the Apple Watch, for example) that become extensions of our bodies as well as our minds. Technology and discourse, then, are enmeshed in a symbiotic relationship in which they evolve together and, more fundamentally, the one simply cannot exist without the other.

Recognizing this situation, rhetoricians such as Blair have expanded available definitions of rhetoric, and even "text," to be more inclusive and, by extension, offer greater potential for more richly textured analyses. According to Blair, rhetoric is "any partisan, meaningful, consequential text, with the term 'text' understood broadly as a legible or readable event or object" (18). Such an expanded definition of rhetoric is possible, Blair argues, due to the fact that both texts and rhetoric share the same basic characteristic: materiality. "No text *is* a text, nor does it have meaning, influence, political stance, or legibility, in the absence of material form. Rhetoric is not rhetoric until it is uttered, written, or otherwise manifested or given presence" (Blair 18). In listing the forms of rhetorical genesis, Blair ties manifesting or giving presence to rhetoric to both spoken and written forms of expression, forms that are often not recognized as having a presence in the same way that a performative body, for example, has presence (i.e., has mass, takes up space).

When attempting to trace rhetorical artifacts such as discourse into digital space, in particular, theorists have struggled to describe the rhetoricity that we sense is there, that we can see at work, but lack the vocabulary or theoretical frameworks to explain. In recent years, this is a limitation that the collective work of New Materialist scholars has,

in part, sought to address. In turn, their work began through a renewed scholarly interest in the character of (seemingly) inert matter itself and the important role that material culture plays in the construction of social and political relationships. For example, literary theorists Bill Brown and W. J. T. Mitchell have explored the significance of "things" within subject-object relations and suggested an organizing role for the objects that make up our material lives. Ian Bogost has taken philosophy into the realm of the object and discovered an unexpected degree of agency inherent in non-human things. Anthropologist Janet Hoskins has suggested that objects, like people, have histories of their own and thus are, in a sense, "biographical." Archaeologist Marie Louis Stig Sorensen has explored the gendered dynamics of material culture and found strong evidence to suggest that Western notions of gender have a material basis, and that material culture is heavily implicated in the formation and maintenance of social and political technologies of power. Feminist rhetoricians Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin have re-centered women's craft activities as modes of consequential rhetorical performance, demonstrating how rhetoric is performed even in the absence of speech or text.

Amidst this diverse body of work, the studies undertaken by feminist scholars in particular are most interested in interfering with cultural and political structures that dictate hierarchies of value. This has been a priority not least because these structures work together to maintain a status quo that perpetuates intersectional oppressions. One such hierarchy works through dichotomies to situate the body opposite the mind, and thus embodied practices and experience opposite cognition and the intellect. Dating back at least as far as Plato's philosophical era, such entrenched notions of mind/body opposition

have been difficult to shift. Not that scholars have not tried; for example, cognitive scientist Antonio R. Damasio's "body-minded brain" provides a compelling scientific look at the embodied aspects of cognition and intellect. According to Damasio, and despite the many science fiction flights of fancy that consider otherwise, without the body, the human mind simply doesn't exist.

Another such hierarchy involves the Western privileging of sight over the other senses, an emphasis that contributes directly to the devaluation of embodied and material practices and ways of thinking and being. Jane Bennett and others working to shift this emphasis argue that there is a distinct vibrancy to matter that makes any material/immaterial opposition a delusion. Given our increasingly digital culture, this is of particular importance because of the way that "reality" is too often opposed to the "virtual" realms of online space, out of which a digital/material binary has emerged. Yet some of the newest scholarship published takes aim at this notion and provides a compelling re-examination of the material aspects of our highly visual world. For example, the work of Laurie E. Gries and Amy D. Propen both explore the inextricable way that the visual and the material co-constitute one another as they function rhetorically across American culture and media. Thomas J. Rickert has proposed a framework of "ambient rhetoric" that also urges scholars to take into account the deeply enmeshed physical, visual and digital economies across which meaning is created and shared.

From this perspective, rhetorical acts are far more complex and involve far more components than more traditional, language-based definitions. In fact, Hauser argues, one of the vital functions of these intricate performances is to encourage the formation of

"actual publics" within and among whom meaning is created, and who then carry with them the histories, attitudes, and traditions of the culture from which they emerge (14). These publics (plural) are in many ways the defining characteristic of a public entity, in particular nonprofit entities like the NWHM.[4] In order to survive and to operate influentially within American cultural and political spheres, a public entity must invest in appeals to any number of publics who then provide the support needed to continuing servicing those same publics. While these appeals can and do take on any number of forms, until they are *present*, materially and rhetorically, they are not capable of performing the discursive functions so vital to the success of a social institution.

Building presence and ethos is also something in which the NWHM has been engaged over the last twenty years. As an emerging social institution, the NWHM has slowly come to terms with the need to accomplish two vital tasks before ground can be broken on their physical museum building: forming supportive publics, and creating an image of their museum as a present and future reality for these publics. Although it is clear that the NWHM has never wavered in its commitment to build a museum on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., that commitment simply isn't enough to manifest it. Whether online or on the Mall, the museum cannot exist without a public that believes in it, until the museum is, for *them,* already always becoming, materially, existing in discourse and in an imagined future. In order to imagine a future, the possibility of that future must already exist in the present.

In this way, the material aspects of discourse become visible, which is why Blair's framework is so useful: it incorporates analyses of discursive objects and collectives into the investigation of the co-constitution of discourse and people,

discursive objects among larger systems of discourse, and so on. As each of these things and their relationships to the others emerge, even momentarily, from the rhetorical situations in which they function, it becomes possible to consider the materiality of a discourse and its publics *in situ*. For the purposes of this chapter, those locations span both virtual and material spaces. Existing in both simultaneously, the publics and discourse that have grown up around the NWHM resist easy categorization to some degree. With the proliferation of social media, in which participates engage both publicly and privately, online and in material space, boundaries between what is public and what is not have blurred, if not disappeared in some instances. Given these circumstances, my study will not attempt to categorize, but rather to follow the activity and function of discourse by and about the NWHM wherever it may lead.

Hauser has argued that "We cannot make sense of our collective selves without understanding how deeply discourse shapes us" (34). This chapter is an attempt toward that understanding. In the sections that follow, I describe briefly the three distinct phases of the NWHM's rhetorical/discursive life to illustrate the shifts and contrasts through which the organization has evolved. I then move into a discussion of the dominant rhetorical strategies employed by the NWHM in recent years, strategies that have produced both a number of supportive publics as well as generated the concept of a national women's history museum as a material reality to them.

Early Rhetoric, 1997-2000

Based on my study of the discourse produced (or presented) by the NWHM over the past twenty years, it seems that the NWHM has slowly come to appreciate the fact that simply organizing around a cause, even one as worthy as making women's history

more accessible to mainstream American culture, does not automatically equate to cultural or political power. This is a lesson that, historically speaking, social and political activist groups have learned through hard experience, and the NWHM is no exception. In fact, the discursive trajectory of the NWHM is reminiscent of any number of woman suffrage, civil rights, or other aspirational organizations: as the discourse reveals, repeated failure, inner turmoil, and the need to fund activities and initiatives are prominent matters of concern early on, only to be supplanted by more robust efforts to engage more diverse publics as status and presence stabilizes.

The early public identity of the National Women's History Museum emerges through intermittent news items, a fairly straightforward but rhetorically immature reporting style, and a narrow focus on the activities of NWHM founder and president Karen Staser. In its first four years, it is clear that the organization is fully occupied with encouraging congressional support and advertising the smallest of successes, all in an effort to present itself as a robust going concern. The discourse objects from 1997 - 2000 bear the marks of their time; they have been "archived" by the NWHM and are accessible only through their web site, although poorly organized and haphazardly kept. There are twenty-four news items in the NWHM's press archive for the period, the majority of which appear to be press releases. However, due to their current format as digital texts and lack of corresponding items in independent news publications, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not these press releases were ever put into print, how or if they were sent to major news publications of the day, or whether or not they were published, either in print or online. A search of U.S. newspapers during this time is unrevealing; what little was reported in the press about the NWHM focused exclusively on the unveiling of the

Portrait Monument after its return to the Capitol Rotunda in 1997, an event the NWHM marks as its first big success ("Woman Suffrage Statue"). The popular press, in particular the LA Times, seemed far more interested in efforts by the National Political Congress of Black Women to add a bust of Sojourner Truth to the Monument, focusing on the supposed "controversy" stirred up by what was presented as feminist infighting over a statue ("Black, White Feminists").

Unfortunately, the NWHM's own news items do little to remedy such a view. The language of these items is markedly militaristic; for example, replacing the Portrait Monument is described as a "battle," a "four-year struggle" in which "tens of thousands of citizens from across the country" fought ("Woman Suffrage Statue"). Like the suffragists they want to honor, the NWHM portrays itself as a combatant, fighting to elevate the status of women along with the statue and taking on the monumental task of intervening in the master narrative of U.S. history.

This portrayal is further underscored by the activity surrounding the launch of the NWHM's "cybermuseum" in 1998, through which the NWHM claims to be taking steps to "tell the rest of the story" ("Here's the Rest"). Quoted extensively throughout, NWHM President and founder Karen Staser paints women's suffrage leaders as revolutionaries who "fought long and hard for the right [to vote] for 72 years" ("Here's the Rest"). Several times, Staser references the domestic lives of activists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for example, who raised seven children and (according to Staser) wrote the Declaration of Sentiments (the two other co-authors are not mentioned) "at home," but still managed to "set in motion the largest bloodless revolution to that time" ("Here's the Rest"). Staser, speaking directly to an undefined group of readers, warns: "Prepare for a

paradigm shift. Prepare for some real surprises and wonderment at the remarkable accomplishments of women through the ages both in and outside the home" ("Here's the Rest"). It is clear that for Staser, positioning women in the home is important; such a move is also highly indicative of the cultural norms of the late 1990s during which there was both a strong push to promote "traditional" families (i.e., heterosexual, two-parent households with a stay-at-home mother) as well as a proliferation of feminist scholarship and organizing.

Riddled with historical inaccuracies and composed in a problematic tone, the discourse produced between 1997 and 2000 is not only markedly one-sided, it also displays the degree to which the methods of the organization's leaders are indistinguishable from those of the organization itself. Listening across the body of materials produced during this time reveals both that Staser works hard to position herself as the face and voice of the NWHM as well as demonstrates the organization's nascent attempts to communicate with and garner support from its potential publics.[5] For example, in a news item reporting on Staser's testimony during the 1998 hearings concerning which woman to feature on a new dollar coin, Staser is described as "an expert on women's history" ("NWHM Testifies"). I read such a claim as Staser's attempt to build legitimacy with a fairly skeptical audience. However, her own biography on the NWHM website explains that she holds an advanced degree and professional expertise in organizational psychology, not history ("Karen Staser"). What is more, her quotations in press releases and other items are filled with inaccuracies and even false statements about women's history, a fact that would be immediately apparent to history lovers and credentialed experts alike. Alienating these potential publics, as Staser's approach may

very well have done, perhaps has only served to hinder the organization's mission in the long run.

The desire to appear authoritative and credible appears in other discursive moments, as well, from initiating an awards program to launching educational campaigns targeting members of Congress. The NWHM hosted its first awards program, the Women Making History awards, in September 1998. As the NWHM press item states: "These awards honor living women who have made unusual or unheralded contributions to history in today's world" (cite). The list of honorees and their "contributions" is telling: most of them are "firsts" in their field (i.e., the first female commercial airline pilot, first female Secretary of Transportation, first woman commissioner in professional sports, and so on). Clearly, the NWHM's definition of achievement is focused heavily on women succeeding in male-dominated fields. There is also evidence of a clear effort toward ethnic inclusivity, with a number of Asian American and African American women honored among the 15 total awardees.

Just as positioning itself as the recognizer of achievement and as the bestower of awards is a reach toward legitimacy for Staser and the NWHM, so too are the education programs launched in the organization's early years. Such endeavors are bolstered by affiliations with established industry professionals, including Edith P. Mayo, Curator Emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution and known for her focus on representations of American women. In January 2000, Mayo gave the inaugural lecture in the NWHM's "Congressional Education Program" ("Edith P. Mayo Kicks Off"). Designed to convince members of Congress of the importance of women's history and, by extension, building a museum to display it, the Education Program was announced publicly and reported on

intermittently in the organization's press releases, but was clearly designed for an exclusive group of "uneducated" policymakers. Situating legislators as both uneducated and elite is implicitly contradictory, and may explain, in part, why such early persuasive efforts did not result in the passing of the NWHM's museum bill.

Another contributing factor was likely the lack of an organizing mission statement and clearly articulated sense of purpose. One of the earliest iterations of the mission of the NWHM appears in a November 1998 press release, which states: "The National Museum of Women's History in Washington, DC is a non-partisan, nonprofit educational institution dedicated to preserving and celebrating the historic contributions and rich, diverse heritage of women, and restoring this heritage to mainstream culture" ("Scholars and Museum Professionals Chart"). By centering the "historic contributions" and heritage of women, this purpose statement situates the NWHM within the characteristically celebratory feminism of the 1990s, during which feminist recovery projects were prominent. In academia, scholars including Cheryl Glenn, Gerda Lerner, and Judith Butler and were building upon earlier recovery projects to add to and promote a more prominent consideration of female rhetors, historical women in education, history, the arts, marginalized groups, and any number of other fields.

However, with the benefit of nearly twenty years' perspective on the period, the narrow focus on celebrating women and recovering their contributions has, by itself, proved to lack the cultural and political weight necessary to shift public attitudes and legislative paradigms. Efforts to materialize itself and, simultaneously, a stable range of supportive publics are similarly extended and ongoing, despite efforts to project an image of present entity, one always already participating in two of the central functions of a

national history museum (collection and preservation). For example, a news item from June 1998 describes the NWHM as an organization which "collects and preserves documents and memorabilia for the purpose of sharing the achievements of women through the Museum's Web site, traveling exhibits and soon-to-be announced permanent site in Washington, D.C." ("NWHM testifies"). However, as detailed in Chapter 4, there is markedly limited evidence supporting such a claim during this time period. Such aspirational attempts to position itself, rhetorically and digitally, as a major corrective to the national historical narrative may, in the long run, have slowed the growth of both the organization and its realm of influence. Paired with the overconfidence of assuming a permanent site was immanent and then facing defeat after defeat, the discourse from the first four years of the NWHM forms an image of the nascent entity as an organization still sorting out its own identity issues.

Shifting Rhetorical Patterns, 2001-2007

The existent discourse recovered from the seven years between 2001 and 2007 is, like that of the earlier period, a rather confusing jumble of discourse objects, and not just due to the manner in which it has been preserved on the NWHM website. Along with obvious shifts in tone and focus, the discourse from this period is rather opaque. For example, in my search of the NWHM digital archive, I discovered that only two news items from the years 2001 and 2002 had been saved, with nothing from 2003, and just one item from 2004. Whatever was going on behind organizational doors during that time, it was not being communicated out, at least not through this particular mode of expression. The lack of outside media attention for this same period seem to support this

conclusion: there are virtually no outside press mentions of the organization during these years.

That is not to say that the NWHM was inactive during this period; far from it. The organization unveiled a new temporary exhibit about female spies in March 2002 at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery ("Exhibition on Women Spies"), and a second one about World War II in May 2004 ("WW II Exhibit"). There is also evidence of a leadership change, and perhaps even some organizational restructuring, as well as a new focus on coalition building. Susan B. Jollie is mentioned for the first time, and given the title "NWHM National President." Other than a few mentions and quotations, however, Jollie is a rather elusive figure, even on the NWHM web site. Unlike Staser and later presidents, there is no biography for Jollie available on the site, a curious absence for an organization dedicated to highlighting the contributions of women in America. There are also reports of a newly created National Coalition partnering with a number of prominent public entities, including Forbes and American Heritage ("NWHM Announces National Coalition").

Such public communications are accompanied by a new iteration of the NWHM's purpose and mission, which in 2002 states:

> The National Women's History Museum researches, collects, and exhibits the contributions of women to the social, economic and political life of the nation in a context of world history. The museum uses permanent and traveling exhibits, its CyberMuseum, educational programs, and outreach efforts to communicate the breadth of women's experiences and accomplishments to the widest possible audience ("Exhibition on Women Spies").

The shift here from a celebration of women, past and present, to education, outreach, and "communication" of women's contributions across a range of public spheres makes for a sharp contrast. The function of the NWHM as a museum is emphasized, as are the programs in which they are engaged and the resources they claim to offer. Such an iteration not only marks a reconfiguration of the organization's self-identity, but also the beginnings of a new relationship with its emergent publics, real or imagined.

This new engagement with the "general" public is an emergent characteristic of the latter part of the period. Starting in 2005, but most notably in 2006, the news items archived by the NWHM show a return to participating in and preserving public discourse. Although there are approximately 44 archived news items for the period 2001 to 2007, most of these are dated from 2006 and 2007. These items are revealing for a number of reasons. The content of the news has shifted dramatically from an internal focus to an interest in and reporting on the "accomplishments" of women, many of whom were supporters but otherwise unaffiliated with the NWHM or its mission. For example, in late 2006 a news item reported that legislation had just been passed that approved the display of a statue of Sojourner Truth in the U.S. Capitol building ("Truth Statue Approved").

Although there are curious gaps in the news items archived by the NWHM, it is clear that there are no gaps in the organization's efforts to secure Congressional approval for their museum build. It is also clear that the sudden increase in press item stem from a strong push coordinated by the NWHM in 2006 to promote that year's bill, the National Women's History Museum Act. Drawing upon its Coalition members and their network of eight million women, the NWHM began trying to garner public support for the passage of their Act in March ("National Press Club"). However, with the bill already

introduced, it was already too late to start such an ambitious campaign and expect a favorable outcome, something that NWHM leadership seems not to have realized.

Yet that 2006 push for Congressional support seems to have prompted some kind of impetus for change; following that year, a series of significant developments were enacted that changed the face and the public identity of the NWHM and form the roots of a sustained campaign to interpellate the supportive publics the organization needs to achieve its goals. For example, in 2006 new "blog" items begin to appear intermixed with the ubiquitous press releases, indicating the adoption of new methods of public engagement and an emerging awareness of the importance of public awareness and support. Particularly in the early 2000s, blogging was a popular mode of expression for individuals as well as business, nonprofit, and government entities; the more conversational affordances of the blog form provided opportunities to draw internet audiences in with engaging content, often accompanied by images or video segments (or both).

Such digital content coordinates well with independent press institutions who have also largely made the leap to online news, but up through the end of 2007, the NWHM had made little or no use of the affordances of digital media. Based on a comprehensive search of national news entities, I found that the NWHM had only a mere hint of media presence beyond the occasional mention of the bills that have been repeatedly introduced to both houses of Congress since the late 1990s. In the rare newspaper article, celebrated actor Meryl Streep was quoted in reference to the 2006 Women's History Month as saying that she is an ardent supporter of the NWHM ("Streep Makes Call"). At the same time, however, the NWHM invested in a redesign of its web

site and marked the occasion with a news item in March 2007, to coincide with Women's History Month ("Site Redesign '07"). Such efforts point to a renewed investment in public engagement, something that will come to be a hallmark of the NWHM's public relations program after 2010. Reinforcing this impression are calls posted on the blog in July 2007 for a new fundraising campaign, and in September 2007 for a logo/branding contest, in which entrants are invited to design a new look for the NWHM. The number and intensity of invitations for public participation are clearly on the rise, a trajectory that will continue through the next decade of the organization's life. In particular, the impetus to rebrand the organization in a public and recognizable way indicates a better understanding of the public's role in sustaining nonprofit initiatives like the NWHM.

It is perhaps no coincidence that such changes occurred at a time when the NWHM appeared to be undergoing yet another change in leadership: in July 2007, in a rare press item dedicated solely to the announcement itself, Joan Wages is named as the new President of NWHM ("New Officers Elected"). Wages, a professional lobbyist and government affairs consultant, first joined the NWHM as a board member and so was able to step in and, by all accounts, take off running. For example, the fact that her appointment was viewed as newsworthy, and that stakeholders, supporters and the public might be interested in new leadership for the organization is a new feature, and may be attributable to Wages herself. The tone and content of the press release is significantly different from its predecessors. In this seismic period, the tone and tenor of the organization's discourse undergoes a series of shifts that clearly correspond with the organization's leadership. Just as Staser's stamp on early discourse is clearly visible, so too are the differences between Jollie and Wages. The years under Jollie are marked both

by curious silences and a more reticent journalistic approach. Despite her training as a public attorney, she seems to have been as adverse to seeking the spotlight as she was to engaging the public. When Wages takes the helm, the NWHM fully embraces the need for public visibility, a bit wiser, more enthusiastic, and more determined than ever to see a women's history museum built on the National Mall within the next decade.

The NWHM Under Wages, 2008-2015

On December 16, 2009, the NWHM shared a new mission statement with the public. It read as follows: "The National Women's History Museum affirms the value of knowing Women's History, illuminates the role of women in transforming society and encourages all people, women and men, to participate in democratic dialogue about our future" ("New Mission Statement"). This mission statement is, in many ways, emblematic of the rhetorical development of the NWHM over its most recent decade of public life. With a new emphasis on social media and interactivity, in just eight years the NWHM grew from relative public obscurity to a public entity with enough cultural and political clout to warrant sustained, organized opposition. The body of discourse generated between the years 2008 and 2015 is both significantly larger than in the past, with over four hundred news items archived on the NWHM web site and hundreds of other posts existing only in social media feeds, such as on Facebook, as well as significantly more effective in inducing public and policymaker support.[6] As the organization has continued to evolve, so too has the discourse it has produced and participate in shifted, forming a body of material that functions multiply, across diverse spaces, to conglomerate supporters into publics and to materialize itself as a reality within a shared vision of the future.

Due in part to the organization's discursive diversification, as well as to the expanding number of staff members and volunteers, for the first time since its inception we start to hear diverse voices as feature articles, blog posts, press releases and other media are prepared by individuals working for the organization. Beginning in 2008, the discourse takes on a tone of collective effort, rather than that of solitary leadership. Although Wages is quoted extensively throughout the archived items, outside press, and even maintains her own blog on the Huffington Post, the tone and content of the discourse is no longer dominated by her voice. At the same time, news items and posts from this period are more organized, stylistically complementary, and clearly guided by someone who understands how to appeal effectively to a diverse population filled with potential supporters. Under comparison, the contrast between the three phases of the organization's rhetorical life is striking. Under Wages, the NWHM appears to have matured into an entity experimenting with a range of effective message forms and outlets. By the end of 2015, the NWHM is present in the public as a collective of women making history, a materialization of an organizational self that is a remarkable accomplishment.

It is clear, after an examination of the collected discourse between 2008 and 2015, that this "self" is one that wants to be considered professional, influential, and embraced by experts and professionals as a cultural and educational resource. In line with the NWHM's mission statement, a large percentage of the media items archived on the NWHM website function to both educate the public about the need for legislative action as well as to offer educational materials including biographies, photographs, historical stories, digital exhibits, and more. On the NWHM website, there are two separate collections of news items housed on different pages: the "Archived Press" area and the

"All News" section. The Archived Press section contains "A sampling of NWHM in the press, our videos, PSA, and lecture series" and focuses almost exclusively on legislation and attempts by supporters in Congress to pass the eight bills introduced during this period ("Archived Press"). For example, out of the six featured items in this section dated between 2008 and 2015, four of them detail the progress of the 2009 Maloney-Collins Bill through both houses of Congress ("Archived Press").

Collectively, the news items in this section form a narrative of the NWHM's struggle for congressional approval to build their museum on the National Mall. Selected from a much larger body of material, the Archived Press items are rhetorically significant in that they communicate an aspect of the organization that, although de-emphasized among digital content with a newly broad focus, has been deliberately cultivated and presented as the core identifying feature of its organizational self. Just from this small selection, big changes are clearly evident. News items now include an organizational biography and statement of purpose, as well as tend to incorporate calls to action and links to the NWHM website. In addition to this far more effective structure, the tone is confident and the appeals much more developed. In this way, the NWHM presents itself as a mature nonprofit institution, dedicated to serving the public while it pursues that elusive Congressional stamp of approval for a women's history museum.

The "All News" section, by contrast, is a *bricolage* of press releases, blog posts, and re-posts from outside news sources. With the majority of the content housed in this section, it is also the most revealing about the rhetorical strategies adopted by the NWHM during this period. For example, the overall tone of news items shifts from statements of American ignorance to a gentler, more inviting approach. Starting in May

2009, posts begin with "Did you know…?" and then offer a startling statistic or tidbit of a story to "hook" the reader, an approach absent in earlier phases of the NWHM's discursive materials. This small but important shift offers history in palatable bites that show, rather than tell, the remarkable contributions that women have made over the entirety of our nation's history. Using this format, posts inform readers about the origins of Memorial Day ("Women and Memorial Day"), women who fought in the Revolutionary War ("Fourth of July"), and teenagers who changed the world ("Young and Brave"). Posts of this type appeared irregularly, averaging about once a month, starting in 2009, but by 2012 had become a consistent feature of the media produced by the NWHM. In this way, the NWHM slowly established itself as the disseminator of stories about remarkable women, a status it had long claimed, but that had remained unrealized until it became a consistent presence in modern mediascapes.

Insight into the organization's internal operations increases dramatically, as do the number of items highlighting new collaborations, new digital exhibits, and even a scandal or two. For the first time, news items include both what is being said about the NWHM in the media as well as the organization's response to them. For example, in April 2014, historian Sonya Michel released a statement accusing Wages of failing to take the museum's historical accuracy seriously by abruptly dismissing Michel and all of the other historians on the museum's Scholarly Advisory Council. Since its inception in 1996, Michel argued, the NWHM had not a single historian on staff, and had such a poor relationship with the academic community that few women's historians were even aware of the organization's existence prior to 2010 ("The NWHM Apparently Doesn't Much Care").

Three days later, Wages released a response to Michel's article that was printed along with a further reply by Michel. Although Wages defended her decision, arguing that the NWHM was a small grassroots organization without the resources to compete with well-established national institutions, she also admitted to an overall lack of expertise governing the quality and content of their digital exhibits. According to Wages, arguing about content with Michel was futile without permission to build a physical museum; "That's why the National Women's History Museum non-profit has shifted focus to educating the public about the need for a museum and meeting our large fundraising goals," she is quoted as saying ("The NWHM Needs to Focus"). Given Wages' attitude on the subject, what the implications are for the value of their much-lauded "cybermuseum" remain unclear. Wages' statements stand at sharp odds with the organization's professed mission and habit of offering itself to the public as an educational resource, something they have always professed to do. Perhaps realizing her gaffe, the NWHM announced the appointment of historian Catherine Allgor to the Board of Directors later that same year ("NWHM Welcomes Catherine Allgor").

A large part of the NWHM's new rhetorical strategies also includes utilizing the affordances of digital technology and social media to expand the organization's reach. To appeal to more diverse publics, the organization needed to establish itself as a stable presence within modern mediascapes. An important first step was the website redesign in 2010, which proffered a "fresh, clean look as well as technical upgrades," including the addition of a search feature and newly organized sections ("Website Redesign"). Other "upgrades" involved both content and delivery platforms. For example, in 2012, the NWHM began producing a series of biographical posts under the title "Women Making

History." Accompanied by pictures of the featured individual, these posts appeared both on the NWHM blog as well as on the organization's Facebook feed, allowing users of Facebook to "follow" the NWHM and thus to see everything they post to that particular platform. In 2013, this series morphed into a "Historical Women Who Rocked" series, in a clear attempt to engage with diverse publics in the vernacular of the time. Rhetorically, the difference between "women making history" and "historical women who rocked" shifts the tone from one of recognition to one of admiration; simply be being included, women profiled on the blog and on social media feeds by implication belong to a group of individuals who "rocked," or were admirable in a rebellious, radical, or revolutionary way. It also invites an element of play into perceptions of history as boring, subverting modern notions of who is worthy of admiration and who is not by juxtaposing images of Victorian abolitionists in their somber black-and-white portraits against a culture of noisy, flashy celebrity and performance amidst crowds of screaming fans.

Ranging away from the biographical sketch, in early 2013 the NWHM began a "Throwback Thursday" series and a "Foodie Friday" series, both also posted across multiple media platforms. The former focused on reminiscences, interesting facts or photos from any previous time period, while the latter offered content focused on historical recipes and other food-related items. These posts were published weekly for most of the year, combining themes popular among users of social media with an element of historical storytelling. Such posts, along with items unrelated to the NWHM itself but clearly considered of interest to its emergent publics, are of note because they function differently, but no less significantly, to expand the relationship between the NWHM and its publics. The digital content of the NWHM web site, blog, and social media platforms

operate within a culture of "edutainment," in which media consumers expect to be educated and entertained at the same time. In this way, the NWHM expanded its reach as well as began to grow a stable presence in public media, as well as establish an ethos unmatched by earlier periods.

Rhetorics of Materialization

Social media and other social technologies involved in the evolving rhetorical strategies employed by the NWHM have been productively paired with rhetorical strategies that, intentionally or not, center on the impetus to materialization. This impetus encourages potential publics to fix the NWHM as a stable presence both among traditions of digital mediascapes as well as museum culture, and thus is an important feature of the organization's rhetorical agency. By encouraging a sense of materiality, the NWHM also facilitates the public acceptance of the continuation of that materiality, ultimately resulting in the construction of a physical museum. Out of the discursive material examined in this chapter, three prominent strategies employed by the NWHM emerged: the trope of home, encouraging museum visitors to make their voices heard, and developing a sense of collaborative action. Each strategy draws on and encourages public participation in a tradition of materiality that is noticeable in the case of the NWHM perhaps because it is so often taken for granted in more traditionally physical memory spaces. In addition, each strategy illustrates the rhetorical negotiations in which the NWHM is engaged and the nature of the publics that form one of the multiple entities involved in those negotations.

The Trope of Home

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the discourse generated by the NWHM over the last six years is the reconfiguring of their mission to build a physical museum on the National Mall as a mission to give women's history a "home." First appearing in a March 2009 blog post, appeals to the organization's readership to contribute to this quest for home take soon become a mainstay of the participatory narrative in which the NWHM under Wages heavily invests. The word home appears 125 times in the archived press on the NWHM web site for items dated between 2009 and 2015, and has been picked up and repeated by dozens of unaffiliated press items.[7] The trope of home, and recasting the mission of the NWHM as a search for home, is an effective appeal within American culture due to the long traditions of valuing homes as a vital component of strong nationhood. In the United States, we depend upon conceptualizations of home for a collective sense of identity, meaning, and purpose. The concept of home is both metaphorical and grounded in the material world, enmeshed with physical objects, bodies, as well as traditions of ownership, privacy, and family.

What makes the quest for a home a particularly effective strategy for the NWHM are the parallels between a women's history museum as a place created with women at its center, and the traditional bourgeois ideals of private residence as the seat of a woman's power. Generally speaking, in American culture *home*, as a trope and an ideal, has a female body at its center and has been conceptualized as a private sphere for married women and mothers. As Mary Douglas and Gwendolyn Wright have argued, the notion of *home* as opposed to that of *house* or *household* is quite distinct: simply "having shelter is not having a home, nor is having a house, nor is home the same as household" (289).

Home, then, is distinct from either house or residence in that its most prominent characteristic is that it is an ideal, a mythos, a locus (real or imagined) that facilitates "the realization of ideas" (290). Iris Young agrees, and adds that "Home enacts a specific mode of subjectivity and historicity" (138), a subjectivity and historicity inexorably tied to the "work of preservation" (142). Significantly, for Young such work involves "teaching the children the meanings of things among which one dwells, teaching the children the stories, practices, and celebrations that keep the particular meanings alive" (142). The similarities here between the cultural role of the history museum and Young's construct of home as a site of preservation and education are striking, and effectively merge the two into an obtainable ideal that diverse women can (theoretically) support.

However, the trope of home is not a universal concept, even within the United States. For some, home is a place of danger, of tyranny, and of loss of autonomy and a public voice. Mary Douglas has pointed out that even in "its most altruistic and successful versions," the ideal of the home "exert[s] a tyrannous control over mind and body" (303). Such tyranny governs tastes and "censors speech," (304), and requires a devotion and diligence on the part of those "committed to the idea of home" that rapidly becomes part of commonplace, gendered norms (305). Bell hooks has also described the dangers of home, particularly for the African American community, who have long been subjected to policies and practices designed to deny black families the ability to "make homeplace" (46). Thus, in adopting a rhetorical strategy that characterizes the mission of the NWHM as a quest for home, the organization risks the tacit exclusion of groups that do not share white bourgeois notions of home. The envisioned museum is in danger of becoming yet another "white space" into which women of color are invited, but as

onlookers and subjects only. Their histories constructed and shared through a framework of white bourgeois notions of home.

Home is also a limiting concept against which feminist groups have struggled for decades. For this reason, a return to seeking a home may raise any number of concerns over assuming naturalized gender binaries and roles, and reifying destructive notions of a "woman's place" in larger systems of politics, business, industry, culture, and so on. For this reason, while making appeals for a home for women's history is in line with the organization's larger goal of mainstreaming women's history, they do little to disrupt the asymmetries of power that produced androcentric museums in the first place.

Make Your Voice Heard

Direct appeals to the emerging publics of the NWHM also become stronger and more effective in 2009 and continue to evolve over the five years that follow. Along with a newly redesigned blog, that year the NWHM launched the *Right Here, Right Now* campaign and unveiled its new logo, all announced in the same press release and all clearly meant to work collectively to interpellate more supportive publics ("Give Women's History a Home"). It is not surprising that Wages, a professional lobbyist, would understand the importance of a recognizable brand (logo) for the NWHM, nor is it hard to see her stamp on the steady increase in diverse discursive modes explored to disseminate their materials and message. Riding the political tide of President Obama's historic election in 2008, the American public was primed to respond to the newly designed appeals to support a women's history museum, and it may be that the new leadership of the NWHM seized upon such an opportunity for their own purposes.

The shift away from the less effective rhetorical appeals of the organization's early years and toward more direct and active appeals to diverse publics signals a newfound understanding of the public's role in achieving the NWHM's goals. This shift took place over the course of several years, and is perhaps most clearly visible on the organization's Facebook page. A brief survey of the number of "likes" the NWHM's posts receive shows a steady increase each year. In 2009, posts were most likely to receive less than ten "likes" each; this number increased to between fifteen and twenty-five "likes" in 2010, then to over two hundred "likes" by 2012. As of 2015, the most popular posts on Facebook received well over nine thousand "likes," with some reaching as many as eighteen thousand ("Métis-Chippewa attorney Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin"), or even twenty-five thousand "likes" ("Before Bobbie Gibb"). Although not entirely indicative of the number of individuals, groups and organizations who make up the supportive publics upon which the continued progress of the NWHM relies, social media interactions ("likes") have become an important measure of a public entity's reach.[8]

Social media platforms, including Facebook, also allow users to leave comments and to reply to comments left by others. While this feature seems largely underutilized by visitors to the NWHM's Facebook page, the analysis of comments and replies offers a rich source of information about how the organization's materials are being received by the public, among other indicators. Such a study is beyond the scope of this project, but certainly offers avenues for future research.

As evidenced by the affordances of Facebook, social media and blog posts rely heavily upon the interaction of their users. Perhaps realizing that in order to reach modern

audiences a public entity must do the same, the NWHM began to invite its own publics to participate more directly in selecting the kinds of content they want to see, as well as holding a variety of online and face-to-face lectures, awards galas, and fundraising events to which supporters are encouraged to contribute. For example, in 2009 a blog post asked the public to send in suggestions for the topic of the NWHM's next online exhibit ("Help Choose Our Next CyberExhibit!"). In 2012, the organization even launched a new "interactive game" on its website, "Progressive Era Women," which asked users to match "five key areas of the Progressive Era" to stories of women's involvement in the same ("Check Out"). Calls to sign petitions and write to legislators are common (see, for example, February 2013, "Sign the Petition to Give NWHM a Home!"). Giving website users and members alike a more active role to play suggests a new organizational interest in investing in its supporters, as a mutual exercise in becoming.

Between 2008 and 2015, the discourse produced by and about the NWHM tend to rely heavily on appeals that are more urgent and more personal than those used in the past, both of which are effective methods to engage publics on an emotional as well as a logical/intellectual level. Starting with her *Right Here, Right Now* campaign, and still evident in the #HelpUsBuildIt hashtag in current use on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms, the discourse has developed a new sense of urgency, incorporated a high energy completely absent in previous years. This new energy is seen in the sheer number of media items produced: daily blog posts, three Facebook posts per day, press releases and other news items several times a month. Wages also clearly understands that she must appeal to potential supporters on a personal level, doing so with a Letter in April 2009 ("Message from Joan") and then later with posts on the NWHM blog and on

her own Huffington Post blog. By modeling the effective feminist strategy of working through the personal to be politically effective, Wages creates a sense of intimacy and dialogue that is familiar to members of today's social media culture. No longer unidirectional, the discourse of the NWHM has evolved to include a range of diverse voices and thus to become much more present in the cultural and political milieu as a feminist institution.

That is not to say that the NWHM does not have much work to do, still, to become truly representational of all women; disagreements emerged early in the NWHM's organizational life and have continued to be an issue over the last twenty years. The increased focus on public interaction, combined with much more effective appeals to Congress, have motivated opposition to the NWHM to organize against them, a clear sign of the organization's growing threat to certain world views. Prior to 2012, the NWHM was often defeated as much by apathy and obscurity as by anything else; they lacked a presence and a network of supportive publics to support their bids for approval. But by the time the NWHM introduced another set of bills into Congress in 2014, this situation had clearly changed. Celebrity endorsements, Congressional backers, and a newly vocal range of supportive publics helped to move the bills through both houses of Congress and resulted in the formation of a Congressional Commission to Study the Potential for a National Women's History Museum (www.womenshistorycommission.org).

This achievement has not gone unchallenged, however. The threat of what Congresswoman Michele Bachmann termed a "radical feminist movement" (Kim) motivated several groups, including the Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee, to publicly denounce the NWHM as an insidious feminist project

meant to exclude conservative American women and to celebrate its own radical and misrepresentative agenda ("NWHM Talking Points"). The irony of such accusations emerge when one considers that the goal of the NWHM is not as much about radically intervening in national history narratives as it is to "correct" them by creating a "mainstream" source of women's history through the most traditional channels possible: the national history museum. Such a mission has drawn sharp criticism from some feminists, who consider the museum's goals far too conservative for their liking. (cite)

Despite such criticisms, controversy is beneficial to any mission focused on shifting cultural and political paradigms, and in this, the NWHM has begun to succeed. Because there is no one "right" way to honor a woman in public – indeed, there is very little precedent for it – the mission of the NWHM has stirred up no little disagreement among American publics. Such disagreement has the added benefit of reintroducing conversations about the status of women in the United States, their relative inequality and the underlying reasons for that, as well as highlighting the far more detrimental representations of particular groups and the way that such dehumanizing and stereotyping is a detriment to American society as a whole. Such arguments have functioned to bring women's history back into the national spotlight, opening up spaces for discussion and new opportunities for change on multiple levels, from policymakers down to primary school textbooks, television programming to feature films. The NWHM is part of this larger conversation, this larger discourse, in which women are rediscovering their voices and finding themselves and their own histories newly respected in diverse spaces. There is much work left to be done, of course, and still decisions to be made about the relative

benefits and negative consequences of working for a "mainstream" women's history, but overall the struggle seems to have been a productive one.

Together We Can

In December 2013, the NWHM was invited to testify at a Capitol hearing on establishing a women's history museum. Such an event is remarkable not only because Congress had agreed to hold such a hearing, but also because this was the first time the NWHM had appeared before Congress by invitation. In a news item describing this historic event, the NWHM recognized the vital role of the public: "Thank you for your continuing support of our mission. Together, we WILL succeed in honoring all of the women who have shaped this great nation by providing them the home they so richly deserve" ("NWHM to Testify"). This simple expression of gratitude illustrates another of the NWHM's evolving rhetorical strategies, that of enlisting members of the public in their cause as empowered agents in their own right.

To attract supportive publics who are invested and empowered, the NWHM began to directly interpellate them that way across the body of their discourse, enabling them to respond in kind. This shift began with a change in organizational identity, and has now expanded throughout the media produced by the NWHM. Adopted quietly sometime in the last five years, the Mission Statement currently published on the NWHM website reads: "The National Women's History Museum educates, inspires, empowers, and shapes the future by integrating women's distinctive history into the culture and history of the United States" ("About NWHM"). This mission statement reflects a new focus on collective action and empowerment, strategies in which the NWHM has more successfully engaged since 2012. The NWHM clearly wants its supportive publics not

only to actively contribute to its cause, but also to actively "shape the future" of the NWHM and, by extension, of the historical narrative of the United States as well.

Part of this new strategy includes encouraging supporters to make demands for a women's history museum on their own behalf. Susan Whiting, Chair of the Board of Directors for the NWHM, has issued a number of calls to action in recent years that demonstrate the shift in the organization's approach. For example, in December 2015, she is quoted as saying: "I invite you to help the Museum at this critical point in their journey by simply emailing or writing your Member of Congress, and saying 'I want a National Women's History Museum'" ("NWHM Finds").

A strategy of encouraging action is also clearly visible in blog posts and press releases that, starting in 2013, end with the affirmation: "Together we can." (cite?) This affirmation functions both as an invitation and a statement of purpose, and marks a distinct shift in the NWHM's relationship with its publics and in their publics' relationships to each other. Given the diversity of its supporters, conflict is inevitable. But the NWHM needs the collective effort of these various groups and factions in order to achieve its vision of a museum built on the National Mall. The diverse publics interpellated by the NWHM must arrive at a functional sense of belonging in order to effectively support the organization and its goals. This "togetherness" is, in turn, materialized by these publics as they act in solidarity, whether through written or verbal support, on social media, through financial contributions, or attendance, in person, at one of the NWHM's many events.

The materials available to these publics in the materialization process is a critical aspect of their ability to perform a supporting role. Such material has been scant in past

years, but increasingly steadily in more recent ones. For example, the NWHM began to incorporate statistical data in new ways into its discourse in 2013, and then again in 2015. In a poll conducted by Lake Research Partners in early 2013, the NWHM argues, it was confirmed that "two-thirds of the American people think our nation should have a National Women's History Museum," and that "it should reside on the National Mall alongside our other national Museums" ("National Survey"). Wages is also careful to note that the NWHM is "pleased, but not surprised, [that the surveys] show men as well as women equally support this effort" ("National Survey").

Confirmation of the NWHM's twenty-year-old claims that Americans do not know women's history was only just addressed in December 2015, when the NWHM conducted a survey of their own. According to their findings, "Only a third of millennials believe they are knowledgeable about women's history, and just 10 percent of adults over age 55 feel the same way" ("NWHM Finds"). According to Susan Whiting, Chair of the Board of Directors for the NWHM, "Three-quarters of the people that the Museum surveyed feel that today's museums are overlooking women's contributions" ("NWHM Finds"). While the reported statistics are striking on their own, what is perhaps even of greater interest is the lack of statistical data gathered by the NWHM or its Coalition members up to this point. Recognizing the value of such appeals quite late in the organization's life may in part explain the length of time that the NWHM has spent building a presence of consequence.

Collectively, the combined strategies of the NWHM work together to form what is now a consequential body of discourse from which and upon which the current rhetorical strategies of the NWHM continue to draw. Such strategies are strategies of

materialization because, as Marguerite Helmers has argued, from a materialist feminist rhetorical standpoint "written expression and oral speech are material, deriving from human activity and lived experience" (115). The image, the art object, and the digital object, too, are aspects of discourse and thus aspects of the materiality that arises from human activity (Helmers 116). The collective discourse produced by and about the NWHM has form and substance; it exists digitally, conceptually, and rhetorically, and exerts a kind of influence among and between the NWHM and its publics. This discourse takes up space, in our digital archives, in our world views; it hails and directs the mind and body to respond in various ways. The shape of this discourse functions to create a presence that is at the same time virtual and real.

As this chapter has demonstrated, an examination of the NWHM's public discourse in terms of significance, apparatuses, modes of production, interaction with (or movement against) other entities and texts, and the manner in which it acts on and interacts with people produces an understanding of the NWHM as a complex rhetorical entity with a history, presence and consequence that continues to strengthen and evolve. The active and multiple nature of the NWHM is, in part, due to the inherently complex nature of its rhetoricity, spanning discursive, material and digital media spaces. As its own story of becoming shows, the NWHM came to be fully present in the modern mediascape as a rhetorical entity of aspiration and influence only when it began to realize certain affordances of the current media climate, behavior in which more traditional museums are also currently engaged. The correlation between the NWHM's emergence into presence and its digital activity is indicative of a direct relationship between two (or

more) rhetorical modes, and hints at a complexity that scholars are just beginning to understand.

But the tensions between digital presence and physical presence are also a critical aspect of the NWHM's materiality and rhetoricity, and the focus of the next chapter. The embodied experience of museum encounters is perhaps one of the most significant elements of a museum's rhetorical engagement with its visitors, raising important questions about the role of embodiment in digital interaction and the differences between embodiment in digital versus physical space. As the next chapter will show, the American public has been taught to engage with historical representation in an overtly physical way, absorbing, through embodied interaction with physical objects, ideations about gender, race, authority, publicness, and much more. In other words, we learn what "gender" means (and, ostensibly, has always meant) by perceiving the manner in which gender is represented through time to be a basic division in American society, past and present. Who is represented, in what manner, and by which objects or terms combine to create the overt rhetorical performance of a museum and its exhibits, and forms the background upon which an examination of less traditional museum entities, like the NWHM, must be conducted.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Here, I use the notion of interpellation that comes from Stuart Hall, "Signification, Representation, Ideology" in *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* pp. 94-112 and Althusser, "Ideology," 1986.
2. Blair's original framework consists of five questions, which are: "(1) What is the significance of the text's material existence? (2) What are the apparatuses and degrees of durability displayed by the text? (3) What are the text's modes or possibilities of reproduction or preservation? (4) What does the text do to (or with, or against) other texts? (5) How does the text act on people?" (Blair 30).
3. For this purposes of this analysis, I have collected and examined the following:
    - Press releases and archived news items from NWHM.org (1997 to 2015)
    - Legislative bills (1999 to 2015)
    - Joan Wages' Huffington Post blog (2014 – present)
    - NWHM Congressional Commission web site
    - Press items discussing the NWHM on independent news websites
    - Arguments posted online by the most vocal opponents to the NWHM
4. I have adopted Hauser's theory of a "*plurality of publics* located in the multiple arenas of a *reticulate public sphere* in which strangers develop and express public opinions by engaging one another through *vernacular rhetoric*" (12). A public, according to Hauser, is defined as "the interdependent members of society who hold different opinions about a mutual problem and who seek to influence its resolution through discourse" (32). For Hauser, "membership in a public requires *rhetorical competence*, or a capacity to participate in rhetorical experiences" (33).

5. Here I draw from Krista Ratcliffe's work on rhetorical listening: "For just as all texts can be read, so too can all texts be listened to" (203).
6. Archived press between 2008 and 2015, enumerated:
    - Posts in 2015: 17
    - Posts in 2014: 19
    - Posts in 2013: 184
    - Posts in 2012: 99
    - Posts in 2011: 45
    - Posts in 2010: 40
    - Posts in 2009: 28
    - Posts in 2008: 4
7. Enumerating prominent terms within the collected discourse of the NWHM (press archives only) reveals patterns of emphasis that may be of use for further study:
    - "History" = 1121
    - "Honor" and variations = 236
    - "Education" and "educational" = 225
    - "Celebrate" and variations = 195
    - "Support" = 187
    - "Home" = 125
    - "Equality" = 69
    - "Stories" = 66
    - "Diverse," "diversity" and variants = 39
    - "Preserve" and variations = 33
    - "Remarkable" = 22
8. There is both qualitative and quantitative evidence to support the idea that Facebook and other social media platforms have become increasingly important modes of communication. As the NWHM reported on July 27, 2015:

"A new Pew Research Center study has found that the number of Americans who receive their news primarily from social media including Twitter and Facebook is increasing. More people are encountering and interacting with news posts in their feeds. A record 63% of users say that these platforms serve as a source of information beyond family and friends. On the heels of this study, the historical stories of remarkable women shared on social media are engaging people in conversations like never before. NWHM's Facebook page is on the cusp of surpassing 250,000 Likes, and the posts' average weekly reach is 4.4 million and rising…Social media is demonstrating tremendous power to connect people with their history. Rather than passively consuming historical news, NWHM's Facebook fans use it to frame their own experiences and better understand their lives" ("Facebook Spreads the Word").

CHAPTER 3

"A SENSE OF PLACE": A FEMINIST RHETORICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

From its inception, the National Women's History Museum has argued that women's history is missing from our national historical narratives. Such claims are well supported by the available evidence. Investigating the material presence of women's historical sites and landmarks in the United States, Lynn Sherr and Jurate Kazickas found that, as of 1994, "Less than 4 percent of National Park cultural sites and less than 5 percent of all National Historic Landmarks focus primarily on women" (x).[1] Out of the one hundred (of approximately two thousand, total) national historical sites, a rare few include museums. Critics argue that the reason for such small numbers is that history is not divided into male and female, "men's history" and "women's history." History, historical sites and memory places are supposedly universal: that is, they do not represent any one particular interest or group, but rather the American people as a whole. From this perspective, there should be no separate history for women and men.

This argument unravels, however, under closer examination. In practice, our historical narratives, historical sites, museums, monuments, and other memory places are products of our cultural and political beliefs and practices, beliefs and practices that have long been based upon hierarchical notions of race, class, and binary genders, to name a few. As Evelynn Nakano Glenn has compellingly shown, gender (as well as class and race) are constitutive features of a society, "organizing principle[s]of collectivities" so foundational that "major areas of life, including sexuality, family, education, economy, and state, are shot through with conflicting interests and hierarchies of power and

privilege along gender lines" (8). These areas, in turn, produce systems of value that determine, physically, ideologically, what and who is remembered, where, and in what manner. In the United States, these systems of value have evolved to privilege elite white men, their activities and world views. This relatively small group managed to secure cultural and political positions for themselves as leaders and thinkers; women, the lower classes, immigrants, Native Americans and African Americans provide the material support system upon and through which they achieved their power and status. The resulting devaluation and suppression of the activities, contributions, achievements, and histories of these marginalized peoples has profoundly influenced the content and structure of our national historical narratives and, as this chapter will argue, the material structures, monuments, museums and artifacts upon and around which it is always already constituted.

Situated among myriad social and political institutions that contribute to national historical narratives, the national history museum is an institution endowed with a remarkable degree of cultural power. The National Museum of American History (NMAH), in particular, is positioned within the material and narrative traditions of the United States as *the* authority on exhibit-based historical education in the nation. Sanctioned and supported by the federal government, it is unique among history museums in its close associations with official historical validity. Millions make the pilgrimage to Washington, D.C. each year to walk its halls; myriad local school children are brought in to study history by exploring its displays. Through an almost sacred physicality, it participates as an unequally powerful partner in the co-constitution of national identity, cultural memory, and historical narrative. As Gerard Hauser has

explained, these elements are a mesh of interworking systems, performing together rhetorically to inculcate diverse publics into a vision of a singular past, negotiating a set of collective beliefs and values.[2]

The public nature of national and historical museums, in particular, imbues them with a power of suggestion that exceeds most other cultural institutions: who or what is included (and excluded), the focus and scope of the exhibits, how objects are arranged and displayed, the tone and content of images, text, and other media – all of these elements become enmeshed in a cultural and political power struggle over public voice, public presence, and public representation. The stakes of this struggle cannot be overstated: as philosopher Hannah Arendt has suggested, to be fully human one must occupy the public sphere.[3] If this is true, it then follows that the assumptions and values that materialize in national history exhibits both contribute to and are symptomatic of the material, political and cultural conditions of American life.

Given the fraught nature of its inherent rhetorical power, it is perhaps no surprise that the NMAH is often the subject of conflict and controversy. As evidenced by the active pursuit of new museums on the National Mall, many consider the NMAH incapable of adequately representing a truly diverse and inclusive past. Most recently, the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) (2004) and the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) (2016) stand as evidence of an upwelling of critical and material resistance to the manner in which groups of Americans have been situated within the national cultural milieu by their historical oppressors. The current efforts of the National Women's History Museum (NWHM) represent another segment of the American population attempting to regain control over their own public

representation and to fully occupy the public sphere. In its bid for space on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to build a women's history museum, the NWHM has directly challenged the NMAHs insistence that it represents the past of the entire nation through its exhibit designs and artifact displays.

To better understand the scope and nature of this challenge, it is necessary to first gain a robust understanding of the narratives generated by and issuing from the National Museum of American History via the "performance" of its exhibits (in Judith Butler's sense of the word). In their landmark work on feminist rhetorical research strategies, Jaqueline Jones Royster and Gesa E. Kirsch argue for an approach to rhetorical analysis that "opens up spaces for observation and reflection, for new things to emerge, or rather, for us to notice things that may have been there all along but unnoticed" (90). Termed "strategic contemplation," Royster and Kirsch advocate for its use precisely because, as scholars of rhetoric, we ourselves "come to rhetoric as an embodied, polylogical social practice" that, implicitly or explicitly, "recognizes the senses…as sources of information in rhetorical performance and in the analysis of performance" (94).

In adopting such notions of rhetoric, rhetorical performance, and embodiment, the case study in this chapter explores the way in which "A sense of place – the physical, embodied experience of visiting places – can become a powerful research tool and an important dimension of strategic contemplation" (92). Following Carol Blair's notion of the materiality of rhetoric, I began my research with an embodied exploration of the National Museum of American History (NMAH) at the exhibit level. Assuming that I would find a full and richly textured history of the white male citizens of the United

States, I engaged initially with the extant exhibits by asking a simple question: Where are the women?

As I moved through the space, tallying mentions and representations, presence and absence of women, as well as recording my reactions and impressions, I sought to form a "sense of place" by capturing the narratives emerging around me and, later, to question the performativity of such narrative among and between the exhibits, their creators, and the publics for whom the museum purportedly exists.[4] In this way, I was able to ask not only what the location, frequency, associations, relationships, and representations of gender relations might mean, but also what such particularities actually do for, with, and against the publics and public narratives in which the museum is inextricably entangled.[5] Admittedly, such a study is an enormous task: the NMAH is constantly changing, an active entity that sometimes seems to resist sustained critical attention through sheer mutability. However, if the occupation of public space is a requisite for full humanity in American culture and politics, as Arendt has suggested, and given the gaining momentum of demands for better, more complex, and more inclusive representation, as the NWHM illustrates, then a careful and critical scrutiny of the National Museum of American History is long overdue.

As a central feature of the museum experience, embodiment (and particularly gendered embodiment) within the space of the NMAH refers to both the material presentation of historical artifacts and information as well as the visitor's embodied engagement with those materials. To better understand the way that gendered embodiment in both senses transforms as it moves from the physical museum space to the digital cybermuseum space, this chapter and the next take up selected aspects of the

embodied experience with museums and cybermuseums within the modern mediascape. In this chapter, I begin with a brief review of scholarship on the rhetorics of the museum exhibit and the relationships in which it participates. I then give a physical description of the National Museum of American History and the significance of its location and design, after which I explore the rhetoricity of selected exhibits within the museum by exhibition level. In this way, I am better able to disentangle the material, cultural and ideological implications of citizenship, power and gender relationships as they circulate among and through the museum and American society.

Rhetorics of the Museum Exhibit

In their work on public memory places, Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson and Brian L. Ott argue for "the value of understanding public memory and public memory places as fundamentally rhetorical" (2). Rhetoric, by their definition, is "the study of discourses, events, objects, and practices that attends to their character as meaningful, legible, partisan, and consequential" (2). More than anything, though, they argue that rhetoric is concerned with the question of "what it means to be 'public'" (3). For Arendt, full humanity is in part determined by one's ability to occupy public space; for Hauser, the public sphere is where rhetorical collectives are negotiated and formed, and where cultural memory and history intersect at shared narratives of the group (113). Drawing from the work of memory scholar Maurice Halbwachs and poststructuralist philosopher Michel Foucault, Blair, Dickinson and Ott describe the relationship of mutuality that exists between a public and its public memory spaces, a relationship that "implicates their [the public's] common interests, investments, or destinies, with profound political implications" (6). In this way, public places, and particularly public memory sites, can be

considered the result of the complex co-constitution of place and publics, where individuals gather in search of a sense of a shared past from which a more informed future can be constructed. As Kenneth Burke has theorized, the identifications by which people come to "belong" in a collective, or in Hauser's terms, a "public," turn belonging into a rhetorical act.[6] This belonging is sought in many ways, from social to economic, but few are so overtly authoritative and political as the belonging sought from the revered artifacts and narratives created by history museums and memory sites.

According to Blair, Dickinson and Ott, memory places (including museums) are unusually powerful in Western culture for six specific reasons. Memory sites, the authors argue:

1. Enjoy status as a place, "recognizable and set apart from undifferentiated space" (25). Each "commands attention, because it announces itself as a marker of collective identity" (25);
2. Construct preferred public identities for visitors and other users "by specific rhetorical means" (27);
3. Are characterized by an extraordinary partiality (28). Positioned as "the sites of civic importance and their subject matters as the stories of society," the stories that memory sites tell are thus made, "quite literally, to matter to the lives of the collective" (28);
4. Perceived as intractably present and located, they "mobilize power in ways not always available with other memory *techne*" (29). Places mobilize power through acting directly on the body; their rhetoricity "engages the full sensorium" (29);

5. Are made up of an assemblage of various memory *techne* that often includes writing or various meaningful symbols (30);
6. Have histories of their own. That is, “they do not just *represent* the past. They *accrete* their own pasts" (30).

As destinations with status and powerful symbolic meaning, the draw and influence of memory sites, memorials, and museums is too often taken for granted. They become the unchallenged but deceptively selective materials from which historical narratives are constructed, shared, and constrained. Quietly, powerfully, they influence our present, our identities, our bodies and our shared beliefs. As we construct them as meaningful aspects of our national identity and culture, they are also constructing us.

Given the power that memory sites wield in the United States, they have understandably become the subject of increasing scholarly attention from diverse fields in recent years. Museum scholars, in particular, have long sought to understand the rhetoricity of public institutions from within their own field, although not always in those terms. For example, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill recognizes that the museum, as an assemblage of words and things, acts “to produce the self; identity is shaped, and self-image is materialized through writing and through collecting…The imagining of possibilities for the self is materialized and made tangible through objects" (9). Museums are deeply involved in configurations of subjectivity, meaning, knowledge, truth and history, due largely to the museum’s “power to name, to represent common sense, to create official versions…and to represent the past” (19). Considering the significance of this power on a national scale, Simon J. Knell ties national museums to the processes through which a nation imagines and defines itself, “both for citizens and wider

international communities" (21). It is entirely possible, Knell suggests, that because a museum "seeks to shape a particular imagining of the nation through its deployment of space and objects" that this material expression can be accorded to the "embedded values and perceptions" of the nation it represents (21-2).

Perhaps this is why, when Hilde S. Hein examines the changing role of the museum in modern times, she urges scholars to consider museums "as world makers and not simply as preservers and propagators of cultural values" (16). As active "makers" rather than passive repositories, Hein insists, the role of the museum must be scrutinized not only in terms of "how experience is dissemination both in museums and elsewhere" but also how and why "certain experiences are valorized over others and according to what standards" (16).

From this perspective, issues of representation in and through museums and other memory sties take on a renewed sense of urgency. As Hooper-Greenhill has claimed, "[q]uestions of meaning are questions of power, which raise issues of the politics of representation" (19). As active makers of meaning, museums are deeply implicated in the political processes of visibility and legitimacy explored by feminist theorists including Judith Butler. For Butler, "*representation* serves as the operative term" in these processes (2). As political subjects, women require sufficient representation to support their status and position within a public; however, in Butler's view, the "pervasive cultural condition" has guaranteed that "women's lives were either misrepresented or not represented at all" (2). For museum scholar Bruce W. Ferguson, exhibitions are "publicly sanctioned representations of identity" that use artifacts as "elements in institutionalized stories" (175). Ferguson has further argued that "Exhibitions are the material speech of

what is essentially a political institution, one with legal and ethical responsibilities, constituencies and agents who act in relation to differing sets of consequences and influences at any given historical moment" (182). Within this complex network of often competing interests, representation becomes a fraught political process imbued with the beliefs, attitudes, and values of potentially conflicting stakeholders. Embodied in the collections and exhibits, these beliefs, attitudes and values are communicated outward in narratives which, Hooper-Greenhill argues, “naturalizes these underpinning assumptions and which gives them the character of inevitability and common sense" (23).

If, as many, many scholars have argued, some of these underpinning assumptions include the inevitability of power hierarchies that privilege one gender, one race, one role or form of power over others, the narrative of common sense embodied in the museum would exhibit these same characteristics. Indeed, that is what museum scholar Gaby Porter found in the late 1990s when she examined selected museums for representations of gender: she concluded that, “as produced and presented in museums, the roles of women are relatively passive, shallow, undeveloped, muted and closed; the roles of men are, in contrast, relatively active, deep, highly developed and articulated, fully pronounced and open" (64-5). Overall, Porter argues, "In museums, and in the discourse [in which they participate], 'woman' becomes the background against which 'man' acts" (64). Archaeologist Marie Louise Stig Sorensen develops this assertion further, arguing that for the most part “Men are used to ‘carry’ the narrative of the past through the exhibition space. It is through men that history is articulated and they therefore become the history” (33). Simply adding women to such a narrative “does not really challenge or

alter the message" she claims; in such a case, women "are merely ornamental and not essential for understanding" (33).

If Porter and Sorensen are correct in their assertions, the implications for identity creation within the museum space are profound. In the museum, representations are "purposefully creative and…generate new social and political formations" notes Hooper-Greenhill. "Through the persistent production of certain images and the suppression of others, and through controlling the way images are viewed or artifacts are preserved, visual representations can be used to produce a view of the nation's history" (25). So when Hooper-Greenhill asks "Who has the power to create, to make visible, and to legitimate meanings and values?" (19), it is a political question, a question of power, status, and publicness. It is a question capable of impacting innumerable facets of public and private life for diverse American publics.

The National Museum of American History

Housing over three million artifacts, most of which are not on display, the National Museum of American History (NMAH) is the largest repository of historical objects in the United States. Construction of the museum began in the late 1950s and opened to the public in January 1964. Originally known as the Museum of History and Technology, the massive 750,000 square foot building was designed by architects McKim, Mead and White and cost $36 million to complete (in 1950s currency). The sixth Smithsonian building constructed on the National Mall, the museum was renamed the National Museum of American History in 1980. Its location on the Mall qualifies it as a National Historic Landmark, and the building is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Beginning in 2006, the NMAH underwent a two-year, $85 million

renovation of the building's central areas, adding a grand staircase, a skylight, a new gallery for the *Star Spangled Banner* exhibit, and renewals of several other exhibits. Currently, the 120,000 square foot west wing is under construction, part of a larger project to update the structure and exhibits ("Mission & History").

The museum consists of three main exhibition levels, a basement, two office-collection levels and a mechanical penthouse on the roof. There are two public entrances; the north entrance, off of Constitution Avenue, opens into the lowest of the three exhibition levels, while the south entrance opens into the second exhibition level, with a balcony view of the building's three-story atrium and an eye-level view of the art installation on the exterior wall of the *Star Spangled Banner* gallery (figure 1).

Figure 1. Art installation on the exterior wall of the *Star Spangled Banner* gallery, The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Shersta A. Chabot, March 2016.

Both entrances consist of glass double doors and are guarded by security guards and metal detectors. A mandatory bag search is conducted upon entry for each visitor.

The north entrance guides visitors down toward an Information Desk; during my visit, the center of the space was filled with an exhibit about voting (complete with a variety of different voting booths and apparatus), and lined with glass cases displaying a selection of artifacts. A brightly-lit gift shop gleamed through glass windows on the opposite side of the space. Dark hallways yawned to the right and the left, leading to the exhibition areas in the east and west wings.

This is Exhibition Level 1, which houses two wings of exhibits: The west wing contains exhibits focused around invention and innovation, a children's activity lab, *Object Project*, a freestanding exhibit centered in the open hall and surrounded by cafeteria-style seating (minus the cafeteria), *American Enterprise*, focused on Americans in the business world, and small exhibits on American currency and how archives work. The east wing contains the large *America on the Move* exhibit, focused on the history of transportation in America, a space which flows into *On the Water*, an exploration of the history of water travel. There is also the *Food Exhibition*, where Julia Child's kitchen can be found, and another set of exhibits about the evolution of electricity and power machinery and money.

Exhibition Level 2 houses the large Center exhibit, the *Star Spangled Banner*. This exhibit is accessed from the three-story atrium through a dimly lit hallway to the right. The west wing of this level is mostly closed for construction, with only one small exhibit open, *Within These Walls*, which gives visitors a glimpse into the history of residential construction. The east wing of Level 2 contains *American Stories*, a large exhibit with objects ranging from TV and film props to antique gowns, pottery, even

famous children's show puppets. There is also a *Documents Gallery* and the *National Museum of African American History and Culture Gallery*, closed at the time of my visit.

The topmost exhibition level, Exhibition Level 3, is likewise under construction; the entire west wing was closed during my visit. The center area is filled with the *American Presidency* and *The First Ladies* exhibits, accessed via the same entryway off the atrium-adjacent hall. The east wing of Level 3 houses the largest exhibit in the museum, *Price of Freedom*, which takes the visitor through different aspects of American at war. The *Gunboat Philadelphia* is also on display here. Figure 2 shows a map of the museum's three exhibition levels as of summer 2016.

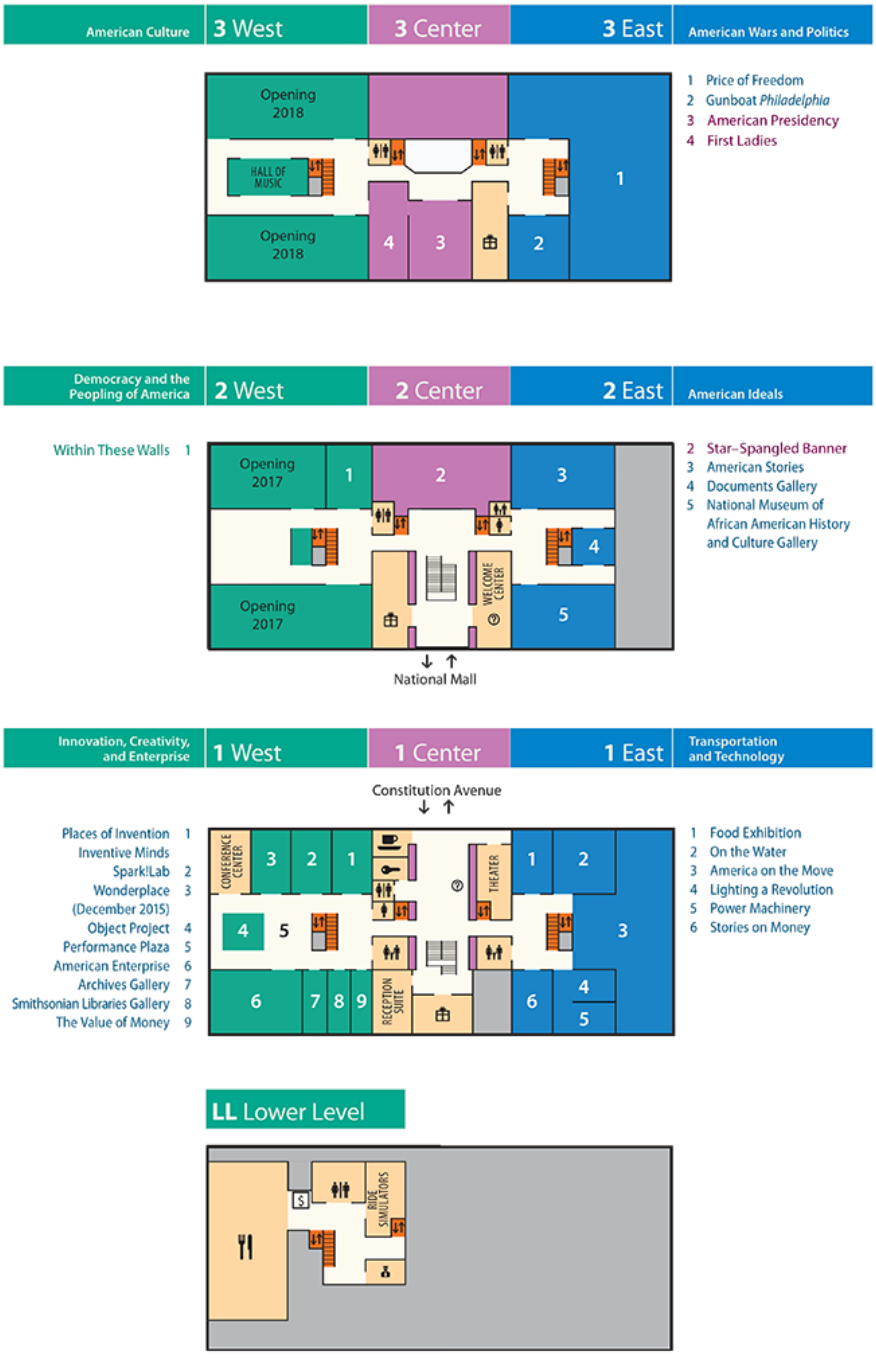

Figure 2. Map of the National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. "Floorplans." The National Museum of American History. *AmericanHistory.SI.edu.* n.d. http://americanhistory.si.edu/visit/floorplans

A Sense of Place

Austere when compared to other historical buildings on and near the National Mall, the rather unassuming stone exterior of the NMAH presents a stark contrast to the interior, where visitors are greeted by a vast and echoing atrium spanning three full levels and lit from above with skylights. A massive art installation, an "abstract flag made of lightweight, reflective polycarbonate," provides a focal point for the space (*Official Guide*). Physically (and, I argue, ideologically), the centered aspects of American history within the museum focus by design on national symbols and political and military leadership; the flag and the anthem it inspired form the core around which the entire museum space is constructed (Exhibition Level 2).[6] Exhibits on Exhibition Level 1 fill two large wings and are a riot of color and spot lighting; the exhibits on this level are themed around invention, innovation, and the celebration of technological and mechanical advancement. Although the location of the *America on the Move* exhibit, for example, and its full-size locomotives, trolley cars, and vehicles may be explained in part by the weight and structural demands of the artifacts, when accompanied by the particular grouping of exhibits on Level 1 such a grouping more than suggests that such values provide a significant part of the cultural and ideological foundations upon which life as an American is based. Exhibition Level 3, by contrast, features exhibits focused on political and military history and national leaders of various kinds; its location at the top of the museum corresponds neatly with the elevated status of these histories and the persons honored by attribution.

The physical organization and presentation of history and artifacts at the NMAH thus contributed in a tangible and material way to my embodied engagement with the

various exhibits. This "sense of place," as Royster and Kirsch explained (92), was my first goal upon arrival: I entered the museum as an observer, keenly attuned to the ways in which my mind and body were invited to interact with the museum space, in general, and with each exhibit, in particular. I also entered aware that my experience would be inextricably shaped by *when* I visited, as well as where. My study took place in March, that chilly and drab time of year just before the warmth of spring coaxes the famed cherry trees into bloom. Although the museum is never without visitors, due to the timing of my visits there were perhaps fewer out-of-state and international visitors present and more school-aged children on field trips than there would be during the summer months. Contending with other people in the space was an issue at times, particularly when attempting to photograph the exhibits; my movement around the exhibits was also constrained not only by the design of the exhibit, but the presence and number of other people as well.

Of course, my engagement with the NHAM began long before I approached it from the Smithsonian subway station on the National Mall; I had visited the museum website multiple times prior to my visit, read several articles about the *First Ladies* exhibit, and purchased and read a guidebook to the museum as well. None of this prior information, however else it may have influenced my experience, prepared me for the sheer size and wealth of content the museum has on offer. Due to my explorations of the museum web site, I expected to find the Stars and Stripes flag, Abe Lincoln's hat, and Dorothy's ruby slippers from *The Wizard of Oz* at the NMAH. But anticipation of these three objects (each in a different exhibit), hardly prepared me for the vast halls and miles of glowing display cases, images, text panels, and artifacts that I encountered. I was

overwhelmed with how much there was to see – and this, with the west wings of Exhibition Level 2 and 3 closed to the public for construction. Much like the museum itself, I realized that my analysis would necessarily be quite selective, and to focus only on certain aspects of certain exhibits at the NMAH. Although far more can and should be said, the analyses that follow were chosen due to the particular insights they allowed into the relationships of power, knowledge, binary gender and American citizenship in which the entire museum is inextricably entangled – one exhibition level at a time.

Exhibition Level 1: Transportation and Technology, Science and Innovation

Engaging with Exhibition Level 1 while attuned to representations of binary gender (and, to a lesser degree, race and class) was (and continues to be) an exercise in frustration. This is not due to the complete absence of women and representations of binary genders, race and class; to the contrary. Women populated the exhibits of Level 1 in surprising numbers. Equally (or perhaps even more) important as the presence of women in the exhibits, however, is the question of where they were located, in what numbers, and in relation to which narratives, traditions and gender roles. As museum scholar Mike Wallace reminds us, history museums have long been a technology of the dominant classes, appropriating the past and the presenting it in selective and particular ways (158). By obscuring some aspects of history and emphasizing others, by ignoring contradictions or oppositions, and thereby "rendering the majority of the population invisible as shapers of history," history museums have long inhibited visitors in their ability to imagine alternatives to the social order – past or future (158). My investigation of the visible and knowable aspects of history as constructed by the NMAH led to a more richly textured understanding of the complex historical narratives co-constituted by the

museum and its publics and, by extension, a more productive understanding of the critical function the history museum plays within American culture and politics.

For the remainder of this section, I will focus on my exploration and analysis of three of the largest exhibits on Level 1: *American Enterprise, America on the Move,* and the *Food Exhibition*. Of all the exhibits on Level 1, these three offered the most complex representations of gender (race and class) and thus, for me, participated more significantly in the resulting rhetorical performances enacted on the level.

American Enterprise

One of the most informative and diverse exhibits in the museum, *American Enterprise* depicts the history of American business from colonial times through the present day. Even this distinction as the "most" diverse is revealing about the relationships between gender, entrepreneurship, and paid work outside the home; perhaps more so than many of the other exhibits because of the obvious attempts that have been made to achieve a modicum of race and gender inclusivity. I say attempts, because after completing a brief study of portions of the exhibit the statistics showed that the narrative remains one of business acumen of elite white men; just as Sorensen argued, in this exhibit (and throughout Level 1) white men carry the narrative; the history on display here is articulated through them (33).

For example, the entirety of the long back wall of the exhibit is taken up with an installation of colorful text and image panels highlighting individuals assumedly representative of business success (see figure 3). Laid out in chronological order from left to right, the panels provided a timeline of "Americans" (although some hailed from before the organization of the United States, a fact the museum seems unconcerned

about) who purportedly innovated their way into prominence via business excellence. The color palette here is a shifting blend of oranges, yellows and pale blues, with black text and a mix of color and black-and-white images. These images vary in size, with white men featured most often in the larger sizes. Spot lighting pulls the eye and illuminates the entire installation with a brightness that dims the rest of the space by comparison.

Figure 3. Gallery wall, *American Enterprise* exhibit, The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Shersta A. Chabot, March 2016.

At first, I was impressed by the number of women represented in each of the five eras into which the timeline was divided: in the 1770 segment, 16 individual profiles were included, 4 of which were women (1 Native American, 1 Chinese, 2 White). The 1850 segment was even more diverse: 26 individual profiles were included, 9 of which were women (2 African American, 1 Japanese, 6 White). The 1930 segment, and each segment following, were quite sparse by comparison: out of the 11 individual profiles

included for 1930, 4 were women, all White; for 1970, which also featured 11 profiles, that number had dropped to just 2 women (1 African American, 1 White); finally, in the 2010 segment, 12 individual profiles were included, with 5 women, 1 Latina, 4 White.

Altogether, women of all ethnicities represented approximately 32% of the profiles features on the exhibit installation; further, approximately 33% of the women represented were non-white.[7] Given the long history of women's exclusion from land and business ownership and other restrictions foreclosing on high-status business positions in the United States, such numbers initially give the impression of inclusivity; after all, in the 250 years represented by this exhibit, women were only full legal citizens for the last century and only gained the right to own property more recently than that.

However, upon closer examination several of the women represented in the *American Enterprise* installation tend to have tenuous (at best) claims to business success, calling into question the criteria by which individuals were chosen for inclusion: of the 24 women profiled, one of these is Addie Card, a female child laborer; one is Afong Moy, "Exploited Attraction," noted for the fact that she was brought to the United States in 1834 as a curiosity and exhibited by wealthy patrons for entertainment; another is Tei Shida Saito, "Picture Bride," whose claim to fame includes being forced into an arranged marriage to a Japanese pineapple farmer in Hawaii. How these women are representative of the history of American enterprise, other than as pawns in the hands of powerful men, I was unable to discover.

Out of the remaining women profiled, most of these were noted for success in occupations that were overtly domestic in nature: clothing construction or design, hair care products, diet programs for women, food preparation, and makers of toys for girls

(specifically, the Barbie doll) are all strongly represented among the businesses referenced. These businesswomen are lauded for pursuits still closely tied to the domestic sphere and women's "traditional" roles as housekeeper, wife, mother, and producer of the accoutrements of daily life, regardless of the century in question: the 2010 group features a television chef, the creator of Spanx (a tight-fitting garment akin to a girdle), organic food growers and a labor organizer.[7] Based on the representations of "enterprise" represented in this exhibit, it is clear that the roles for which American women are and have been venerated have not changed significantly over time; they have simply moved into for-profit arenas.

Most curious and perhaps most frustrating for me, the period between 1970 and 2010 featured only two "businesswomen" – Oprah Winfrey and Gloria Steinem. As those of us who were alive to see it understand, this forty-year period was a time of phenomenal growth for women activists, businesspersons, political leaders, and other innovations and occupations. Yet somehow, a vibrant and widely diverse segment of business history in the United States has been reduced to two women who, however deserving of a spot on the wall, are nonetheless merely a fraction of the successful businesswomen who made a name and a fortune for themselves during this time. I would image few of us would claim these two women as being representative of enterprising women during the time period. Moreover, the particular challenges women have historically faced in the business world are not mentioned, nor are the legal and cultural barriers that linger on into the present day. It seems that Sorensen's argument, that simply adding women to a particular historical narrative does not challenge nor alter the message to a significant degree, has been reaffirmed in this exhibit; in *American Enterprise* and

elsewhere, the presence of women (and ethnic minorities) is still somehow inessential to the narrative under construction, and, by extension, inessential to the enterprise aspects of American society.

America on the Move

The largest exhibit on Exhibition Level 1 is *America on the Move*, an exhibit that moves the museum visitor through the history of mechanized transportation in America from horse-drawn wagons to the (relatively) modern automobile. The size of the artifacts in this exhibit make for a memorable encounter: locomotives, busses, trolley cars, subway cars, and wagons and vehicles of all shapes and sizes are carefully positioned within narrative vignettes and in relation to groupings of life-size human mannequins in a variety of poses, genders and ethnicities (see figure 4). The exhibit provides a wealth of text and images to accompany and complement the more 3-D display items, as well as a selection of digital interactives and audio features.

Figure 4. Artifact Grouping A, *America on the Move* exhibit, The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Shersta A. Chabot, March 2016.

The colors here are muted, with neutral grey carpeting and exposed ducts and pipes overhead painted a uniform black working together to create a theatrical setting for the exhibit's artifacts. Many of the vehicles on display are situated within vignettes that feature landscapes or cityscapes in blues, accented with reds and blacks, on the wall behind them; spot lighting creates areas of strong light and shadow that pull the eye toward certain aspects of the displays. A row of windows along the far wall adds natural lighting to the space. The life-sized human figures are all a uniform grey, although detailed enough to determine race and gender at a glance. Visitors are invited to join the figures as they wait for a trolley, or talk to a locomotive engineer; to peer inside a subway car or to sit beside Charlotte Hawkins Brown, an African American woman waiting patiently for her bus. With ramps that move visitors up and down for a variety of vantage

points, *America on the Move* directs and motivates movement in embodied ways that support the assertions of scholars including Hooper-Greenhill and Blair about the kinds of work that material objects and constructed space perform on the body in the process of knowledge construction.

The theme of the exhibit is not overtly gendered; as we are expected to know, men and women have long used various modes of transportation, and in large numbers. While women may have had additional restrictions on their travel (due to a variety of factors), the exhibit shows them riding bicycles, driving cars, and as passengers on trolleys and buses. For this reason, the impressions created here, when compared to *American Enterprise*, are more difficult to quantify. Women appear in a variety of ways and performing a number of roles, from a text panel detailing the first woman to drive across America (Alice Huyler Ramsey, completing her trip in 1909) to driving a minivan full of children down a modern American highway.

Figure 5. Artifact Grouping B, *American on the Move* exhibit, The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Shersta A. Chabot, March 2016.

However, given the prevalence of white men, the impression one is given is that they outnumber women (of all races) by at least two to one. The white men, identifiable by their Anglicized features, are posed as engineers, drivers, and operators; they are present in each and every scenario, whether it be riding a motorcycle, owning a grocer's shop, or selling a couple a new car. In one vignette, titled "On the Interstate, 1956-1990," 9 figures are distributed within the vehicles on display; of these, 3 are female, and one is an African American male. In a vignette directly across from this display, a white couple (one male, one female) sit across from a white male salesman in a car dealership; the "road" directly behind their position is peopled with 8 figures, two of which are female (one driver, one passenger) (see figure 5). Based on these two proximal examples alone, women (of all races) represent roughly five out of seventeen, or 29%, of the figures present.

But just as a closer look at who the women of *American Enterprise* were, and how they were being presented, lent a distinct insight into attitudes about American women and their relationship to the world of business and enterprise, the women of *America on the Move* overwhelmingly perform roles which are stereotypical and unimaginative; even in the display of a travel trailer, the white male figure sits outside in a lawn chair, reading the newspaper, while an adult female and young girl figure cook and set the table inside. Or in the car dealership display, where a pregnant woman sits beside her husband (both white) while he negotiates the price of a new car with a white salesman, the audio two male voices (she does not speak). While certainly representative of some historical moments, as Glenn has argued, *America on the Move* is insidious in the way that it renders the category of white male as the transparent but powerful core around which the exhibit weaves its narrative of progress (13).

In practice, the exhibit performs a kind of gender asymmetry that is echoed across the museum's other exhibits; where women are represented, they are frequently tied to domestic roles or, if depicted in public, accompanied by adult males. The innovations in mechanized transportation in the United States have undoubtedly offered freedoms for all who can afford to participate; however, the terms and constraints upon that participation clearly favor the narrative of the innovative and independent white man conquering both machine and distance with his mettle. The freedom to travel is clearly a privilege provided by white men, a freedom in which women and people of color participate, but do not have ownership rights. This, in effect, reifies the normalized hierarchy of power that maintains white males as the dominant figures of American culture, both past and present.

Food: Transforming the American Table, 1950-2000

Few things are as important to Americans as food. Growing it, preparing it, and at the NMAH, displaying food-related culture. For many Americans, food is an important link back to a native culture or ethnic heritage, one that is less obvious than other aspects of "fitting in" and so the one that tends to survive enculturation. The design of *Food* places its largest "artifact," the circa 1990s kitchen and set of Julia Child's television show, in a prominent location at the entrance. From the main hall, one can peer in through "windows" that have been inserted for that purpose; brightly lit from above with spot lights, the glass-enclosed room features the accoutrements of a modern kitchen space: table and chairs, refrigerator, sink, and an impressive array of pots, pans, knives, and other tools of the trade. Thanks to glass panels on all four sides, visitors can get a 360-degree view of the set; in fact, the exhibit directs the gaze in a manner that encourages visitors to do so, leading them into a large alcove behind the kitchen to a viewing spot for the video of Child's show playing there. The audio from the show tends to echo around the area, providing a kind of informal narrative to the artifacts on display.

Unlike the other exhibits on this level, *Food* features a light hardwood floor and a long table down the center of its main room, lending further to the impression of being in an American kitchen. Glass cases line alcoves on either side of the table, set into walls painted a soft creamy white. Moving deeper into the exhibit, the right-hand wall features a long glassed display of a 1950s grocery store, complete with photos of white male grocers and white female shoppers mixed in amidst the shopping carts and cookbooks in the case. The left side features a number of themed cases that include displays on fast food, countercultures, and of course, the ubiquitous outdoor barbeque.

Figure 6. “Backyard Cookout” display, *Food* exhibit, The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Shersta A. Chabot, March 2016.

This last display is situated in proximity to another, focused on Mexican food in the United States, and the contrast between the two cases is stark in an overtly gendered way. For example, in “Backyard Cookout,” two styles of charcoal grills are positioned on red risers with a man’s Hawaiian shirt affixed to the wall behind it; the books displayed beneath these items show white men grilling meat in an outdoor setting (see figure 6). Immediately to the right of this display is the “Mexican Food Revolution” display, which features a woman’s apron, a “traditional” Mexican woman’s dress, and a tortilla press, all set against yellow risers. The lone black-and-white photo included in the display features Mexican women making tortillas (see figure 7).

Figure 7. "Mexican Food Revolution" display, *Food* exhibit, The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Shersta A. Chabot, March 2016.

Even for the casual observer, it is impossible to miss the distinct masculine tone of the barbecue display, with its outdoor backdrop, large metal grilling tools, and man's garish leisure shirt, and the contrasting feminine quality of the brightly flowered women's artifacts amidst the tools of Mexican food preparation. For the critical eye, this feminization of Mexican peoples reads as a deliberate attempt to enhance the masculine province of outdoor barbequing. Such differentiation has powerful implications for the museum and its publics: as Sorensen has pointed out, "Objects easily provoke identification; they are affective and act as an aid to memories. They play on traditions and recognition, and can be subject to fetishism. Objects also have aesthetic dimensions; they produce responses and sensations" (78). By contrasting the privileged and leisurely

relationship that white men have to food against the laboring brown bodies of Mexican women, *Food* re-asserts the naturalness of white male dominance over others.

The entire back section of the exhibit strongly underscores this gendered relationship to food as well. The entire rear section of the *Food* exhibit (perhaps about a third of the total space) is devoted to wine making. Images depict dark-skinned people laboring in vineyards while white men are pictured tasting wines and using their creative faculties to make a beverage for the elite, the privileged, and the connoisseur; the field hands certainly do not partake of the wine they helped bring into being, at least not in the confines of the display. If women are pictured, they are among the laborers; it is difficult to tell, however, due to the quality of the images provided.

Based on these examples alone, the evidence points to overtly gendered ideas about food preparation in America that are heavily implicated in technologies of power and citizenship. This, in and of itself, is unsurprising: the reproductive activities of food purchasing and preparation have long been firmly tied to women's role as domestic laborer, while white men's food-related activities maintain clear boundaries both in regard to space (kitchen versus backyard patio) as well as purpose (obligation/survival versus leisure). Such configurations lend strength to notions of gendered hierarchies within American culture and cultural attitudes in which white men are the innovators, the owners and overseers of food in America; they own stores, make wine, own fields, cook outdoors as a leisure activity. Their privileged position and relationship to food sits in stark contrast to women, who are shown in relation to food as consumers and laborers, cooks and caregivers. As museum scholar Beverly Butler has acknowledged, within the "objective" museum space, the poverty and inaccuracies of representation of women is,

in a word, pernicious; woman, she argues, is "never the historical 'subject'…Always she is objectified" (21). Tied, inextricably, to binary biological and reproductive functions, such gendered narratives help to form and reflect back to us the foundations upon which American society is built.

Exhibition Level 2 – American Ideals, American Lives

Just as built environments employ foundations to support what comes next, Exhibition Level 1 provides sure footing for the exhibits I encountered on Exhibition Level 2. Here, culture prevails; a wealth of overtly patriotic culture, the exhibits imply, form the core of what makes American and Americans unique from the rest of the world. As previously mentioned, *The Star-Spangled Banner: The Flag that Inspired the National Anthem* is an exhibit located at the physical and ideological heart of the NMAH. Its dim, near-sacred halls are heavily guarded and tell the story of the flag that inspired the national anthem. With most of one wing closed for construction, the secondary focus of Level two is *American Stories,* an exhibit advertised as "a chronological presentation of highlights of American history" (*Official Guide* 113). In this section, I explore the implications of these two exhibits as they have been situated – at the museum's core.

The Star-Spangled Banner: The Flag that Inspired the National Anthem

As its title implies, the focus of *The Star-Spangled Banner* exhibit is the massive flag, now carefully enclosed within a custom-designed, "environmentally-controlled chamber" installed as part of the museum's ongoing renovations ("Star-Spangled Banner"). No photos are allowed inside the exhibit; under the watchful eye of security guards, visitors are ushered up a gently sloping walkway lined with artifacts, images and text panels describing the events that led to Francis Scott Key's now-famous poem and,

ultimately, to our national anthem. Most of the materials have been affixed to the wall at approximately eye level; carpeting hushes footsteps as the light grows dimmer, until finally, turning sharply to the left brings the visitor before a large glass wall and a dark, narrow room with strips of faint light installed in the hardwood flooring. Behind the glass, the storied flag rests on a slight incline, inviting visitors to lean in close for a better look. Lighted interactive panels span the base of the glass, too low for adults to use or read with any practical ease. The fragility of the artifact is clearly evident, even in the poor light; the threads have frayed, separated or even disintegrated in many places, leaving the battle-worn flag further faded, tattered, and under threat of total disintegration. The words of Key's poem are inscribed on the black back wall in white; the overall effect is disorienting, a bit spooky, and palpable, as the hushed voices and carefully controlled body language of the crowd demonstrate.

After a hushed shoulder-to-shoulder shuffle along the glass with these strangers, another sharp left turn leads to a downward-sloping hall lined with artifacts, images and text panels narrating the story of the creation of the flag itself, and a little about the women who sewed it. The details offered here are surprisingly thorough – several images accompany the text, as well as small artifacts to enhance the narrative. Additional panels detail the history of the flag's preservation (and desecration – people were cutting pieces off of it for souvenirs, at one point) before its arrival at the NMAH.

As the symbolic core around which the narrative of the NMAH and, by extension, the narrative of the nation's history is constructed, the gendered performance of citizenship roles in relation to the flag lies at the heart of the gendered power hierarchies through which American culture and politics operates. As clearly demonstrated through

the exhibits on Level 1, women perform their citizenship through domestic labor and reproductive activities and men through public or military action and/or inspirational artistic expression. The flag is not owned by the women who create it; rather, it is produced in service of a nation under the absolute control of elite white men. Ownership of the flag, and by extension that which it symbolizes, is demonstrated throughout the exhibit by tying it to the greatness it inspired and the destructive license taken with the artifact by those who cut pieces out of it for souvenirs. Such a message serves to reify male ownership of female reproductive labor, and to guarantee continuing prejudice against women who prefer to perform their patriotic duty via less domestic avenues. Patriotism, it seems, is a gendered concept and performance.

American Stories

As demonstrated by *The Star-Spangled Banner*, the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves have a significant impact on how core American ideals, like patriotism or citizenship, are conceived and performed. It stands to reason that if our ideology relies upon what historian Gerda Lerner termed "gender-linked service functions," that "inequality between the sexes" is structured into "every institution of society" (111). As the largest and perhaps most widely ranging exhibit (at the time of my visit) on Level 2, *American Stories* stands as another missed opportunity to shift those institutions back toward equality. The focus of this exhibit is on things, more so than on people; while not the only exhibit in the museum to take such an approach, the manner in which *American Stories* attempts to construct a cohesive and chronological narrative of the "highlights" of American history demonstrates the significant degree to which even our national history institutions cannot move beyond asymmetrical representation.

Figure 8. "Industrial Development" display, *American Stories* exhibit, The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Shersta A. Chabot, March 2016.

This exhibit features floors carpeted in a neutral gray, black-painted ceilings strung with spot lighting (a favorite in the museum), and purple and yellow wall panels around the sides of the room. The room itself is completely open, the interior taken up with freestanding glass display cases at varying heights depending upon the size of the artifacts within. Materials are affixed to the back and side walls as well. These objects range from colonial-era gowns to the death mask of Abraham Lincoln, a 1980s-era computer to the chairs of Edith and Archie Bunker from the set of the 1970s television show *All in the Family*. The objects take center stage here; text panels and images are small, often difficult to read unless bending over. Images of historical people on the wall are unaccompanied by text; who they are, or why they might have been significant, remains a mystery (see figure 8).

Observing the exhibit with an eye on the stories of women, in particular, I was pleased to encounter Alice Paul's Equal Rights Amendment Charm Bracelet from 1972 and a briefcase once belonging to Adlai Stevenson from the 1960s. Although not the only objects in the exhibit stemming from a woman's personal belongings, they were among the very few that hinted at histories beyond the personal or the domestic. Of course, the presence of these artifacts also underscores the mysterious dearth of representation for other, arguably equally important, moments for women: the woman suffrage movement, for example, or the civil rights or labor movements. True, Exhibition Level 2 claims to represent the cultural aspects of American history, rather than the political, but as feminist have recognized for centuries, for women, the personal is political. To display, in proximity, Paul's bracelet and Dorothy's ruby slippers from the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz* within the context of a single exhibit suggests that both are of similar significance and import, rather than one representing a vast and vibrant political women's movement and the other a costume an actor wore in a film, however beloved.

In fact, *American Stories* offers a cultural history of America that is so eclectic, so fragmented, that the exhibit fails to form a cohesive view of that history nor to assign appropriate levels of import to objects connected to moments of historical significance. As it currently stands, *American Stories* has given a whole new meaning to the word "objectification" – pieces of our shared past reduced to objects, stripped of context and dubiously meaningful. As a whole, the objects are displayed with minimal text panels that frequently fail to describe the object itself but rather tease the inquisitive visitor with bits of "stories" of American history, from slavery to politics. Some, including the images on the walls, fail to do even that much. By the simple but powerful virtue of their being

displayed, visitors are made to understand that these things are considered of some interest or import, but the selection and display decisions at work in the space lead to a jumble of wildly diverse aspects of American culture that, in the end, seem to perform the "contradictory, ambivalent" position in which Macdonald has argued museums currently find themselves (2).

Culturally, politically and materially, American women are in no less a contradictory, ambivalent position themselves, a status noted by feminist historians since Gerda Lerner. In its relationship to women, Lerner argues, society has "acted paradoxically…in formulating its values," a condition reflected in and constituted by the cultural institutions that claim to represent them (4). This paradox is at the core of what *American Stories* makes visible, namely, the absence of an organizing core when it comes to understanding women in history, in relation to history, and as history makers in their own right.

Exhibition Level 3: Political and Military History

Lifted above the core values and popular expression are the exhibits on military and political history: the impressive *The Price of Freedom,* and the twinned (but asymmetrical) exhibits *The American Presidency* and *The First Ladies*. Given the predominance of memorials devoted to two of these three, it is no coincidence that these exhibits are the pinnacle of the both the museum and its overarching narrative. In fact, the exhibits on this level participate in the most profound narratives constituted by the museum and its visitors; [make this the focus of the next section] Military and political history long masqueraded as "history" as a whole; social, cultural and other aspects of

history deemed insignificant to the overarching historical narrative from which the nation and its citizens are meant to form interrelated identities.

The Price of Freedom: Americans at War

Occupying nearly the entirety of the East Wing of Exhibition Level 3, *The Price of Freedom* exhibit enjoys a position of prominence both within the physical layout of the NMAH as well as in U.S. history as a whole. The scale of the displays echoes the larger-than-life narratives and mythologies that military history has accrued over the years; the large size of the images, text panels, and artifacts on display encourage visitors to relate to them in an embodied way – that is, it is impossible to walk through the exhibit without (consciously or unconsciously) experiencing the materials in relation to one's one physical presence. Similar to *America on the Move*, aspects of the exhibit are populated by life-size but monochromatic mannequins posed in a range of activities, often accompanying military vehicles and, significantly, representing the contributions of American women to the manufacturing industry during World War II.

The Price of Freedom, perhaps more than many others, brought to mind the assertions of Ferguson about the nature of design and display choices in museums: ""All exhibitionary procedures" he has said, "labels, didactics, advertising, catalogues, hanging systems, media in their modernist sense, lighting, wall colors, security devices, posters, handouts, etc. -- combine as aspects of the exhibition's active recitation. They emphasize, de-emphasize and re-emphasize braided narratives with purposes -- fictions of persuasion, docudramas of influence" (181). Each element of a display, exhibit or museum contributes to the way in which the narrative in which that display, exhibit or museum participates is understood.

From the very first, *The Price of Freedom* lures visitors with a sense of familiarity and with the constant use of patriotic colors and symbols. The color scheme here is reminiscent of other museum spaces, with neutral gray carpeting and black ceilings. Yellows, blues and reds accent otherwise a range of wall colors, from pale to black. Text panels alternate from light to dark to provide contrast. Artifacts, images and text panels are arranged in a variety of ways, from the more traditional glass cases to angled installations that span from floor to ceiling (including one Jeep, suspended high enough off the floor to allow adults to walk beneath it with ease).

That women have been conscientiously included in the exhibit is clear even before one enters the exhibit hall: the front panel leading to the entrance off the main hallway is filled with a photo collage that features at its center the well-known photograph of four female pilots, or WASPs, taken around 1940 ("Group"). Superimposed over the script of the United States Constitution and an image of the American flag, the collage is perhaps one of the most inclusive pieces within the exhibit, rivaled only by the space devoted to a life-size vignette of 1940s-era women working in industrial manufacturing (see figure 9). Located deep inside the exhibit, this display features the only image of an African American woman I noticed during my visits; she is pictured in an image below the mannequins of "Rosie's" soldering together military-grade aircraft.

Figure 9. “Rosie the Riveter” display, *The Price of Freedom* exhibit, The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Shersta A. Chabot, March 2016.

In fact, women are strongly present throughout the exhibit up to and including the post-World War II era; mixed in with the Native American costumes, soldier uniforms, and wartime propaganda are text panels titled “My View” featuring mostly women recording history in their own words. Women are shown participating in the Civil War as nurses, slaveholders, and spies; although noticeably fewer in number than displays focusing on male military leaders and soldiers, still the presence of women in a variety of capacities has been thoughtfully included.

That is not to say that the inclusion of women and people of color is not problematic; *The Price of Freedom* is, at its heart, the narrative of white male military power. This is evident in many ways; for example, in the World War II section, a narrow alcove panel features a display focused on women’s fashion (particularly stockings and undergarments) of the era. A second one focuses on recycling and the “Victory Gardens”

promoted by the government to increase food production within the general population. A third proximate alcove panel, of the same size, is themed around the mass incarceration of Japanese-Americans on U.S. soil during the war. Although beyond the scope of this chapter, in an exhibit where size and space matter, that equal and extremely limited space is devoted to each of these three aspects of wartime life in the United States is troubling. It implies that within the context of a militarized past, such subjects are equally of note as if millions of lives were not stolen from American citizens, however temporarily. The sequence of these panels also serves to firmly situate white women within the domestic sphere, contradicting and perhaps negating the significance of the historic contributions of American women during the war.

Another glaring issue that surfaced during my exploration of the exhibit was the realization that the presence of women becomes increasingly inconsistent after the World War II displays; in fact, outside of post-war advertising showing (white) women returning happily to full-time domestic duties and a detailed visual display focused on teen and popular culture in the 1950s, women disappear entirely from the exhibit. Despite significant increases in the number of women soldiers, nurses, and other military personnel after World War II, the exhibit is entirely silent on their contributions to this aspect of American history. The displays are dominated by large images of white military leaders and text panels, and/or oversized military artifacts; all attempts at gender or race inclusivity seem to have evaporated after the 1950s. Indeed, the trajectory of the representation of women was strongly reminiscent of the *American Enterprise* exhibit, in which women are most present prior to 1970.

As *The Price of Freedom* shows, even in its most generous configurations, military history in the United States simply cannot imagine women contributing in significant ways outside of the domestic sphere unless instructed to do so by their government. More troubling still is that I know that such history exists: an extensive display of women's military artifacts is on offer to the public at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery. By excluding this information from their exhibits, the NMAH reifies the technologies of power that keep women and people of color marginalized both in our historic past and, in significant and material ways, in the present. For these and other reasons, the location and representation of women on Exhibition Level 3 echoes that of the lived experience of women in the United States in many ways. Women haunt this exhibit with their present absence, offering only tantalizing hints into women's actual roles during the war, stories that lie just underneath the constructed narrative of male power and sacrifice.

The First Ladies and The American Presidency

Centered on Exhibition Level 3 are the twinned exhibits *The American Presidency* and *The First Ladies.* Sharing an entrance off the main hall at the top of the museum's exhibition levels, these two exhibits focus on the highest political office in the United States and the person(s) who occupied it. I phrase my description this way because although to date only men have held the office of President of the United States, the role of the First Lady, however unofficial, contributes in significant (if often unrecognized) ways to the nature of that office and its temporary occupant. Such a two-for-one situation is also clearly indicated by the manner in which each role is represented by the NMAH, with separate but significantly proximate exhibits.

The First Ladies exhibit as it exists today is the work of curator Edith P. Mayo, who in 1992 reportedly "developed a bold new exhibition based on political and social history" (Graddy and Pastan, 10). Although the dress collection has been displayed in one form or another since 1914, the public's fascination with the first ladies' clothes is cited as the major motivation for the continued presence of the gowns in the redesigned exhibit (Graddy and Pastan, 11). Mayo's role seems to have been to add further insight into the person and political activity of the featured first ladies, an attempt to shift the focus of the exhibit away from a costume gallery and toward the role of first lady itself.

Figure 10. Entrance, *The First Ladies* exhibit, The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Shersta A. Chabot, March 2016.

By design, *The First Ladies* provides a contrast and a complement to *The American Presidency* exhibit in many ways. The former boasts an elegant black and grey color scheme that provides a visual focus for the gowns and china place settings that make up the vast majority of the exhibit's artifacts. Large glass cases holding the gowns

displayed on headless mannequins are softly lit from above. Smaller "highboy" cases hold personal items and text panels detailing their use. Life-size photographs of some of our most popular First Ladies grace the entrance (see figure 10).

The design of *The American Presidency* exhibit, in contrast, is reminiscent of the architecture of the White House: elaborate crown molding extends over the heads of visitors as they wind through the numerous individual displays, at least one for each of the former American presidents. The walls are white, but the lighting is dim and largely emanates from within the display cases themselves, unlike the spot lighting used in the vast majority of the museum's exhibits. The mood is somber, grave, and dignified, lending seriousness to *The First Ladies* next door while complementing the more feminine dignity it offers.

Visitors might assume that because *The First Ladies* exhibit shares an entrance with *The American Presidency* exhibit, and that it is devoted entirely to the role of women in the White House, that it is evidence of and represents the equality and importance of women's contributions to the nation. Nothing could be farther from reality, however. Although smaller in size than *The American Presidency* exhibit, what is more significant about *The First Ladies* exhibit is the manner in which it ties women to the domestic sphere, even women in highly visible, politically influential roles. As the exhibit description is careful to point out, this role is an unofficial one, created by the women who found themselves elected to "keep house" for the country's top political and military leader. The "official hostess" of the President, the role initially encompassed all of the women who served in that capacity regardless of their relationship to the President – as Graddy and Pastan note, over the years "daughters, daughters-in-law, nieces and

sisters have acted as hostess of the White House" (13). However, after the decision was made to rotate a smaller selection of gowns through the exhibit to reduce deterioration of the fabrics, the resulting display has narrowed significantly to spouses of past presidents. Whether intentional or not, the implication is that the First Lady of the United States is a wife first, and hostess to the nation's collective and political home second.

The rotating gowns are simply one way in which The First Ladies is an exhibit in motion. During my visit, former First Lady Nancy Reagan had passed away and a commemorative plaque erected in her memory appeared one morning on an easel at the exhibit's entrance. Simple in design, this plaque included only a photo of Reagan, her birth and death dates, and the dates of her term as First Lady. A second example of the mutable nature of this exhibit is the inaugural gown and accessories Michelle Obama wore to her husband's 2008 inaugural ball, which were on display in the center of the room (see figure 11). Arranged in a freestanding glass case, the display invited visitors to lean in close and, perhaps, consider the present absence of this fascinating and powerful woman in relation to their own embodied experience. Few other artifacts offer a sense of a person's physical size and taste like an item of clothing; perhaps this explains the public's fascination with the dresses and their wholesale acceptance of them as representative of each woman.

Figure 11. Display of First Lady Michelle Obama's inaugural gown, *The First Ladies* exhibit, The National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Photograph by Shersta A. Chabot, March 2016.

That our nation's First Ladies are an important part of our nation's history is beyond doubt: their contributions to various organizations, public policy and international relations have always been invaluable. Some of these are mentioned, briefly, in the text panels that accompany each gown. But regardless of Mayo's efforts and the declared focus on these contributions, within the exhibit they remain secondary to the clothing and the White House china by and through which each First Lady is represented. Mayo's

reasons for retaining the gowns is clearly an attempt to appease a public familiar with the close association between a woman and her clothing; in fact, the female body and the clothing associated with it are so closely tied as to be nearly interchangeable. Given the power asymmetries associated with gender hierarchies in the United States, such a construct is highly problematic, reifying archaic and detrimental attitudes about a woman's "proper" role, positionality and appearance.

To underscore this point, one need only compare the contents of *The American Presidency* exhibit next door. The display cases on each president are both far more personal and more complex; their careers and characters are frequently depicted, as are traditions that rose up around their presidencies. Where family is mentioned, it tends to focus on the children, rather than the spouses, of the top political leaders of our nation. What is more, the displays in this exhibit tend to expand on topics related to the office of the presidency, including one alcove featuring a brief history of presidential funerals in America. Selected clothing from the men is displayed, including Abraham Lincoln's iconic top hat, George Washington's uniform, and so on, but these are accompanied by other large artifacts – chairs, desks, even caskets – that balance to focus of the displays rather than dominating them.

When compared to the complexity, breadth and depth of the displays next door, as well as the allotment of space - one full display case (or more) for each former President – *The First Ladies* exhibit appears starkly limited in the possible narratives it can constitute with visitors. At a time when the role of First Lady is an increasingly public and influential one, such limitations reinforce the marginalization of women within politics and justify a continuing distrust of women in powerful, public positions. As Hein

has argued, "Objects, like language, serve as principle media for the formation, expression, and confirmation of human relationships, and so museums that preserve objects are mines of knowledge about the workings of human societies" (31). Removing first ladies to their own exhibit has the unfortunate effect of removing them from the narrative of the American Presidency, both in the museum and in the canon of American history, despite their obvious and public role and position of influence. Further, due to the close connections between body and clothing, and the caregiving functions of the domestic sphere and china place settings, *The First Ladies* positions even extraordinarily accomplished women within our national history as wives and home-makers.

For these and other reasons, *The First Ladies* is one of the most overt examples of female stereotyping and reification of the domestic role in the museum space. It more than suggests that the role of even our nation's leading wife and matron of the White House is still largely to host dinners and play a supporting, ornamental role during important functions (as evidenced by the gowns), a message completely at odds with the vital and ongoing work in which most of our politically driven, intelligent and thoroughly capable First Ladies engaged during their lives.

In this chapter, I have explored some of the largest and most materially influential exhibits at the NMAH and, overall, found a wealth of qualitative and quantitative evidence to support the idea that the narratives generated by and issuing from the museum reify certain oppressive cultural norms and attitudes that prevent women from coming into their own as fully human, unqualified and unchallenged occupants of a national public sphere. Testing Porter's and Sorensen's assertions about the status of women in museums at the National Museum of American History, I have found that

despite the years since those assertions were made, there is still ample evidence to support them. In particular, I wanted to put pressure on the idea that removing women from a museum exhibit would not significantly change the narrative in which it participates. Surely, I reasoned, women's increasing visibility in public, political, military and cultural roles would warrant better and more authentic representation within the most revered repository of historical information in the nation.

In this hope, I was disappointed. Instead, my findings support the claims of numerous theorists and researchers, including Carole Pateman, who argues that women "have never been completely excluded, of course, from public life; but the way in which women are included is grounded, as firmly as their position in the domestic sphere, in patriarchal beliefs and practices" (132). Where women exist, publicly, visibly, such representations tend to take the form of a direct extension of traditional domestic tasks (Pateman 132). The danger that such a situation poses cannot be overstated. The narratives generated by and issuing from the NMAH carry with them a significance that other spaces and objects don't, and for this reason, they may impose a lasting measure of constraint over the kinds of opportunities and possibilities open to women (and people of color). Because "Objects are encountered initially through the senses and the body," argues Hooper-Greenhill, they create knowledge, communicate and constitute meaning in ways that may never be brought to articulation (116). This tacit, or felt, knowledge is not intellectual or reasonable; it is learning through engagement with the material world. In this way, the embodied experience of the museum visit teaches in ways that subvert and possibly counteract verbal or textual messages, even ones offered by the same institution and/or in the same space. As Hooper-Greenhill has also observed, "Unspoken feelings

influence behavior, attitudes and values, and are perhaps especially powerful precisely because they remain unexamined" (116). Such unexamined, unarticulated feeling, when engaged within a space of power and learning, lends an unquestioned stamp of legitimacy to the naturalness of domesticity for white women; it normalized the power hierarchies that keep white men in control of our spaces, our bodies, and by extension, the material conditions of our lives.

Women in our nation's history museum remain at the periphery of history, in roles that are dependent, derivative, and sometimes completely obscured by gendered hierarchies that determine who is represented, in what way(s), and for what purpose. Such hierarchies reveal themselves through the museum's displays, architecture, leadership, and in myriad other ways. However, it is what is not included in the museum – a comprehensive exhibit on the Civil Rights movement, for example, or the woman suffrage movement – that is perhaps even more telling that what is currently there. Based on the offerings at the NMAH, women's history has failed to gain a significant foothold into our national history museum and, one might be forgiven for assuming, into our collective political and cultural institutions as well. It is this gap that the National Women's History Museum aims to fill; without a museum of our own, women may be doomed to continue the seemingly endless struggle to locate fully textured, authentic representations of themselves within the nation's "official" public memory places. We are better able to understand the traditions out of which the NWHM arises, those in which it participates (or aspires to participate), and those against which it resists. That entities like the NWHM may be in each of these tensions with the same narrative(s) speaks to the

complexity of the matter, the issues at stake, and the highly contradictory status in which the women of the United States are too often held captive.

In the next chapter, I turn from an exploration of embodied engagement with physical museum exhibits to an analysis of the NWHM cybermuseum. In particular, my discussion of materiality and embodiment shifts from constructs of gendered history narratives via physical space to what occurs when gendered history narratives are constituted in digital space. As the next chapter will show, notions of embodiment and materiality are not absent from the engagement with a cybermuseum, but rather continue in alternate modes subtle enough that they are easily overlooked. Once envisioned as a utopian space free of bias, prejudice and discrimination, today we understand digital space and the interactions that take place there to be rooted in the same social and political constructs that govern our lives. The notion that even the most astute digital technology ideologues continue to unconsciously engage digital media from an embodied perspective, and that gendered bodies continue to haunt our digital interactions just as they do those in physical space, lends critical insight into the complex rhetoricity of a digital-material entity like the NWHM.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. In their book *Susan B. Anthony Slept Here*, Sherr and Kazickas published one of the only existing lists of women's historical sites, naming over two thousand of them in the United States. Most of these are small, local, and/or marked only with a plaque, and many of them exist as libraries, schools, gardens, and house museums. In a significant number of cases, the site remains but the original building is gone, replaced with more modern construction.
2. See, for example, the first four chapters of Hauser's *Vernacular Voices* in which he explores "the rhetorical character of publics, public spheres, and public opinion" and develops his argument for a "*plurality of publics* located in the multiple arenas of a *reticulate public sphere* in which strangers develop and express public opinions by engaging one another through *vernacular rhetoric*" (12).
3. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition;* See also Hilde S. Hein, *The Museum in Transition* (2000), p. 148
4. See, for example, Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (2002); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1990); Marie Louise Stig Sorensen, *Gender Archaeology* (2000); Shelley Budgeon, *Third Wave Feminism and the Politics of Gender in Late Modernity* (2011); Lenore Davidoff, "'Regarding Some "Old Husbands" Tales': Public and Private in Feminist History" (1995); Julie Des Jardins, *Women & the Historical Enterprise in America* (2003); Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices* (1989)

5. Carol Blair has persuasively argued that "we must ask not just what a text means but, more generally, what it does; and we must not understand what it does as adhering strictly to what it was supposed to do" (23). However, where she is still "reading" physical objects as texts, I argue that considering the object or artifact in terms of its materiality results in a more richly textured understanding of the interworkings of embodied and materiality of rhetoric
6. The placement of the flag is by design: the *Official Guide to the Smithsonian* states that "The flag that inspired the national anthem is displayed at the heart of the museum" (104).
7. American Enterprise totals: Total individual profiles: 76; Total women profiled: 24; Total white women: 16; Total non-white women: 8; 32% are women, 33% of those non-white
    - 1770 – Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte, "Land Speculator"; Elizabeth Keckley, "Dressmaker"; Sarah Winnemucca, "Translator"; Afong Moy, "Exploited Attraction" (Afong Moy was the first female Chinese immigrant to the United States.[1] In 1834, she was brought to New York City from her home of Guangzhou by Nathaniel and Frederick Carne, who exhibited her as "the Chinese Lady")
        - 16 individual profiles included; 4 women, 1 native, 1 chinese, 2 white
    - 1850 – Madame C.J. Walker, "Hair-care Millionaire"; Addie Card, "Child Laborer"; Tei Shida Saito, "Picture Bride" (In 1913, Tei Shida's parents arranged her marriage to a Japanese pineapple farmer in Hawaii without

her knowledge. She struggled with the laborious lonely life on an isolated plantation in the mountains of Hawaii); Ida Rosenthal, “Undercover Agent”; Florence Kelley, “Labor Crusader”; Barbara McClintock, “Pure Researcher” (Nobel Prize in plant research); Hattie Carnegie, “Tastemaker” (fashion designer); 2 unnamed

    - 26 individual profiles included; 9 women, 2 African American, 1 Japanese, 1 child, 5 white

- 1930 – Ruth Handler, “Barbie Mama”; Marlowe Family, “Poverty Victims”; Jean Nidetch, “Weight Watcher”; Muriel Siebert, “1 among 1,365” (known as The First Woman of Finance despite being preceded in owning a brokerage by the controversial Victoria Woodhull. Siebert was the first woman to own a seat on the New York Stock Exchange and was the first woman to head one of the NYSE's member firms. She joined the 1,365 male members of the exchange on December 28, 1967)
    - 11 individual profiles, 2 African American men; 4 women, all white
- 1970 – Gloria Steinem, “Feminist”; Oprah Winfrey, “Media Mogul”
    - 11 individual profiles; 2 women, 1 African American, 1 white
- 2010 – Myra Goodman (pictured with husband), “Organic Entrepreneurs”; Maria Durazo, “Labor Organizer”; Dora Hilda Escobar, “Restauranteer”; Sara Blakely, “Determined Retailer” (creator of Spanx)
    - 12 individual profiles; 5 women, 2 Latina, 3 white

CHAPTER 4

THE MUSEUM IN CYBERSPACE: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY CYBERMUSEUM

From the earliest years of its organizational life, the National Women's History Museum (NWHM) has recognized the affordances of new media technology. In the 1990s, the internet was still largely uncharted territory, and digital space seemed to hold the promise of new modes of expression and interaction, modes free of the biases and inequities that plagued social, material and political life in the United States. When the NWHM launched its first website in 1998, it was a nascent organization in the process of developing an identity and presence capable of challenging a monolithic national history narrative. Although the central goal around which the NWHM was organized was securing the necessary support and approvals to build a National Women's History Museum on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in the interim the organization also developed a "cybermuseum" housed on the NWHM.org website. The first cyber exhibit, "Motherhood, Social Service, and Political Reform: Political Culture and Imagery of American Woman Suffrage," was launched in 1998 as part of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention and was curated by Edith P. Mayo, Curator Emeritus of the Smithsonian Institution ("NWHM Educates America"). Described as a chronicle of "women's suffrage and the involvement of women in politics throughout history," the exhibit enticed viewers with its "comprehensive educational journey" and "walking tour through the image gallery to see a variety of event-related materials including the actual buttons worn by the suffragists" ("NWHM Educates America"). As described in Chapter 2, with this new cybermuseum the NWHM set out to "educate

America" about women's history as well as to legitimize women's history as a topic worthy of veneration. Making digital space for women's history functioned as a means to facilitate making cultural and physical space as well, within national history narratives and museum culture.

In Chapter 3, I detailed the presence and representation of women at the National Museum of American History (NMAH). As grim as my findings proved to be for women's history, it is what I did not find that is perhaps more dire. To my surprise, I was unable to locate an exhibit, or even a substantial section of an exhibit, in the NMAH that focused on the history of woman suffrage, women's rights movement, civil rights, or even social reform or labor movements, to name a few more prominent moments in women's history. Exhibits on labor, civil rights and women's rights can be found elsewhere: inside the National Archives Museum in Washington, D.C., for example, and a detailed display about women in the military is available at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery. Scattered among and between monuments, house museums and other locations, access to women's history through public memory space is hard work and requires significantly more effort of visitors than anything currently present on the National Mall. In fact, visitors to Washington, D.C. may be forgiven for believing that women have made few, if any, contributions to our nation, given the utter lack of cohesiveness that marks the marginal representation women are afforded within the venerated public memory space of our nation's capital.

It is this deficiency toward which the National Women's History Museum is aimed. Yet the NWHM is not the first organization to attempt to make cultural and

material shifts in museal tradition; although rare, national museums focused on women's history do exist. For example, the Sewall-Belmont House in Washington, D.C. (renamed the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument in 2016) features artifacts from the woman suffrage and equal rights movements; Seneca Falls, New York, is home to the Women's Rights National Historical Park, a commemorative collection of historic buildings and a visitor's center featuring a history of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention and woman suffrage efforts arising from it. Of course, such museums are focused on one relatively small aspect of women's history and are not, by design, intended to be comprehensive. Also, like most of the exhibits mentioned thus far, they are located geographically outside of the commemorative core of national public memory, which tends to marginalize them conceptually as well as materially.

In partial recognition of these limitations, in September 2000 a determined group of women's history advocates opened a Smithsonian-affiliated museum, The Women's Museum: An Institute for the Future, in Dallas, Texas. Despite its location, the museum was intended to house exhibits encompassing the contributions of women throughout history. Unfortunately, the museum was short-lived: it closed in October 2011, reportedly due to a lack of funds (Rosales). This troubled history has no doubt hindered the mission of the NWHM by providing fuel for its critics who argue that "niche" museums lack the appeal and longevity to justify the expense involved; at the same time, however, the failure of The Women's Museum underscores the importance of geographical location and adds credence to the NWHM's claims that the proper place for a women's history museum is on the National Mall.

The focus on and struggle for geographical placement raises critical questions about the efficacy and status of the digital museum. The NWHM has invested significantly in the development of its cybermuseum, which to date is the most comprehensive women's history museum at the national level (digital or otherwise). Support for and interest in the cybermuseum has grown exponentially in the last ten years, with some statistics currently reporting an average of nearly twelve thousand visitors each month.[1] As scholar Megan Fitzmaurice has noted, "[t]hrough digital displays of women's national efforts as spies, solders, entrepreneurs, and labor activists, the cybermuseum complicates traditional ideas of gender and citizenship," speaking directly to "the exclusivity of traditional commemorative sites, leveraging the inclusive potential of their digital space to accommodate a seemingly infinite array of voices" (521). Yet the investment of the NWHM into its digital museum has been consistently overshadowed by its quest for materiality. Based on the organization's activities over the last twenty years, the emphasis on securing a site for a physical museum – and the cybermuseum's status as a placeholder, an interim measure – is clear. Seeming to controvert the importance of the cybermuseum while simultaneously promoting it, the NWHM's mission to build a "real" museum on the National Mall demotes the digital iteration as less: less effective, less permanent, and less capable of affective lasting change in American public memory production.

The question of whether a digital museum can do the same work as a physical museum remains unasked by the NWHM itself, however. By all accounts, and despite efforts to promote the value of the digital museum, the NWHM appears to have simply assumed that it cannot. In fact, I would argue that there is a serious lack of scholarship

examining the rhetorical work of the cybermuseum within the larger context of museum culture itself. Perhaps this deficit is due, in part, to the lack of a theoretical framework capable of accounting for the materiality of the museum (conceptual and actual) as well as the flexibility, mutability and (seeming) ephemerality of digital media. Traditional rhetorical frameworks are heavily focused on language, both spoken and printed, and require a fixed object for analysis. Recent shifts in rhetorical theory have challenged this history, recognizing the inherent rhetoricity of the material and the digital artifact, interaction, and/or context.

In this chapter, I offer a brief overview of some of these theoretical shifts, drawing out corresponding themes between the different strands of rhetorical theory applicable to the unique positionality of the cybermuseum. I look at the materiality of the born-digital artifact[2] through the lens of the rhetoricity of public memory places, making visible the underlying cultural premises that support them both. Beginning with Carole Blair's framework for the analysis of materiality in rhetorical situations, I focus on the National Women's History (Cyber)Museum, analyzing six selected exhibits by asking a set of five rhetorical questions:

1. What is the significance of the museum exhibit's (material) existence?
2. What are the apparatuses and degrees of durability displayed by the museum exhibit?
3. What are the museum exhibit's modes or possibilities of reproduction or preservation?
4. What does the museum exhibit do to (or with, or against) other cultural institutions and/or memory places?

5. How does the museum exhibit act on people?[3]

As digital artifacts, cyber exhibits have a certain "weight" and substance that is different from a physical object but is no less real for those who engage with them. As my analysis shows, such digital artifacts are rhetorically material because of what they do, the work that they perform, the consequence that they offer to public memory production and, by extension, to national culture and the products of cultural frameworks, including policy, shared narratives, and notions of citizenship and patriotism. For this reason, I contend that a richer understanding of the relationship between the digital and the material is better achieved when combining the analytic strengths of both digital rhetoric and material rhetoric.

In the sections that follow, I examine the affordances of first digital rhetorical theory, and then material rhetorical theory, at the intersections of public memory culture. I then conduct an analysis of six digital exhibits, testing these affordances against the digital-material public memory production of the NWHM. In examining the NWHM cybermuseum in this way, my goal is to lay the necessary groundwork from which a more robust theorization of a digital-material rhetoric may begin to emerge.

Digital Rhetoric, Material Rhetoric

In 2005, James P. Zappen surveyed the burgeoning field of digital rhetoric and efforts to extend and transform traditional rhetorical theory to account for "the conditions and constraints of the new digital media" (319). At the time, Zappen asserted that the core of digital rhetoric aimed to "explain how traditional rhetorical strategies of persuasion function and how they are being reconfigured in digital spaces" (319). Coined in 1992 by Richard Lanham, the term "digital rhetoric" has since become a catchall

category with long tentacles in any number of discrete disciplines. Perhaps this is why consensus about how or whether to apply traditional rhetorical theory to and within digital media continues to evade the field. Early scholarship on/about digital rhetoric is highly polemic, a legacy Elizabeth M. Losh attributes to the defensive posture of the new discipline and the fact that digital rhetoric, as a nascent field, was "responding to two major influences on the field of rhetorical studies more generally: continental critical theory, particularly the work of deconstructionist philosopher Jacques Derrida, and anti-Socratic revisions to rhetorical history, which questioned the authority of Aristotle as a founding father of the discipline" (83). In perhaps the most comprehensive discussion of digital rhetoric to date, in her 2009 book *Virtualpolitik* Losh attempts to delineate a definition by looking at four interrelated characterizations of digital rhetoric:

> 1. The conventions of new digital genres that are used for everyday discourse, as well as for special occasions, in average people's lives.
>
> 2. Public rhetoric, often in the form of political messages from government institutions, which is represented or recorded through digital technology and disseminated via electronic distributed networks.
>
> 3. The emerging scholarly discipline concerned with the rhetorical interpretation of computer-generated media as objects of study.
>
> 4. Mathematical theories of communication from the field of information science, many of which attempt to quantify the amount of uncertainty in a given linguistic exchange or the likely paths through which messages travel (47-8).

According to Losh, digital rhetoric is so hard to define simply because it often "operates across all four hierarchies of different forms of knowledge work" (95), sometimes

simultaneously. It can also take forms often neglected or ignored: despite the tendency to equate "rhetoric" with persuasive discourse, Losh argues that even in the classical tradition, rhetoric can also "be defined to focus on the timing of a given message and how the language of that message may be shaped by specific contexts and opportunities for social change, which are located in time and space, as well as politics and culture" (50).

Despite these neglected affordances, or perhaps because of them, Losh, Lanham, and scholars including Collin Gifford Brooke and Barbara Warnick agree that digital texts and media perform differently than verbal speech or printed text, necessitating (at the least) an update to the rhetorical canon.[4] Because persuasion occurs online, but at the same time, "occurs differently in online, interactive Web-based environments from its use in context-specific and comparatively more stable circumstances," argues Warnick (26), "rhetorical criticism of online persuasion can retain the categories and critical methods used for analyzing oral and print discourse and at the same time incorporate new critical methods" (42). This mix of the old and the new is perhaps even necessary to account for the unique and varied functions of digital artifacts; they persuade differently because they are materially different from rhetorical expressions of the past. Much of traditional rhetorical analysis focuses on a particular work, often taken as a fixed, stable object. By this definition, a Web text or other digital artifact is not quite a "work": rather, "[i]n its intertextuality, performative forms, and indeterminacy, the Web text is more like an organism," one that is always already in a state of becoming (Warnick 29). Losh supports this view, arguing that "rhetorical expression through electronic means" (48) has more or less obviated many of the distinctions upon which classical rhetorical theory relies. Online, the boundaries between author and reader, sender and receiver are easily

and frequently indistinct and intensely mutable, part of what Michel de Certeau called an "ensemble of practices" within multiple, overlapping cultural systems of meaning (Losh 49). Lanham, too, has noted the "unfixed and interactive" nature of digital media (31), further underscoring the importance of accounting for its vibrant, dynamic character.

Curiously, accounting for vibrant matter has not been developed as thoroughly in digital rhetoric as it has in material rhetorical theory. One strand of material rhetoric in particular, New Materialism, has sought to focus more productively on the agency of objects in the material world and recover notions of the inherent rhetoricity of non-human things. For example, Diana Coole and Samantha Frost have asserted that as beings composed of matter, we rarely attend to or account for the "power of matter and the ways it materializes in our ordinary experiences or…acknowledge the primacy of matter in our theories" (1). In describing the emerging field of study of New Materialism, Coole and Frost identify "three interrelated but distinctive themes or directions in new materialist scholarship" (6). First, they note "an ontological reorientation that is resonant with, and to extent informed by, developments in natural science" (6-7). A second strand involves the "consideration of a raft of biopolitical and bioethical issues concerning the status of life and of the human" (7). Third, "new materialist scholarship testifies to a critical and nondogmatic reengagement with political economy, where the nature of, and relationship between the material details of everyday life and broader geopolitical and socioeconomic structures is being explored afresh" (7). Spurred on by theorists including Jane Bennett, who has described matter as "lively and self-organizing" (10) and attended to "the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle" (Bennett 6), all three components of New Materialism emphasize the process of

materialization as “a complex, pluralistic, relatively open process” that requires “humans, including theorists themselves, be recognized as thoroughly immersed within materiality’s productive contingencies” (Coole and Frost 7).

Representing the first direction most strongly, the work of Thomas J. Rickert takes the notion of materialization even further, arguing that not only is it important to attend to the vibrancy of matter, but that rhetoric is itself “grounded in the material relations from which it springs, not simply as the situating giving it its shape and exigence, but as part of what we mean by rhetoric. Rhetoric in this sense is ambient. It *surrounds*” (x). Further, Rickert argues that rhetoric is “ontological, having to do with being and not just knowing” (xv). When this understanding of rhetoric is applied to issues of materiality, that which we typically consider to be setting or context, the “background to rhetorical work,” is instead foregrounded and recognizable as “material, complex, vital, and, in its own way, active” (Rickert xv). In a culture experiencing rapid technological and material changes, this vitality takes on new significance in the face of the “profound externalization of media and their saturation of everyday life, a growing dispersion of human 'agency' through technologies, and new theories and practices of spatiality" (Rickert xiii). Within the context of digital technologies, coming to terms with the way that they are both material and virtual, both conceptual and embodied, both normal and singular, lets us also account for the multiple and diverse ways that digital artifacts perform in a digital-material milieu.

Still, it is the third direction, a reengagement with political economy (of digital artifacts), that is most in line with the vitality recognized by some digital rhetoricians. Despite recognizing the significance of the relationship between agency and digital

technologies, Rickert's work focuses on the ontological reorientation of rhetorical theory in the natural world. Online, relationships between digital and material life and larger socioeconomic structures are both more personal and more public than many theorists (including Rickert) have yet accounted for. Too often, theories or approaches to digital rhetoric focus on the visual or cognitive aspects of interactivity, failing to account for the embodied nature of digital media users and, to use William E. Connolly's term, the "affinities" that develop between human beings and other vibrant, physical and digital systems (180). To "perceive" something is not the same as simply seeing, or even thinking. Following Merleau-Ponty, Connolly argues that perception is "intersensory" and "saturated with the tactile history of the experiencing agent" (182). It involves a complex mixing "of language, affect, feeling, touch, and anticipation," and is "set in the memory-infused life of human beings" which is understood, however unconsciously, in relation to the orientation, shape, size, and spatial positioning of their own physical bodies (181).

Thus engagement with digital artifacts is an embodied practice, one with deep roots in public memory production that is grounded in and produced through materiality. Rather than just code running on machines, digital texts and media can be understood as active agents with an inherent rhetoricity, much as public memory places and objects have come to be understood as performing a kind of non-human agency of their own.[5] From this perspective, the applicability of the work of theorists including Carole Blair (others?) is confirmed and extended beyond the bounds of the physical. According to Blair, rhetoric has a material character, most visible in "its capacity for consequence, and its partisanship" (20). Blair also argues that rhetoric has "material force beyond the goals,

intentions and motivation s of its producers" (22); it doesn't just "mean," but actually does something (23); in Blair's view, rhetoric "acts on the whole person – body as well as mind – and often on the person situated in a community of other persons" (46). Texts and objects make physical demands on us; memorials and other memory sites even more obviously so, and by so doing, significantly shaping the nature of the rhetorical experience that results (46). There is no reason to suspect that digital texts, objects, and sites behave any differently; in fact, accounting for the rhetoricity of digital media is where rhetorical scholarship must assay next. As our digital technologies make demands on us, they become integral to the processes of rhetorical interaction characteristic of the material world. Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa E. Kirsch have noted the rhetorical potentialities of technology and new media, citing the Internet as a "rich new site of rhetorical agency and intervention" (65), one that has the potential for "recasting the notion of authorship, genre, audience, and community" and for inviting democracy "quite boldly into the public sphere" of digital life (67).

The democratization of digital artifacts is one of the themes beginning to emerge in the area of visual rhetorics, as theorists attempt to account for the radical mutability of digital content. For example, rhetorical scholar Laurie Gries recognized the way that virtual images are also "real thing[s] that spark traceable consequences in the world" (11). What is more, Gries argues that "[n]onhuman things, such as images, also experience rhetorical becoming(s) in that their potential to alter reality and reassemble collective life is constantly materializing via their multiple and distributed encounters" (32). To better account for the complexity of things in a digital age, she argues, scholars must attend to the way in which digital technologies, participatory media platforms, and

various actor networks contribute to the circulation and transformation of things in both digital and physical realms" (18). Extending these claims into considerations of space as well as object, Amy D. Propen argues that the context, though often overlooked, is perhaps as inherently rhetorical as the performance taking place within it. To look at a space (including cyberspace) as rhetorical, Propen asserts, "is to acknowledge the capacity for consequence borne out of the interaction of the texts, artifacts, bodies, and discourses deployed within it, and the sense of place engendered by those interactions" (6). Echoing Blair's insistence that in order to fully account for the rhetoricity present in a situation, scholars must attend to what a text (or image, or artifact) does, as well as what it might mean, Propen contends that such an approach "requires examining not only the rhetorical responses to visual-material artifacts but how those responses are shaped" by the context, including the presence of other artifacts (186).

Based on such claims, it seems clear that early understandings of digital rhetoric fail to recognize the materiality and more extensive rhetoricity of the performances and relationships occurring in cyberspace. Often coming from a social sciences perspective, the focus of digital rhetorical scholarship tends to be asymmetrically centered on discussions of new media technologies and the (supposedly) distinctly different characteristics they display as opposed to everything else. While this has been a productive discussion, it fails to fully account for the myriad performances, relationships and implications that fall outside of such a rigid and narrow prevue. Of course, an analysis of cyberspace and digital artifacts in their entirety is unattainable, even if it would be of use. For this reason, this chapter focuses on the digital-material rhetorics of

digital memory places, situated within the larger context of public memory production both on and off the web.

The Rhetorics of Digital Memory Places

In their anthology *Places of Public Memory*, Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson and Brian L. Ott argue that memory places (including museums) are inherently and powerfully rhetorical and, as such, demand more sustained scholarly attention. Such a sweeping claim is supported by six distinct characteristics of public memory places, as follows:

1. First, a memory place "assumes a special importance" because of its status as a place, "recognizable and set apart from undifferentiated space" (25). It "commands attention, because it announces itself as a marker of collective identity" (25).
2. Second, "memory places construct preferred public identities" for visitors and other users "by specific rhetorical means" (27). A memory place brings the visitor into contact with "a significant past," thereby creating an understanding of the present as "part of an enduring, stable tradition" (27).
3. Third, memory places are "characterized by an extraordinary partiality" (28). Positioned as "the sites of civic importance and their subject matters as the stories of society," the stories that memory sites tell are thus made, "quite literally, to matter to the lives of the collective" (28). Thus, their partiality introduces distinct rhetorical consequentiality into their existence, performance, dissemination and collective constitution.

4. Fourth, because memory places are intractably present and located, they "mobilize power in ways not always available with other memory *techne*" (29). Places mobilize power through acting directly on the body; their rhetoricity "is not limited to the readable or visible; it engages the full sensorium" (29).
5. Fifth, memory places are rarely (if ever) solitary entities; most often, they are made up of an assemblage of various memory *techne* that often includes writing or various meaningful symbols. Museums in particular are complex examples of this characteristic; everything from the architecture of the building to the deployment of space in the gift shop work on the mind and the body in specific and influential ways (30).
6. "Finally, memory places themselves have histories. That is, they do not just *represent* the past. They *accrete* their own pasts" (30). As an increasing number of scholars including Janet Hoskins and Ian Bogost have observed, objects and artifacts have biographical lives. It follows that places of significance, such as public monuments and museums, would also have histories, have lives. Such lives, such places are rhetorically consequential and best understood through case study analysis (31).

If we accept this list of characteristics, the question then becomes whether *digital* memory places, like cybermuseums, exhibit these same traits. Briefly, I would argue that the answer to this question is that they do, but only in part. For example, a cybermuseum or digital exhibit is clearly recognizable and set apart from undifferentiated (cyber)space; to go to or move through the museum, a web address must be entered, one that is different from all others. In terms of offering a glimpse into a significant past and being

partial in nature, the NWHM cybermuseum also conforms; the effort required to build, launch and maintain digital exhibits focused on marginalized aspects of women's history in the U.S. is, in itself, a marker of significance. The cybermuseum is also an assemblage, using multiple media and interactive features to present the selected information. And, as Chapter 2 has shown, the NWHM cybermuseum does have a history of its own, one made visible through archived press documents and social media posts.

At the same time, however, whether digital exhibits like those presented by the NWHM are intractably present and located is less clear, as is the cybermuseum's ability to mobilize power by acting directly on the body. To anyone who has walked the grounds of the National Mall or visited the museums there in person, there is a difference between the engagement of the body in a physical public memory place and engagement with a digital one. The insecurity associated with digital artifacts makes fixing them in a single place, or describing the presence and significance, more challenging. I think it is possible, however, to argue that digital memory places do have a kind of presence, do mobilize power in specific ways, and do act directly on the body. Cognitive scientists including Antonio Damasio and Hubert Dreyfus have argued that despite long-held Western traditions of a Cartesian split, the body is never passive. Rather, "the mind derives from the entire organism as an ensemble," meaning that perceiving "is as much about acting on the environment as it is about receiving signals from it" (Damasio 225). In fact, Dreyfus asserts, all information an individual encounters is processed in an embodied way, going so far as to say that "sensory motor skills underlie perception whose basic figure/ground structure seems to underlie all 'higher' rational functions, even logic and mathematics"

(255). As the body actively modifies itself to process new information, the self repeatedly reconstructs from a biological state outward (Damasio 226-7).

Other points of doubt arise when considering whether and how digital memory places contribute to preferred public identities, and whether or not they could qualify as markers of collective identity. Due to the continuing chronic invisibility of women in our national public memory and public memory places, the NWHM and others like it function as a challenge to pre-existing preferred public identities more than a confirmation of a continuing tradition. The source material for these pre-existing identities is diverse, but absolutely includes public museums, memorials, patriotic observances and other facets of national culture. As I have shown in Chapter 3, such material is narrowly focused on preferred representations of a past dominated by the achievements of elite white men and the supporting roles of all others. At present, public memory places in the U.S. are far more apt to exclude diverse groups and marginalize non-dominant historical narratives than to strive for inclusivity. "Collective identity," then, is either an unachievable aim (under present circumstances) or a nefarious ploy meant to lull diverse publics into believing in the rightful dominance of one version, one extremely exclusive version, of a national past over all others, a version that deliberately shores up the idea that white men have always been and thus should always hold all available positions of political, cultural and military power.

It is this process that the NWHM's digital museum aims to disrupt. Drawing on the characteristics of the museum genre, and clearly situated within the tradition of museum curation and presentation, the digital museum is a virtual iteration of a traditional form with greater capabilities of personalization, interactivity and broader

access to content. That a digital museum is both similar to and different from those that are more tangible seems readily apparent; however, the affordances of digital technology allow for wider variety, more inclusive materials, and the ability to hyperlink to additional content that provides a depth of information unattainable in the physical museum space. By examining what the digital exhibits of the NWHM *do*, in terms of their significance, apparatuses, modes or reproduction, and relationships with other cultural institutions and publics, the materiality of the digital is made visible, enabling a more textured understanding of the role of the digital and the material in public memory production.

The National Women's History Cybermuseum

The National Women's History (Cyber)Museum has been an important feature of the organization's claim to legitimacy since its launch in 1998. However, this claim may or may not have been supported by the digital exhibits on offer, at the time or even today; as critics of the museum have repeatedly argued, the design and content of the cybermuseum is clumsy, imprecise and, for some, amateurish (Parry). Although such critiques are increasingly balanced by glowing endorsements of the museum and its mission from politicians, celebrities, and members of its carefully assembled "coalition,"[6] it is important to study the NWHM cybermuseum as it is situated within the various contexts of museum culture, public memory production, and digital media.

Accusations of the museum's amateurism stem largely from the patriarchal traditions of history, as an academic discipline, and museum curatorship, a profession that grew increasingly standardized and exclusive in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, historian Bonnie G. Smith has explored the tensions between the

professionalization of history as a field and women doing history work, discovering that despite the existence of a large body of historical work by women tracing back into the eighteenth century, such work has largely been dismissed in "official" circles due to the assumption that women, as historians, are "amateurs" (6). Museum scholar Mike Wallace, in his examination of the history of the modern museum, has argued that "from the mid-nineteenth century on, most history museums were constructed by members of dominant classes and embodied interpretations that supported their sponsors' privileged positions" (137). As museum studies grew into a field, such positions were reserved for professionals with close ties to history and the sciences, fields (and degree programs) from which women were largely barred until well into the twentieth century. In concert with the other social and economic barriers that have limited women's lives and choices, such restrictions led to a lack of "economic and social resources or the historical self-consciousness to initiate [their] own presentations"; as a result, "most exhibits come from institutions controlled by men" (Melosh and Simmons, 212).

To test the assertions of these scholars, one need go no farther than the National Mall, dominated by the cultural wealth of the Smithsonian Institution. The Smithsonian Institution governs nineteen museums, including the National Museum of American History (NMAH), twenty libraries, the National Zoo and a number of research centers. At is head is Secretary David J. Skorton, a cardiologist and former president of Cornell University ("Leadership"), who oversees Under Secretary Richard Kurin, former bank vice president ("Staff Biographies"), who in turn oversees museum directors including John Gray, a cultural anthropologist and the current Director of the National Museum of American History ("John Gray"). While the absence of professional training in

curatorship among these men is striking, perhaps more troubling is the fact that they all come from historically male-dominated professions. Whether this explains the absence of women and ethnic minorities along this particular chain of command or not (Skorton, Kurin and Gray are all white), it seems to lay to rest the question of whether or not the NMAH, arguably one of the most revered collections of national history, is "controlled by men."

As a result, and despite decades of challenges mounted by historically marginalized groups, museum culture still arises directly out of a patriarchal tradition that is hyper-focused on the veneration of the white male elite and achievements traditionally tied to masculine virtues, including power, military leadership, public debate and negotiation, innovation, scientific and technological progress, creativity within "high art" culture, and professionals of all stripes. Barred from education and many professions for decades, women and other marginalized groups have continued to work and contribute in other spaces and places, a tradition that simply does not translate into marble monuments and solemn museum displays.

A second daunting hurdle that the NWHM has faced over the years is the ignorance of the American public as a whole. In 1999, just months after the launch of the organization's cybermuseum, a national poll reported that 74% of Americans did not know when women won the right to vote. The poll, conducted by the New York-based Global Strategy Group, also found that most Americans (93%) didn't know who Elizabeth Cady Stanton was, and roughly two-thirds (64%) didn't know that Susan B. Anthony was a women's rights activist ("74% of Americans"). Startling findings, to be sure, but later studies found that the lack of knowledge in American history extends

beyond woman suffrage. For example, in 2008 a study by Intercollegiate Studies Institute found that fully half of Americans didn't know the three branches of government in the U.S. (Naseem). A 2014 study of 8th graders included in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report found that a mere 18% of students were considered proficient in U.S. History, and a 2014 study from Texas Tech University found that college students were no better at knowing the answers to basic questions like "Who won the Civil War?" and "Who is our vice president?" (Naseem). In December 2015, the NWHM conducted its own survey, which found that more Americans feel they know more about sports and celebrity gossip than they do about history, and recognize the names of notable men far more often than women (Williams). Given the results of the other polls and studies, such findings are unsurprising. The NWHM's survey is highly problematic, however, because too many of the questions asked focused on current events, not historical knowledge.

A final challenge the NWHM has struggled to overcome is the fact that, as a digital museum, the NWHM competes with an astonishing array of digital content, from educational to informational to a range of entertainment media. Most museums now have websites designed to complement their exhibit halls and offer educational resources for a range of visitors. Situated among a slew of high-quality, professionally-designed sites and materials, the perceived legitimacy of the NWHM has suffered by comparison. As my analysis shows, the design features, utilization of digital affordances, and content choices of the NWHM's cyber exhibits function paradoxically as the museum's greatest strengths and, at the same time, some of its greatest weaknesses.

Analysis of Exhibits

The fraught relationship between women and the public sphere continue to shape the way that public memory places, particularly national places, incorporate or represent the presence and contributions of America's historical women. As a national museum and public memory place, the National Women's History (Cyber)Museum aims to make space for women's history through making women and women's history more visible, by providing accessible histories online that both supplement and challenge the content of museums such as the National Museum of American History. It is with an eye toward accounting for this positionality and context that I explore selected exhibits of the NWHM cybermuseum. In the sections that follow, I examine the consequence and affinities produced by and with six digital exhibits: "Rights for Women: The Suffrage Movement and Its Leaders"; "Building the New World: The Women of Jamestown Settlement" and "Women With a Deadline: Female Printers, Publishers and Journalists from the Colonial Period to World War I"; "Claiming Their Citizenship: African American Women from 1624-2009" and "Chinese American Women: A History of Resilience and Resistance"; and "Breaking In: Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics."

The exhibits analyzed here were chosen after considering the launch dates, curators and consultants, and topics discussed. The exhibits were selected, in part, to reflect the shifts in exhibit style and focus over the life of the cybermuseum. They were also selected to facilitate a discussion about not only gender but ethnic inclusivity, a feature that has long been claimed as being of critical concern to the NWHM. Due to the manner in which the NWHM has developed over time and the highly collaborative nature

of its museum, selecting a representative sample of digital exhibits proved to be highly problematic. Each exhibit is as different as the people who created it. Unlike museums with longer histories, large budgets and more rigid governance, the NWHM exhibits do anything but communicate a central design philosophy or consistency of medium. In contrast to the slick and expensive displays one finds at Smithsonian institutions, the NWHM cybermuseum is a grassroots patchwork of content created by diverse individuals with a range of goals and motivations. In selecting the exhibits for this analysis, I have attempted to represent this diversity.

If we accept the vibrant materiality of the digital artifact, it is then possible to critically assess each one in terms of its substance, presence, and consequence. Rhetorically, digital exhibits and other media are material because of what they *do*, perhaps even more so than what they might *mean*.[8] To examine what each digital exhibit does, then, I take them in turn and explore them starting with the five analytic questions described above. As I discuss each exhibit's significance, apparatuses and durability, mode of reproduction and preservation, relationships and tensions with other cultural institutions and digital museum visitors, among others, I aim to describe how, as a rhetorical artifact, the digital exhibit functions amidst a context that spans the virtual as well as the material world. If we understand the inherent rhetoricity of these exhibits, then we understand aspects like these to be a critical essaying point, one from which more productive questions may then be formulated.

NWHM Home Page

The NWHM cybermuseum is customarily accessed through the NWHM.org website. For this reason, many visitors will find that the museum visit begins not with the cybermuseum itself, but first with the "Home" page of this website (NWHM.org). Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of this page is the large central image that dominates the page. This image is actually a "gallery," or a set of four images that rotate every ten seconds. The images themselves include links to content found on other pages on the website. Layered atop the image(s) are a number of fixed features that include the NWHM logo in the upper left corner, a "Search" bar and "Donate" button in the upper right, and a row of colorful tabs across the upper third. These tabs link the visitor to the rest of the site's content, and from left to right, are labeled "Donate," "Building the Museum," "Online Exhibits," "Education & Resources," "Get Involved," "About Us" and "Contact." The text "Women have been left out of the telling our history" appears just below the central image, in small black font; below this phrase, the words "We are the National Women's History Museum" appears, larger, in a bold black font, followed immediately by a red "Become a Member" button (see figure 12).

Figure 12. Screenshot A, NWHM Home page (upper half). "Home." National Women's History Museum. *NWHM.org*. 1 Sept. 2016.

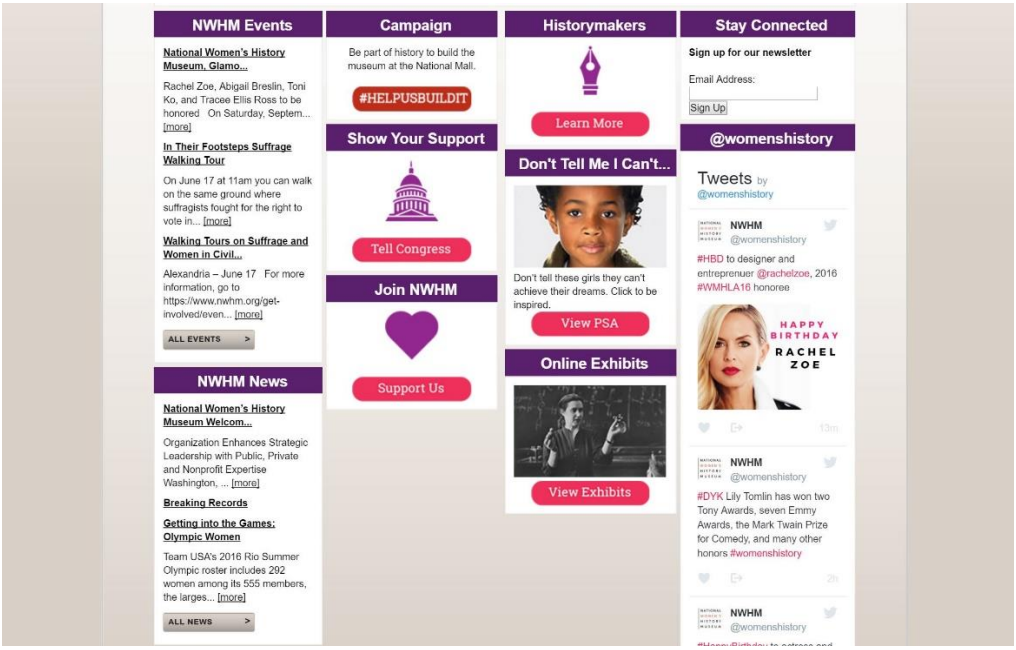

Figure 13. Screenshot B, NWHM Home page (lower half). "Home." National Women's History Museum. *NWHM.org*. 1 Sep. 2016

In fact, color is used on this upper section of the Home page that it emphasizes the NWHM's organizational priorities: against a background of pale neutral colors and sepia images, the "Building the Museum" and "About Us" tabs are in shades of purple, a color with meaningful ties to woman suffrage and the movement's color scheme of white, gold and purple; and the "Online Exhibits" tab and both "Donate" buttons (upper right and the first tab) are in red, as is the word "Woman's" in the NWHM logo. Clearly, fundraising and building the museum come before all else, with the cybermuseum perhaps a close second.

Scrolling down is necessary to view the lower half of the page, and in this area, the colors purple and red continue to dominate as accents on a white background (see figure 13). "Events," "News," "Campaign," "Show Your Support" and "Join" areas are contained in text-heavy boxes on the left; the right shows "Historymakers," "Don't Tell Me I Can't," "Online Exhibits," "Stay Connected" and the organization's Twitter feed, "@womenshistory." Buttons labeled "Learn More," "Tell Congress," "Support Us" and "#HELPUSBUILDIT" are in red or deep pink. Each of these buttons and headings are links to content found elsewhere, either on other pages of the organization's website or the NWHM's social media feeds. The "#HELPUSBUILDIT" button, for example, links to a freestanding website (www.helpusbuildit.org) focused on the NWHM's campaign for a physical museum on the National Mall. Others, like the "Tell Congress" button, link to a separate campaign platform page that is no longer active ("Sorry, this campaign is currently not available") (http://NWHM.good.do/account/inactive_account/). The impression that emerges from the viability of these links and features is one of an organization in transition, almost but perhaps not quite managing it with the thoroughness

expected of a professional organization. Broken or misdirected links, while minor features in and of themselves, speak to a certain negligence toward their intended publics as well as an inattention to small but important details of their own campaign activity. It also may indicate limited funds and access to professional website management, something entirely in line with the grassroots origins of the NWHM.

Overall, the "Home" page of the NWHM.org site is content-heavy and focused on soliciting support and donations, two characteristics not unusual in and of themselves, but certainly indicative of the relationship the organization envisions between itself and its supporters. The page itself is a virtual hub for myriad links to other places, a transit point for any number of paths through the site and beyond. The simple color scheme both enhances this impression and facilitates it, the soft neutrals and bright accent colors reminiscent of other color-coded modes of public transit.

When assessing the effectiveness of a website, there are numerous approaches to consider. Among these, I find those described by Douglas K. Van Duyne et al accessible and productively centered on user experience. As web design experts, Van Duyne et al suggests that successful digital qualities can be broken into five primary categories: ease of use, performance, content quality, satisfaction, and brand value (367). Although basic and seemingly self-evident, Van Duyne et al argue that those who design websites do not always understand the needs and proficiency levels of the typical web user, just as many users do not understand the affordances and limitations of digital technologies. The design of the NWHM website follows many of the standard practices of web design the authors describe, agreeing with practices described by other web design experts which dictate the placement of many of the page elements. For example, studies have shown

that web users typically read a web page in an “F” pattern, starting with the upper left, scanning across, then back to the left and moving down slightly, then across again, then less focused scanning the bottom t of two-thirds of the page (Nielsen “F-Shaped Pattern”). Examining the layout of the NWHM.org “Home” page, it is clear that the features of the page already emphasized with accent colors are also situated, spatially, within this “F” reading pattern. Reading this way, the first features a visitor encounters are the NWHM logo, a red “Donate” button, a red “Donate” tab, the rest of the tabs, and then a red “Become a Member” button.

Taught to read left to right, as most Americans are, the website visitor encounters the web page through muscle memory and body orientation. As the eyes and head scan left and right, the body is engaged in a range of activity that includes reading, clicking or touching, scrolling, typing, waiting, attending, and retaining information (however short term). If there is audio or video present, we are also hearing and listening, and perhaps responding to sounds with movements of our own (i.e., tapping feet, head bobbing, or even dancing). The body is oriented toward the interface through which the web page is accessed, which may be positioned on a desk, a lap, or held in the hand. As technology increasingly becomes an extension of the mind and body, the visibility of the interface itself recedes, masking the tactile connection required to enter cyberspace at all. We are so used to interacting with all aspects of the material world in relation to or through our bodies that to do so online feels natural, in some respects. For novice users, however, this is not the case, and that naturalness is revealed as a learned behavior.

In addition, the page exhibits attention to usability, a “a quality attribute that assesses how easy user interfaces are to use” (Nielsen, “Usability 101”) as well as efforts

to minimize interaction cost, or "the sum of efforts — mental and physical — that the users must deploy in interacting with a site in order to reach their goals" (Budiu). Usability and interaction cost are important aspects of effective web design, and are intricately connected: the easier a site is to use and navigate, the less effort it takes to do so. Minimalizing the effort required to use is considered a best practice because the internet user is so difficult to induce to stay in any one place for long. The moment that user becomes frustrated, bored, overwhelmed, or irritated, they are likely to immediately shift away from the web page and its content. In the top portion of the NWHM.org Home page, at least, the overall usability and interaction cost appear to perform effectively; the need to scroll down, however, and the clutter of the lower portion of the page (not to mention the presence of obsolete hyperlinks) significantly hamper usability and increase interaction cost. That the organization would want an accessible link to additional interactive platforms, such as Twitter, is a logical impulse; however, such links are surrounded by others, many of which are repeated from above, undermining the effectiveness of including them.

Given the design of the NWHM.org "Home" page, the access point for the cybermuseum is placed centrally, rather than on the left side or near the top, which in effect already marks the online exhibits with a status secondary to the organization's fundraising and support-gathering functions. Of course, the color of the "Online Exhibits" tab mediates this demotion somewhat, as does the fact that the central images on the page are themselves links to the featured exhibit. Clicking on the "Online Exhibits" tab opens what could be described as the "Home" page for the NWHM cybermuseum (see figure 14). The fixed features of the NWHM.org "Home" page – the

logo, the search bar and "Donate" button, and the row of tabs across the top third of the page – remain fixed on this page; however, the tabs are no longer a solid color with white text (unless selected) but are now white with black text and a bar of color, corresponding with the color of the tab on the "Home" page, at the base. At a glance, users can determine which content area of the website they are currently viewing by noting which tab has reverted back to a solid color, a valuable usability feature.

Figure 14. Screenshot, NWHM Online Exhibits Home page. "Online Exhibits." The National Women's History Museum. *NWHM.org.* 1 Sept. 2016.

Curiously, the left side of the page features a single "In This Section" bar, in red, and then white space all the way down to the bottom. Given the way that we know web users read online, this layout increases interaction cost by forcing the eye to the right without providing a focal point for reference, a curious choice until clicking through the other tabs reveals that this space on the left side has been reserved for additional links. Perhaps because each exhibit is represented by a colored box and an image that contain

the link to the exhibit's contents, a list of links for the exhibits does not appear on the left side. Instead, users are forced to scroll down, many times, to browse through the images and titles of available exhibits. Hovering a cursor over any image on the page flips that image and the box containing the exhibit title both to a black box, and a brief description of the exhibit and the words "View exhibit" appear in white text. The words "View exhibit" are also a hyperlink that lead to that exhibit's "Introduction" page.

These boxes appear to be grouped in no particular order on the page, other than perhaps the presence of a featured (and in this case, newest) exhibit, "Getting into the Game: Women and the Olympics," situated larger and oriented horizontally across the top, different from the other, smaller exhibit titles in vertical orientations. Warm tones on a white background provide a sense of visual cohesion as well as variety, and many of the images have been rendered in warmer, sepia tones rather than a higher contrast black-and-white. The exhibits themselves are a patchwork collection of topics, from women in sports and business (near the top) to histories of immigration, African American women in the Civil Rights movement, and female presidential candidates (at the bottom). Although clearly not comprehensive, the topics hint at an array of historical knowledge lacking or less accessible elsewhere, and an effort to provide each display with a creative title and unique focus has clearly been made. In competition with digital media, as well as historical tourism and diverse educational resources, the NWHM is clearly responding to a need to be timely as well as inclusive, to focus on stories that awe and inspire, to draw out hidden histories, and to emphasize the unexpected.

Perhaps this is why the NWHM's first cyber exhibit, "Motherhood, Social Service, and Political Reform: Political Culture and Imagery of American Woman

Suffrage" curated by Edith P. Mayo is no longer available on the website, at least not under that title. While the emphasis on motherhood may appease critics of the NWHM who have accused the organization of a far too radical agenda (Parry), the topic certainly lacks the same sense of curiosity inspired by the experiences of colonial women, for example, or even Harriet Tubman, whom most would likely recognize.

Overall, the exhibits currently featured on the NWHM website represent women with ethnic ratios similar to that of the National Museum of American History's more inclusive exhibits: of the 28 exhibits, three could be categorized as focusing exclusively on African American women, one on Chinese American women, and one on immigrants from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Tallied this way, approximately 18% of the exhibits are overtly diverse. Non-white women are included throughout the other exhibits, of course, which makes this number far from absolute, but still troubling for an organization determined to be viewed as inclusive. In my selection of exhibits to analyze, I have attempted to be as inclusive as possible given the circumstances. In what follows, I examine six exhibits divided into four analytic groups, examples that I argue demonstrate significant features of NWHM's approach to exhibit production and, by extension, public memory production as well.

Analytic Group 1: "Rights for Women: The Suffrage Movement and Its Leaders"

An early example of a NWHM cyber exhibit and one of its most durable offerings is the "Rights for Women: The Suffrage Movement and Its Leaders" exhibit ("Rights for Women: Suffrage Movement"). "Rights for Women" was launched in August 2006 but based on a traveling exhibit designed and constructed by the NWHM in 1998 ("Rights for

Women"). Originally designed by Edith P. Mayo, curator emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution, the online exhibit was curated by NWHM summer intern Kristina Gupta.

At the core of the NWHM's mission is the assertion that the American public are woefully ignorant of women's history. Such a mission is not without merit: exhibits about the woman suffrage movement are scarce, particularly when placed in context with exhibits about other significant moments in US history.[9] The mission of the NWHM also underscores the organization's belief that this history holds significance for the American people; by creating an exhibit about it, the NWHM asserts that learning about woman suffrage, the women and men who were involved, the struggle and ultimate victory, is an important but often glossed-over aspect of a national past. Offering a permanent and comprehensive exhibit about the history of the woman suffrage movement is a logical choice for the NWHM; unlike other national museums, which despite such designation often fail to account for the history of American women as well as men, the NWHM has, from the beginning, positioned itself rhetorically as a corrective to the absences and omissions in the national historical museum tradition.

Lauded as a valuable educational resource, the exhibit is based on the history of woman suffrage in the United States as crafted by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, two prominent suffrage leaders who had the foresight to document their own social movement and the influence to widely disseminate their own unique version of events.[10] The exhibit's historical roots are further made visible in the colors selected for the text and page features; the gold, purple and white of woman suffrage adorn all nineteen sections. The banner across the top features the NWHM logo (an older version than the one currently in use) in the upper left, the title of the exhibit in purple on a gold

background in the center, and a black-and-white image of a “Votes for Women” illustration balancing the logo on the upper right. This banner is the only fixed feature appearing in all sections of the exhibit.

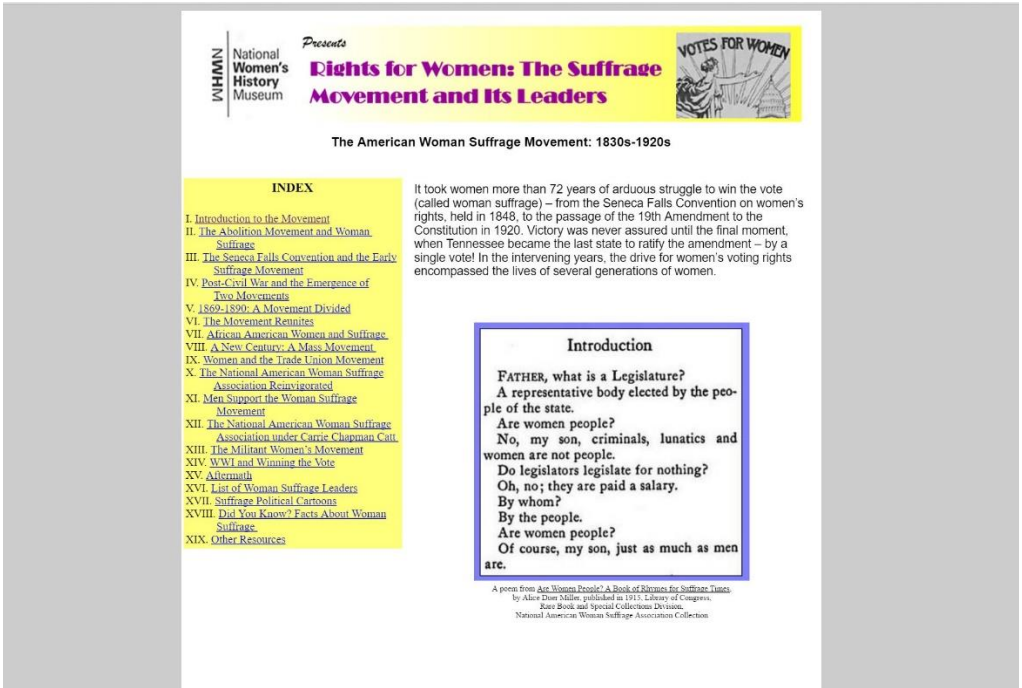

Figure 15. Screenshot, “Rights for Women” exhibit. “Rights for Women.” The National Women’s History Museum. *NWHM.org*. 1 Sept. 2016.

Despite the nod to suffrage colors, the page sections of the “Rights for Women” exhibit manage to be both stark and cluttered at the same time (see figure 15). Stark as a result of the unrelieved white background and black text; cluttered as a result of the narrow, vertical orientation of the display and blocks of text including the lengthy Index box on the left, with the titles of each of the nineteen sections listed, and paragraph of background information about woman suffrage in the middle-upper right, and an image of a period poem by Alice D. Miller, 1915, “Are Women People?” The lack of a focal point on the page may also contribute to the cluttered feel; without a central image or idea, the viewer struggles to decide where to look and in which order.

Successive sections of the exhibit begin with a discussion of colonial voting laws and abolition and narrate a history of suffrage that ends with a brief look at the aftermath of ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Such a scope encompasses more of the movement's history and context than is usually taught, living up to the exhibit's stated educational purpose. To Mayo's credit, she does not shrink from the less admirable aspects of Stanton and Anthony's political tactics, including opposing the Fourteenth Amendment and allying themselves with pro-slavery politicians. Such content, while perhaps running the risk of offending some, less well-versed members of the public, is a clear sign of the exhibit's attempt to provide a perspective that is both thorough and fair.

From this example, it seems that the content and the design of the "Rights for Women" exhibit are each based more on utility, and less on aesthetics. Yet utility itself is also hampered by a lack of consistency from section to section. The basic nature of the design supports this view, as does the layout of each of the exhibit's sections. Utilizing some of the affordances of the digital medium, images of prominent figures related to the movement are provided, as are links to extended biographies kept on pages elsewhere on the NWHM website. The full text of the Declaration of Sentiments is available through a link in one section, accessed through an image of one of the period copies of the document (the original has never been located). The image of a suffrage ribbon is located in another section, accessible from any web device. Despite these features, however, each section centered on the narrative, on the text describing different moments or facets of the woman suffrage movement, with historical photographs, propaganda, and other images place either below the text or to the right. If we accept that the top and left side of the screen is "read" far more attentively and more often than the right and the bottom, then

by placing the text to the left and images to the right or below, the narrative of the exhibit is spatially as well as conceptually emphasized, while the historical artifacts themselves are placed in a hierarchy of lesser importance.

Navigation through the exhibit is also a function of utility, although, once again, troubled by inconsistency. Scrolling and clicking through the exhibit is facilitated by two features: a set of links in the Introduction providing direct access to each section, and a set of navigation buttons at the bottom of each of the succeeding sections. However, some of the sections require the visitor to scroll down to access these buttons due to the length of the content and size of the images. At the same time, the size of the text itself is quite small, requiring a visitor to enlarge the content to read it without straining. Such compulsory interactivity may have unintended negative consequences for the NWHM: for example, a visitor accustomed to digital content that adjusts automatically to screen size for ease of access and legibility may find the rigidity of the NWHM exhibits archaic and frustrating to use.

Such an opinion might be further enhanced by the nature of digital artifacts, known for their mutability and fluidity. It is rare, perhaps, to find something that has existed in a relatively fixed state for ten years, as this exhibit has done. Of course, such durability is also an illusion: the exhibit will continue to exist in its present form only as long as the organization wills it so. Housed online, "Rights for Women" is subject to the same frailties and limitations that mark all digital objects, requiring maintenance to remain accessible to the public. Once the exhibit is deemed obsolete, it will be removed and, unless deliberately archived, simply disappear.

Analytic Group 2: "Building the New World" and "Women With a Deadline"

Of the twenty-eight exhibits currently available through the NWHM.org website, the curation of six of them is attributed to Doris Weatherford, NWHM Vice President of Programs, author and former High School history teacher. Two of Weatherford's exhibits, launched in 2007, are representative of a time when the organization was undergoing visible and material shifts in leadership, vision, and public image. "Building the New World: The Women of Jamestown Settlement" and "Women With a Deadline: Female Printers, Publishers and Journalists from the Colonial Period to World War I" each focus on aspects of women's history that are rarely included elsewhere, adding to the corpus of women's history accessible online as well as communicating a great deal about the organization that sponsored them. That Weatherford, neither an academic nor a museum professional, was entrusted with such a large percentage of the cybermuseum's content speaks to the willingness of the NWHM to invite diverse voices into the planning and design of its cyber exhibits. At the same time, it is a deliberate eschewing of credentialed expertise, something for which the organization has been heavily criticized (Parry).

"Building the New World: The Women of Jamestown Settlement" explores the presence and contributions of women in the "New World." Beginning with a brief introduction explaining the significance of European exploration in seventeenth century, the exhibit includes a section on indigenous peoples of the North American continent before moving to the arrival of the first European women in 1608. This exhibit, rather than chronological, is organized topically, and explores facets of life in the Settlement that range from agriculture and indentured servitude to family life and living conditions.

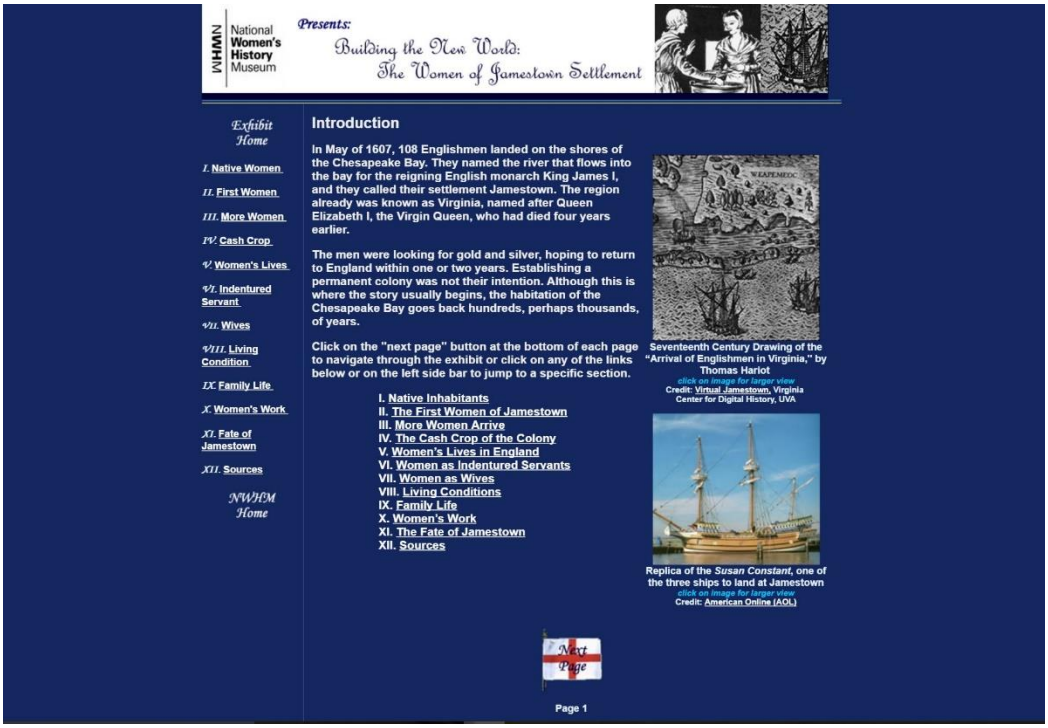

Figure 16. Screenshot, "Building a New World" exhibit. "Building a New World." The National Women's History Museum. *NWHM.org*. 1 Sept. 2016.

The design and layout of "Building a New World" are reminiscent of "Rights for Women," at least in terms of the vertical orientation, centered text, and fixed banner at the top of each section and page. In this exhibit, however, a white banner with the NWHM logo, title in a black cursive font, and a small black-and-white image is affixed to the top center of the screen over a field of dark blue that fills the entire background (see figure 16). White and bright blue fonts seem to float on that background, with the narrative content of the exhibit centered on the screen, a list of section links down the left side and two captioned images to the right: a black and white drawing of a ship, "Arrival of Englishmen in Virginia" by Thomas Hariot (seventeenth century) and a photo of a replica of the Susan Constant, one of the three ships to land at Jamestown in 1607. Curiously, a second set of links appears below the central paragraph on this page as well,

as does a “Next Page” button, styled to look like a white flag with a red St. George’s cross, at the bottom center.

Although at first glance “Building a New World” seems to have less content than “Rights for Women,” with links for only twelve sections shown, unlike “Rights for Women” there are multiple pages within each section of the “Building a New World” exhibit. Despite the fact that the list of section links remains fixed on the left side of the screen, the only way to access many of these pages is to click the “Next Page” button, limiting a visitor’s ability to move directly to a desired page. Similarities to “Rights for Women” are in evidence, as well: each page of “Building a New World” features a different arrangement of images and text, as well as a greater variety of both color and black-and-white images. But where images were largely restricted to the right and lower areas of the screen in “Rights for Women,” here they move all around the content area of the page: top, right, center, left, and bottom. Inset text boxes featuring links to additional material are also a common feature as well as a portable one; for example, on the first page of the “Native Inhabitants” section, links are offered to “Learn more about European Exploration Before Jamestown” and “Learn about the Beginning of British North American.” Despite the affordances of hyperlinks, these links lead only to material is still contained within the exhibit, and once finished, require the visitor to retrace their steps back to the original section through a series of “Previous Page” buttons. Such a requirement severely limits the visitor’s mobility through the site, failing to offer the fluidity of movement and depth of content that many digital media users have come to expect.

The second exhibit launched the summer of 2007 attributed to Weatherford's influence is "Women with a Deadline: Female Printers, Publishers and Journalists from the Colonial Period to World War I." The curation of the exhibit itself was done by two interns, Stephanie Edwartoski and Tamar Rabinowitz, with Weatherford taking on the role of "historical consultant" ("Doris Weatherford"). And, for the first time, we are given the name of the website designer, David Bovey. Such information indicates that the other exhibits may also have been designed by an unacknowledged third party, but given the differences between them, likely not the same person. The inclusion of Bovey's name here underscores the absence of certain attributions elsewhere in the exhibits, a troubling trend for an organization whose stated mission is to recognize those who have made historical contributions. The recognition of interns is both laudatory (interns are rarely given credit for their work, in my experience) and a point of concern when one considers that the exhibits in the NWHM cybermuseum are often the organization's first point of contact with the public, as well as a demonstration of its ability to participate in museum culture. That such critical content is attributed to interns and Weatherford, rather than a professional historian or other trained professional, may inadvertently reduce the exhibits to a secondary status among the organization's priorities and then communicate that out to visitors. It is possible, however, that such arrangements are the result of other factors, including access to professionals with web design abilities, limited funding, and so on.

Figure 17. Screenshot of "Women with a Deadline" exhibit. "Women with a Deadline." The National Women's History Museum. *NWHM.org*. 1 Sept. 2016.

Perhaps the most visible difference between "Women with a Deadline" and the other exhibits I've analyzed thus far is the lack of the NWHM logo (see figure 17). Instead, a custom banner with the title layered over an image of antique typewriter keys reads "The National Women's History Museum Presents." The font used here is evocative of early type styles, and alternates between white and dark brown lettering. In fact, brown is the exhibit's dominant color, with shades of tan and taupe layered over a background of deep brown. Such a color scheme works to emphasize the white text, when used: on the exhibit's first section page, the title in a thick white font is the focal point.

When compared to the clutter of "Rights for Women" and the deep blue sea of "Building a New World," "Women with a Deadline" seems to strike a relatively balanced middle ground between utility and aesthetics. The ever-present list of section links on the

left side is more narrow, the central content area attractively titled in a larger font size and justified to the left with the body paragraphs beneath it. All fonts used (other than that of the title) are clearly legible in a sans serif style. There are no images on the first exhibit page; the focus is on describing the purpose and content of the exhibit.

The historical content of the digital exhibit begins in the next section, "Pioneers of the Press," which details the contributions of seventeenth-century women to the new American colonies by bringing printing presses with them when they came. In this section, there is a photo of one such press, as well as an image of an early printed book, positioned to the right and below the textual content of the sections (https://www.NWHM.org/online-exhibits/womenwithdeadlines/wwd28.htm). In fact, on each section page, the images have been positioned in line with the text rather than positioned beside or below it, pointing to a slightly more skilled hand to the design. Unlike the first section, which fit easily on one screen, each of the next fifteen sections require the visitor to scroll down to view all of the content that has been included, as well as the "Back" and "Next" buttons at the bottom center, styled to look like typewriter keys.

The exhibit content makes a compelling case for the significance of women's contributions to publishing and journalism in the United States, offering a fairly comprehensive overview of women's role in publishing during the Revolution, female journalists during the Civil War, and the origins of *Ladies Home Journal* magazine, started in 1883 and still in print today. The exhibit also contributes to the visibility of women's contributions by including the names of the curators, consultant and web designer in the exhibit's concluding section. As the exhibit clearly shows, the history of

printing and journalism is a material as well as a conceptual history, a history of Americans creating and sharing reading material in the performance of their rhetorical agency.

Both "Building a New World" and "Women with a Deadline" take aim at traditions of misogynist versions of history in which women are rarely represented, or are frequently misrepresented. The role of women in colonial settlement or the role of women in printing, publishing and journalism are not well known; for example, the narrative of white colonization often focuses on exploration and conquest, activities in which women featured less prominently than men. The history of printing and publishing is an even more determinedly exclusive case, given recent attention drawn to the significant gender inequalities in the industry today. For example, according to a recent survey, the number of female editors at the twenty-five top daily newspapers has actually decreased from seven in 2004 to just three in 2014 (Griffin). In book publishing, the numbers are just as skewed, but in the other direction: according to one report, 78% of the staff at thirty-four major book publishers in the United States are female. However, what this statistic does not reveal is that women working in publishing tend to be concentrated in lower-level jobs, with 40% of the top jobs in publishing held by men (Flood).

Whether due to absence or ubiquity, both situations contribute to the invisibility of women in printing, publishing and journalism, a gap that the NWHM cyber exhibit aims to fill. In its development of women's history resources over the years, the NWHM has rhetorically positioned itself as a national gauge representing the status of women's history in the United States. For this reason, the existence of the exhibit itself has become

a sign that gender disparity exists; not all gaps in American history have been addressed, yet each exhibit at the NWHM cybermuseum aims to fill a select few. That the corpus of the NWHM exhibits is selective and partial also points to the possible breadth and depth of foci available for additional exhibits, given adequate resources. This potential complicates the public narrative of American history by demonstrating not only how much has been omitted, but also how inconsequential these omissions have long been considered to be. In this way, the NWHM continues to develop as a social and political weight capable of showing women as history makers, rather than marginalized subjects, and bringing women forward, exhibit by exhibit, to accept their rightful place in American history.

Although wider consequence is difficult to assess in the midst of development, one effect the NWHM desires is to inspire women to re-evaluate their own potential futures in light of an honorable and fully textured past. The knowledge that women were valuable contributors to printing, publishing and journalism from the earliest times of each field may inspire more women to engage, more meaningfully, in these areas. By highlighting the dangers faced by women who crossed oceans and confronted what they described as a wild and dangerous new world, the NWHM may inspire more constructive understandings and more creative thinking about the capabilities of women in diverse cultural and historical spaces. Values such as bravery, courage, fortitude, hardiness, and so on are rarely associated with women and popular notions of women's history. Thus the cyber exhibits of the NWHM challenges deeper cultural beliefs about the nature and character of women and offer that challenge to women as a tool to use as they continue to break new ground in historically male-dominated fields.

Of course, a consideration of consequence may also reveal that the actions and agency of historical women were not always exemplary. By bringing previously hidden aspects of women's involvement in colonization and media production to light, the NWHM risks exposing roles that women played in censorship or violence against indigenous peoples. As an ethical and socially responsible institution, such risks raise important questions about the need to confront a less-than-admirable aspect of the past within a public memory milieu that, as a rule, glosses them with sweeping generalizations and selective amnesia. In this way, an additional task (yet to be taken up) of the NWHM is to both take responsibility for historical equality (positive and negative) as well as force it to be shared, equally, among pre-existing institutions responsible for the generation and maintenance of public memory.

Some question as to whether women's roles in the conquering and genocide of indigenous peoples is something to be celebrated; arguable as to whether this exhibit celebrates or informs, perhaps. If women are to be an equal member in history, they must be present in all spaces, even those shameful parts of the past that led to unspeakable violence and acts of destruction. Responsibility as well as veneration needs to be shared, regardless of gender.

Analytic Group 3: "Claiming Their Citizenship" and "Chinese American Women"

The NWHM's origins in and traditions of white feminism are clearly visible in the early years of the organization, which are characterized by an intense focus on woman suffrage and a determination to place women on par with white men in historically male-dominated fields, such as the hard sciences, technology, sports, and business. While the process of rescue, recovery and (re)inscription (Royster and Kirsch)

continues to be among the important feminist projects of the new millennium, omitting or ignoring aspects of women's history outside of challenges to male domination marginalizes a history of female achievement beyond the pale of the public spotlight. In this way, the NWHM unwittingly accepts the status quo in such a way that patriarchal norms are not dismantled, but gender-swapped (white woman for white men) instead. Many of the museum's critics come from feminist activists, who dislike the museum's narrow views on what qualifies as commendable achievements and who is worthy of commemoration. Charges of a lacking diversity accompanied other critiques of the organization, accusations that the NWHM has struggled to address.

Perhaps in response to these critiques, the NWHM launched two cyber exhibits in 2009 and 2010 designed to invite the histories of historically marginalized women into their museal construct. These two exhibits, "Claiming Their Citizenship: African American Women from 1624-2009" and "Chinese American Women: A History of Resilience and Resistance" provide brief glimpses into an historical past as experienced and recorded by oppressed groups. They also challenge widely-held popular conceptions of American history as the actions and accomplishments of the white male elite. However, the question of whether the NWHM feels that adding a few exhibits like "Claiming Their Citizenship" will cement their status as an inclusive cultural institution bears closer examination.

Written and curated by Dr. Ida E. Jones of the Moorland Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, "Claiming Their Citizenship" details the history of African Americans from their enslavement on the American continents to issues and accomplishments of the new millennium. In her conclusion, Jones asserts that "[t]he

history of African American women has provided a rich, vibrant voice to the chorus of American freedom, justice and independence," and that despite and through inconceivable hardship, have continually sought to redefine themselves through education and leadership roles in American society ("Claiming"). The exhibit content is divided into fourteen chronological sections, and also offers a "Timeline" of historical women and "Additional Resources" listing a selection of articles and books. In these features, as well as in the tone and content of each content section, the mark of a trained historian is clearly in evidence, as are the photographs and images that accompany the text. Researched by Sydnee Winston, these images range from the familiar (Phyllis Wheatley) to the rare (a meeting of club women, for example).

Accessing the exhibit from the main page of the cybermuseum opens a page that appears to be riddled with technical errors. Although a neatly designed banner spans the top of the page, with a neutral tan background, cutout images of African American women clustered in the center (four), "NWHM presents" in gold font on the left and the title, in dark brown, on the right, the remaining page is the blank white of a design flaw. A list of blue links runs awkwardly down the left side. Scrolling down, the page content becomes visible: a map of the Slave Trade and several large paragraphs of text about the African presence in English-speaking North America. Without preamble, this page opens the history of African American women with violence; labeled "Introduction," even so the page does not actually introduce the exhibit (as the introduction in "Women with a Deadline" does). Inexplicably, navigation links titled "Home" and "Next" are visible, floating midway down the page between sections of text, perhaps another error.

It is not until clicking on the next section link, “The Early Era,” that what is likely the intended design of the exhibit becomes visible (see figure 18). In shades of brown and tan, a dark brown box on the left holds a list of section links in gold font, while the remainder of the page is tan with black text in the center and an image, “A slave ship from 1860,” on the right. On this page, the navigation links are more functionally located in the lower right corner.

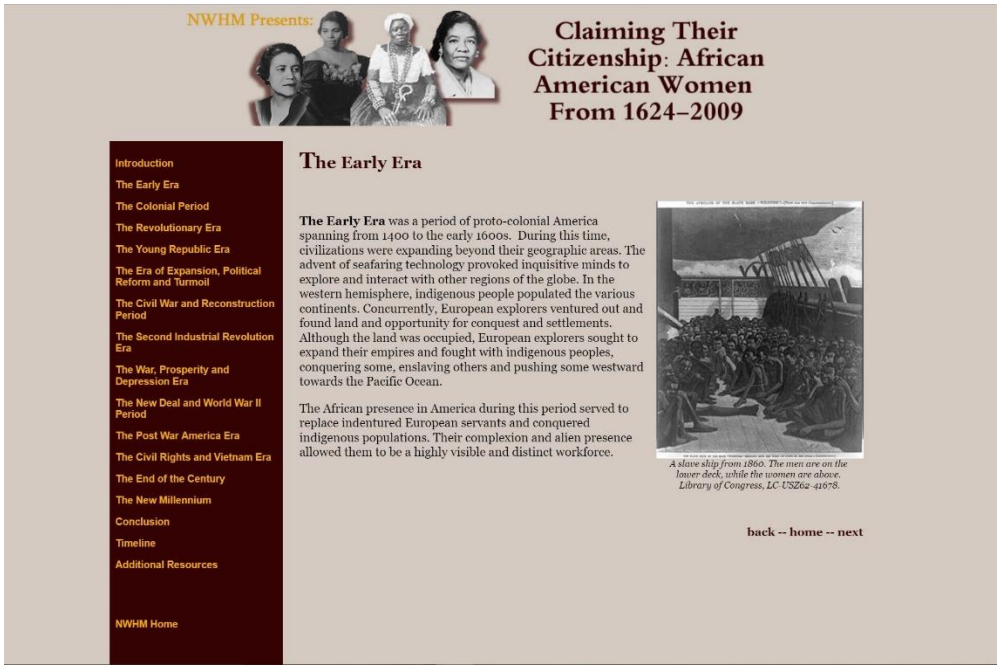

Figure 18. Screenshot, “Claiming Their Citizenship” exhibit. “Claiming Their Citizenship.” The National Women’s History Museum. *NWHM.org*. 1 Sept. 2016.

The succeeding pages feature a range of content and image layouts, although the many seem to follow a pattern where an image is positioned in the upper left area of the central text area and the right side of each page features additional information, timelines, and other supplements. The soft colors of the exhibit theme provides a neutral background upon which both black-and-white and color images are presented to draw the eye, images present in roughly equal numbers of each type.

Despite the damage done to the ethos of the exhibit by the Introduction section, the exhibit strives for a simple but dignified presentation, maintaining a style that eschews provocative language and maintains a tight control over emotional appeals. In fact, the text focuses so exclusively on factual information that it often lacks the storytelling flow present in many of the museum's other exhibits and typically expected in digital texts. Although there is no correlation, the approach and presentation of this exhibit, as one of the museum's only offerings focusing exclusively on the histories of historically marginalized women, begins to look as though the curator and/or the organization itself are trying just a bit too hard to achieve a "serious" performance.

That "Claiming their Citizenship" exists as a separate, bounded content area separate from the other exhibits is, in itself, problematic. While the exhibit addresses troubling gaps in American history that too often ignore the contributions of African American women, at the same time it creates a division between the history of African American women and "everyone else." This situation is not unique to the NWHM cybermuseum; my study of the National Museum of American History and other sites in Washington, D.C. revealed that African American history is, as a rule, separated from and thus held apart from the mainstream historical narrative of the United States. Within the context of public memory, that division has material weight; it *matters*. Just as women's history is divided from "history," so too is African American women's history divided from "women's history." Such divisions may function, deliberately or not, to reinforce social, political and material divisions between the publics the NWHM cybermuseum exists to serve.

That this exhibit exists within the milieu of digital media is also a matter of concern. Although more recent than some of the museum's other exhibits, "Claiming their Citizenship" already shows evidence of wear in terms of the technical errors that plague its Introduction page. As digital code becomes corrupted or fails to function as designed, the message of the exhibit is significantly impeded and the effect on the exhibit's visitors altered. It does seem odd that, in the years since I began writing this analysis, that technical error has remained unchanged. Such negligence may be the result of something as innocent as ignorance or lack of resources, or it may point to larger issues of inattention to details or, at worst, the re-marginalization of an historically marginalized group. If the exhibit continues to break down and cease to function correctly, will it be replaced, or will this history slip back into obscurity? Perhaps only time will tell.

Another prominent example of diversity and division within the NWHM cybermuseum is the exhibit "Chinese American Women: A History of Resilience and Resistance." Featured prominently on the museum's home page, "Chinese American Women" functions similarly to the "Claiming their Citizenship" exhibit in that it centers a historically marginalized group of women and challenges the dominant historical narrative of American history. Under the direction of Doris Weatherford, "Chinese American Women" was curated by Dr. Jean Pfaelzer, Professor of English, Women and Gender Studies, and Asian Studies at the University of Delaware, designed by Nikki Emser, and researched by Shi Chen, Meghan Hindmarch, and Claire Love ("Chinese American Women: Resources"). Launched in 2009, this exhibit is organized thematically and provides insights into the unique challenges faced by Chinese American women from

the earliest immigrations to the cultural and educational work they undertook in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Figure 19. Screenshot, "Chinese American Women" exhibit. "Chinese American Women." The National Women's History Museum, *NWHM.org*. 1 Sept. 2016.

Visually, the exhibit design is aesthetically coherent; each page features red text on a white background, with fixed top banner featuring gold Chinese characters layered behind the large, legible title in red on the upper far right (see figure 19). The words "The National Women's History Museum presents" appear at the very top; otherwise, that coveted upper left corner is bare. This emphasis on the right side of the page may seem a function of the exhibit design, but it may also point to a deliberate resistance to the Western practice of reading from left to right. Beneath the banner, the ubiquitous list of content section links runs down the left, in green, and is set off by a decorative flourish. Other than this list, the colors red and gold are used exclusively throughout the exhibit, symbolic of good fortune and prestige within the context of Chinese culture and tradition.

Text fills the center of the page, but is balanced by a large image on the right, arguably the focal point of the page. “Portrait of a Chinese Woman Standing” is an arresting image of a Chinese American women, full length, posing with a three-quarter profile facing to the right and is rendered in muted sepia tones. The soft colors, stance and direction of woman in the picture lend a somber dignity to the section that is echoed in the rhetorical suggestiveness of the title and throughout the remaining content.

The layout of this content works in concert with the narrative it weaves, describing the challenges faced by Chinese women as they made the perilous ocean voyage to North America in black text on a white background. Although the use of white for a background risks an unfinished look, in this case the white allows the faded images and old photographs of each section to provide a focal point for the viewer. The tone of the text is reminiscent of the “Claiming their Citizenship” exhibit, but adopts a slightly more narrative style possibly attributable to Weatherford. Navigation of the exhibit is facilitated through the use of three decorative buttons at the center bottom of each section, “Back,” “Home,” and “Next.” When compared to the other exhibits discussed thus far, “Chinese American Women” is startlingly brief in its text, allowing the images to take a more conceptually prominent place in the displays. These images vary in size and position on the page, but are all rendered in black and white or sepia tones and highlight little-known or unfamiliar aspects of the experience of historical Chinese American women.

Indeed, the exhibit makes visible stories and evidence that clearly exists within the historical record but has been omitted or otherwise ignored. Chinese American history is often left out or glossed over by traditional histories; in terms of national

history museums, they are too often relegated to depictions of immigrants and laborers, flat background characters against which the elite few act and find veneration. Chinese American women, in particular, are so often glossed out of the narrative that the NWHM's exhibit may appeal to visitors as a facet of history about which they knew nothing at all. For this reason, like "Claiming their Citizenship," "Chinese American Women" makes it difficult to ignore the possibility that other important parts of our past have also been left out, considered unimportant or too niche to include in the more mainstream historical narratives and texts.

That space is devoted to an exhibit about the history of Chinese American women in the NWHM cybermuseum is a sign of the organization's desire to demonstrate its commitment to inclusivity, yet even in doing so, the museum risks engaging in ethnic tokenism of historically marginalized groups. As one of the few national museum exhibits devoted to the subject, "Chinese American Women" is perhaps a step toward greater visibility for previously neglected aspects of American history within the mainstream of public memory, a benefit for all of the museum's publics. By maintaining an exhibit about Chinese American women in their cybermuseum, the NWHM marks that history out as significant to collective understandings of resilience and citizenship, contribution and commemoration. This exhibit directly challenges the idea that the only valuable contributions to the nation-building activities of the United States are those made by elite white men (and occasionally white women). At the same time, however, given the relatively small number of exhibits organized around histories of marginalized groups, the NWHM may be using "inclusive" exhibits to bolster its own sense of identity as a diverse institution. The scope and content of the other exhibits stand as partial

evidence against this, if only in regard to the inclusion of historical references to indigenous peoples and the inclusion of multiple, often overlooked perspectives. What is more certain, perhaps, is that in order for the NWHM to stand as an argument for the strengths of diversity and inclusion, the organization must not only reference the benefits in their press materials and public media but also demonstrate that commitment through better and more comprehensive exhibition designs, content and opportunities for representational autonomy.

Together, "Claiming their Citizenship" and "Chinese American Women" inhabit a fraught space within the NWHM cybermuseum. On the one hand, such exhibits fill a gap in the historical record as understood by the general public. At the time of my visit, there were no national history exhibits open to the public on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. focused on these women.[11] Confronting visitors with our own ignorance, if outsiders, or perhaps even prejudices, if discipline professionals, such exhibits function as reminders that American history is far deeper and more diverse than our more traditional public memory places would have us believe. On the other hand, that these exhibits exist, separately, from the others in the NWHM cybermuseum speaks to a continuing divide that separates not only women's history from "history," but the histories of African American women, Chinese American women, and undoubtedly many unacknowledged others as well. Such divisions offer greater focus on historically marginalized groups, as well as more depth into their histories and experiences, but also reinforces the idea that groups of Americans can (and should) have "separate" histories, rather than insisting upon a truly integrated account of US history. Inclusion is critical to offering women, in particular, an accessible past peopled with strong and inspiring figures from whom

current and future generations can draw for the courage to continue to fight for progress. This cultural power is a potent force, a fact acknowledged by the many historical examples of the utter destruction of accessible histories by tyrants who would deny existence to targeted minorities (Young). But when that cultural power is held and bestowed through participation in a museum, it becomes tarnished by the patriarchal traditions and colonizing impulses out of which the modern museum arises.

What these examples show is that despite steps in a more inclusive direction, there is still much to be discussed, negotiated and figured out. Making a public declaration that the histories of African American women and Chinese American women have value is an important starting point. But it cannot stop there. Rather than becoming comfortable with an agenda of inserting previsouly unacknowledged histories into an existing historical framework, perhaps there are better ways to disrupt the framework itself, to encourage it to reform, from the foundation upward, into a robust and inclusive system capable of representing the fullness of American history. The result would be a history, truly, by and for all who claim an American nationality and citizenship.

Analytic Group 4: "Breaking In: Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics"

The final exhibit I want to discuss in this chapter is indicative of a distinct shift in the design and purpose of the NWHM cyber exhibits. As detailed in Chapter 2, the NWHM underwent significant organizational and technological shifts when Joan Wages took the helm as President in 2007. Since then, the NWHM has rapidly expanded its public presence and supportive publics through developing attractive and relevant content in social media, blogs, websites, and other digital platforms. Among these developments,

the NWHM increased the number of type of collaborations with other organizations. "Breaking In: Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics" is an example of one of these collaborations, produced with Google's Cultural Institute and hosted on the Institute's website (https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/about/). The Culture Institute is an initiative sponsored by Google, designed to collect and promote the arts and culture through sharing "artwork, collections and stories" from around the world ("About"). By participating in this initiative, the NWHM rubs shoulders with cultural institutions including the Sydney Opera House, the Harvard Institute of Politics, The Natural History Museum of London, and many more. The NWHM also solidifies its presence as a cultural institution among others, taking a place alongside, rather than adjacent to, some of the world's most esteemed repositories of art, artifact and information.

Curated by Elizabeth L. Maurer, NWHM Director of Programs and coordinated by Sydnee Winston, "Breaking In" was launched by the NWHM in 2015. Unlike the vertical orientation, list of links and conspicuous (and sometimes disobedient) design features of the other cyber exhibits, "Breaking In" utilizes a digital platform that bears a strong resemblance to a digital slideshow: indeed, to move through the exhibit, a visitor must click on an arrow that "slides" from page to page, right to left, rather than needed to scroll up or down. Each "page" in the exhibit utilizes the space horizontally, rotating through layouts that feature an image that fills the entire screen overlaid with text, a large image filling one side and a paragraph of black text over white space on the other, and a few with smaller "images" that are, in fact, embedded video clips (see figure 20). Although multimedia, there are no images of artifacts (other than historical photographs)

in this exhibit, again reinforcing the impression of a slideshow or presentation. What is more, there is no "Home" button, no link from the presentation back to the NWHM.org home page. Once you enter the exhibit from the NWHM museum page, the only way to return to the NWHM museum is to recall the site in some other way. A final difference between "Breaking In" and the other exhibits in this chapter lies in the branding: the logo of the NWHM is entirely absent; in fact, the only place the name of the organization appears is in the "Credits" section at the end of the exhibit.

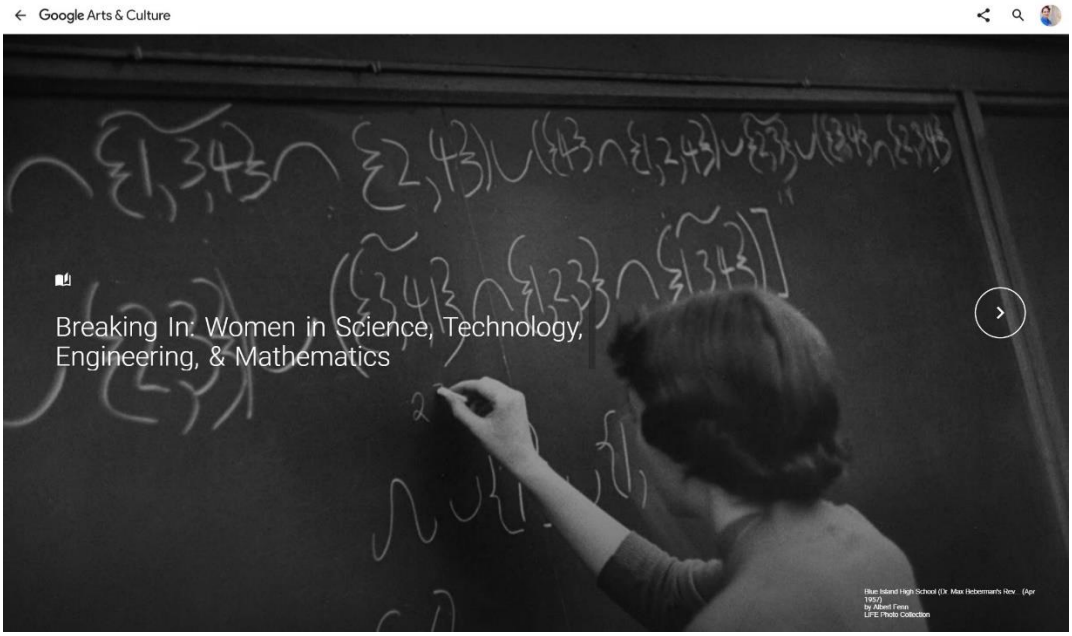

Figure 20. Screenshot, "Breaking In" exhibit. "Breaking In." The National Women's History Museum. *NWHM.org*. 1 Sept. 2016.

The influence of the tech industry is strong throughout "Breaking In," perhaps a deliberate choice for a presentation featuring women in technology and other typically male-dominated (STEM) fields. On the title page of the exhibit, a large black-and-white photograph of a woman performing mathematical calculations on a chalkboard fills the entire space, rendered to fit a widescreen format. The title, in a thin, white sans serif font

that has come to be associated with "professional" digital media, floats about midway down the left side. Small white font in the bottom right corner give the photo's attribution, and a simple arrow inside a circle opposite the title invites the visitor to click for more.

Throughout the succeeding pages, text is kept at a minimum. Images dominate, providing the "evidence" that supports women's long-term presence in STEM fields. Women (predominantly white) are shown lecturing, using scientific equipment, and studying in science classrooms filled with other women. Beginning with a very brief discussion of women pursuing science and math education in the nineteenth century, the exhibit moves the visitor through a chronological narrative that allows glimpses into the contributions and struggles of female scientists, mathematicians, engineers and, after Title IX, in fields like aeronautics as well. The exhibit concludes with a brief consideration of current efforts to encourage women to enroll in STEM fields and initiatives aimed at engaging children of both genders, from toys to clubs.

The existence of an NWHM exhibit hosted and enhanced by Google's brand and technology lends the organization another stamp of professional legitimacy from well-funded, highly visible outside institutions. "Breaking In" is the material evidence of a collaboration between the two entities, one that indicates the NWHM's success in accumulating acclaimed and well-known support across a broad range of industries. For much of its organizational life, the NWHM has struggled to achieve a durable presence among cultural institutions and non-profit organizations alike; while a collaboration with a corporate entity like Google may seem an unusual move for a museum, it is becoming more common for even physical museums to allow sponsored exhibits alongside their

more altruistic displays. For example, curators at the Children's Museum of Houston and the Chicago Children's Museum cite tight budgets behind their decision to solicit corporate sponsorships to bolster their funding (Geiger Smith). Such partnerships are unregulated, and so the influence such sponsors may have over the type and shape of the exhibits they fund vary widely. But under pressure to continually provide new and trendy experiences for visitors accustomed to the affordances of digital technologies, museums and other non-profit institutions often require more funding than they are allocated.[12]

Consistent with Google's brand, the ethos of this exhibit situates it firmly within the conventions of professional fields, including business and web development. These associations lend themselves to a perhaps too-easy impression that this exhibit, in itself, is "more professional" than the others I've discussed in this chapter. The quality of the exhibit design is quite different; it is easy to use - and just as easy to forget. Because the text is small, it is tempting to flip through the exhibit without reading the captions, relying instead on the images and video and audio features to deliver the message.

With the required interaction minimized, so too is the potential impact on the exhibit visitor. In line with what we could call the "mainstream media," the design and content of "Breaking In" has left even the pretense of radicalization behind. While many would argue that this is a sign that the histories narrated by the NWHM have gained enough of a foothold in popular culture that they no longer shock or challenge most members of the general population, others would contend that this loss of shock value demonstrates the NWHM's willingness to surrender its feminist militancy to the temptations of the status quo, a first step toward complacency and, ultimately, a return to invisibility.

Beyond the influence of an outside organization, “Breaking In” functions to reinforce certain aspects of the increasingly more adamant discussion around women and girls in STEM. With dwindling enrollments in STEM-related college programs and growing labor shortages in STEM-related jobs, the push to “sell” science, technology, and math as attractive and fulfilling career options has been a consistent feature of American culture for at least the last decade. For example, one initiative promoted by the Obama administration (Office of Science and Technology Policy) focuses on promoting STEM fields to women and girls and encouraging participation in more STEM-based educational and extracurricular activities (“Women in STEM”). It is a symptom and irony of the gendered state of today’s labor force that, despite the fact that women are no longer barred from STEM majors, colleges have considerable difficulty filling their enrollment quotas with equal numbers of men and women. The root cause of this difficulty appears to be widespread and systematic: in a White House report dated September 2015, researchers found that educational institutions were less likely to respond to women seeking information about STEM programs, and science faculty were less likely to hire or mentor a female student (Handelsman and Sakraney).

Such examples are merely a few of the measurable traces of the conflicting messages women and girls imbibe from culture and public memory from infancy, a situation visible in the “Breaking In” exhibit. It begins with the exhibit title: to “break in” to something could mean to pioneer a new path, or to make an historic achievement; to “break in” can also mean to engage in illicit behavior, to trespass on property that does not belong to you. That a woman could expect to experience both definitions of the term while pursuing a STEM career seems supported by the experiences of women who have

"broken in" to science and tech fields over and over again. That women have long worked in computer technologies seems of little import to those who continue to resist hiring female software developers or computer engineers; the statistics are grim.[13] By highlighting the exceptional few who, for example, managed to graduate from MIT in 1956 (12 women in a class of 759), or Sally Ride, one of only 5 women selected for NASA training in 1978 and, to this day, one of the few women to have broken out of Earth's atmosphere and orbited the planet in space, "Breaking In" reinforces the idea that if one is truly exceptional enough, there are no true barriers to STEM fields. For decades, women have been told that if they would just work hard enough, be good enough, they could succeed in male-dominated fields. Yet such motivational rhetoric proves empty in the face of continuing cultural discrimination and prejudice against women, attitudes designed to function as barriers just as effective as any law or university ban.

The existence of the "Breaking In" exhibit is, in some ways, a marker of status for the NWHM. A partnership with Google could be considered a stamp of legitimacy, an important indicator of the NWHM's success in accumulating acclaimed and well-known support across a broad range of industries. It may also indicate a willingness of the part of the NWHM to relinquish at least partial control of their content and message. In the past, the organization has held its mission close to the chest; in fact, as Chapter 2 shows, at times it was difficult to ascertain the activities in which the NWHM was engaged. Because collaboration and cooperation require more negotiation, more compromise, and more trust than producing content alone, both of the possibilities described above point to a continuing maturation of the organization that echoes the evolutions visible in its discursive presence (Chapter 2) and ability to provoke change in behemoth cultural

institutions such as the Smithsonian Institute, one of the subjects of Chapter 5. As I explain in more detail in the next chapter, a new media emphasis on women's history sponsored by the Smithsonian can be traced roughly to the point in time when Congress began taking the NWHM seriously enough to organize the American Museum of Women's History Congressional Committee (http://amwh.us/). Collaborations including the one that produced "Breaking In" in some ways mark the arrival of a newly influential cultural institution in the NWHM.

As vibrant matter with agentive properties, museum exhibits in the digital sphere operate within multiple spheres simultaneously. Located at the intersection of material culture, digital archive, historical education, and public memory production, among others, the NWHM cybermuseum functions multiply within these spheres as well. For scholars, historians and enthusiasts, the digital exhibits confirm a history that is known but rarely escapes the confines of academics, supplementing and complementing the richness of women's history in the academy. For others, the exhibits may provide new information or new perspectives on the contributions and value of women. In confronting the unknown, the visitor encounters challenges to what they think they know, a risk matched only by the museum's determination to challenge the shallow, one-sided political and military histories that most of us are taught as children.

In this way, the NWHM positions itself as a producer of media designed to influence public memory production. As Jenny Kidd has argued, museums "share a raft of responsibilities with media organizations and similar concerns," responsibilities that curators have been slow to recognize (4). Within what Kidd calls the "present mediascape," understanding the generative role of museum exhibits means reconsidering

a number of issues, including the remodeling of how people experience cultural artifacts; shifts in identity and notions of community; shifts in the ways information is created, distributed, and accessed; shifts in the way lives, communities, politics and culture is organized; the roles of producer, consumer and distributor; and claims that new media technologies "democratize access, participation and right to representation" (5). As an activist entity, the NWHM operates at the heart of many of these shift and questions within circumstances that are continually changing. Yet the organization's effectiveness has been severely hampered by perceptions of the museum as amateurish, boring, and riddled with content errors.

The performance of the museum's digital exhibits certainly plays a large role in such perceptions. Unlike museums and museum websites with strong, unifying modes of presentation, the NWHM cybermuseum is a patchwork collection of women's history narratives created at different times by different individuals, and for different purposes. This means that each exhibit conforms to the principles of web design with varying degrees of success, with no two exactly alike. In the examples I've analyzed, above, consistency seems to be the most troublesome aspect, with outdated or poor design choices a close second. While the variety of the exhibits does give the impression (and indeed, does largely represent) a multitude of voices, this admirably feminist stance is still at odds with the museum's aim to bring women's history into mainstream culture. Unlike the somber colors, dignified presentation and seamless performance of museum websites like the National Museum of American History site (see figure 21), visitors may interpret the colorful variations of the NWHM exhibits as the work of the unskilled.

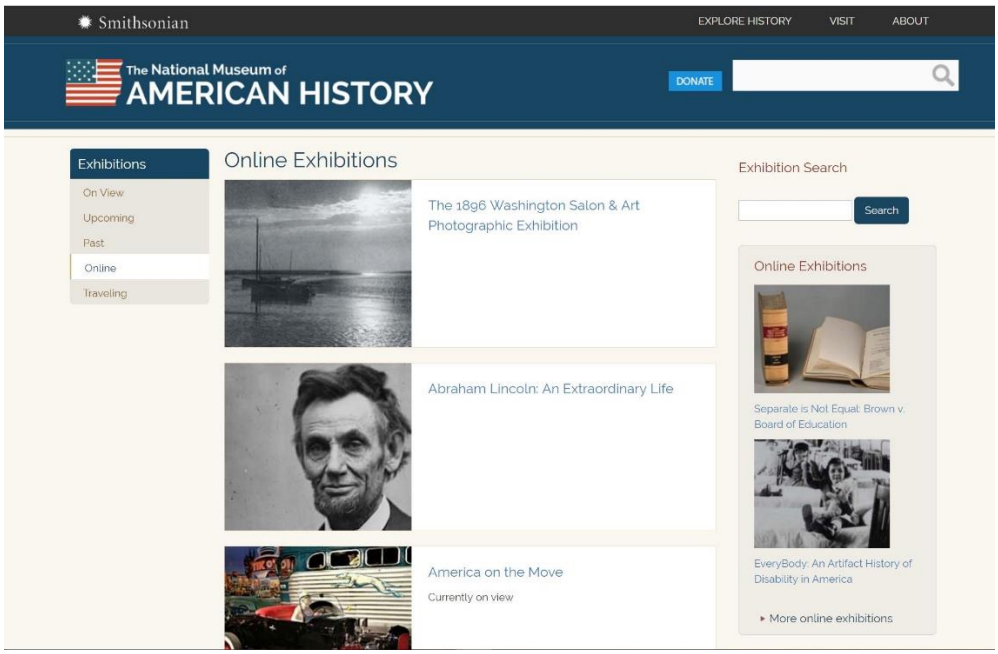

Figure 21. Screenshot of Online Exhibitions page, The National Museum of American History website. "Online Exhibitions." The National Museum of American History. *AmericanHistory.si.edu.* 1 Sept. 2016.

Particularly now that websites are typically designed to fill the wider screens of the latest digital interfaces, the narrow orientation and flat color scheme of NWHM exhibits may appear outdated, look cramped, and particularly on small screens, be difficult to read. Other features of the exhibits also tend to "read" as the mark of an amateur: the rounded fonts of several of the exhibit titles, for example, has come to be associated with text and media created for entertainment or personal use. Museum and other institutional websites, in contrast, typically use fonts with strong, clean lines, often sans serif, and rarely in bright colors.

Such interpretations raise important questions about the expectations of digital audiences and the "standards" of professionalism on the web; just how far a cultural institution can push against those standards and remain authoritative in the eyes of digital museum visitors is a tension that the NWHM seems unwilling or unprepared to explicitly

address. The NWHM's attitude seems to be that information is information, all equally valuable despite the mode or appearance of its dissemination. But today's online exhibit visitors are savvy consumers: they can easily discern a clumsy hand, a weak mastery over the medium. Within the context of new media technology there is a high tolerance for such failings in peer-to-peer interactions; such a tolerance almost disappears for the "professional" organization. Haunted by the specter of amateurism, both that of the field of women's history as well as of their own making, the NWHM still has a long way to go to convince the public of the value of a women's history museum, digital or physical.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. The website traffic report obtained on SimilarWeb shows approximately 136,000 visitors since September 2015 (https://www.similarweb.com/website/NWHM.org).
2. The term “born-digital” refers to materials that originate in a digital form, as opposed to materials that have been reformatted from analog to digital form.
3. These questions have been adapted from Blair, who argues that “memorial sites, taken as rhetorical texts, invite us to consider at least five questions that arise from their materiality: (1) What is the significance of the text's material existence? (2) What are the apparatuses and degrees of durability displayed by the text? (3) What are the text's modes or possibilities of reproduction or preservation? (4) What does the text do to (or with, or against) other texts? (5) How does the text act on people?" (30).
4. In *Lingua Fracta: Toward a Rhetoric of New Media* (2009), Brooke argues the necessity of replacing the five rhetorical canons (invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery) with five "updated" rhetorical concepts (proairesis, pattern, perspective, persistence, and performance).
5. For example, Ian Bogost attempts to transcend human-centric notions of thing-ness and consider the being of things (including ideas, concepts, traditions, systems, etc.) as things, in and of themselves, while Janet Hoskins argues that things, like people, have biographies that are complexly intertwined with the lived experience of the people who own, use, or live among them.

6. For a complete list of members, see “A History of the NWHM National Coalition Organizations.” *NWHM.org*. National Women’s History Museum. N.d. Web. 13 October 2016. https://www.NWHM.org/online-exhibits/coalition/index.htm
7. In 1986, at the time Melosh and Simmons were writing, there was only one “notable exception” to this claim: “the Sewall-Belmont house, headquarters for the National Woman's Party (NWP) since 1929” (212).
8. Carole Blair has argued that "rhetoric has material force beyond the goals, intentions, and motivations of its producers, and it is our responsibility as rhetoricians not just to acknowledge that, but to try to understand it" (22). For this reason, she argues, "we must ask not just what a text means but, more generally, what it does; and we must not understand what it does as adhering strictly to what it was supposed to do" (23).
9. Although women are included in many exhibits across a range of physical and digital institutions, it is difficult to find space that has been wholly dedicated to the display of women’s history. In Washington, D.C., I found just two locations with exhibits dedicated to woman suffrage: the Sewall-Belmont House, a house museum wholly dedicated to this subject, and an exhibit inside of the National Archives, just north of the National Mall. Online, there are more numerous digital texts with information, many of these encyclopedic in nature.
10. This history, published under the title *History of Woman Suffrage*, is popularly considered to be *the* history of the woman suffrage movement; however, historian Lisa Tetrault, in *The Myth of Seneca Falls*, argues convincingly that Stanton and Anthony’s version of events was partisan and designed to omit the complex

nature of the movement's factions, disagreements and mistakes. In questioning the origin story of the woman's movement itself after it stood unchallenged for so long, Tetrault signals the maturation of a modern feminism marked by a willingness to engage with the less exemplary moments in women's history.

11. The National Museum of African American History and Culture opened to the public on September 24, 2016, six months after I completed my field study.
12. See a discussion of this development in, for example, Hilde S. Hein, *The Museum in Transition* and Jenny Kidd, *Museums and the New Mediascape*.
13. See, for example, Catherine Hill et al's findings published in a 2013 American Association of University Women study, in which the numbers of women enrolled in science, engineering, technology or mathematics programs (STEM) lagged far behind the number of men: https://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/Why-So-Few-Women-in-Science-Technology-Engineering-and-Mathematics.pdf

CHAPTER 5

"WITHOUT WALLS": ACCOUNTING FOR THE DIGITAL-MATERIAL ENTITY

Securing a permanent place for women's history on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. continues to be an uphill battle. Among the factors working against the NWHM and its mission, the traditions of history as a discipline and iterations of it via public museums are perhaps the most formidable. As Joan Wallach Scott has argued, "history as a unified story" is more or less the story of a fictional universal subject, rather than the representation of "real" individuals or groups (197). Unless and until our history and its material iterations become more diverse, more inclusive, and more critical, we will continue to struggle to "write women into history" (197), a grim pronouncement for those seeking more immediate change. Adding complexity to this situation is the continued demotion of digital space as a means of remembering women's historical efforts; as Megan Irene Fitzmaurice has observed, the NWHM itself contributes to this hierarchy of commemorative space by venerating "the exclusivity of material museums" in its quest for space on the National Mall (520). Given such hurdles, what potential is there that the museum the NWHM seeks to build will resolve the marginalization of women's history in the United States?

Producing scholarship aimed at gaining a better understanding of how and where these hurdles arise is an important first step, and the central object of this dissertation. In the opening chapter, I introduced Jenny Kidd's concept of a "new mediascape" within which contemporary museums are situated. I re-introduce this term now as a useful way to bring together the facets of the body of research represented in this dissertation. From the broad vantage of today's mediascape, the rhetoricity of the efforts and status of the

National Women's History Museum take shape within and through a clear conceptualization of the systems of values and assumptions upon which museums, as cultural institutions, public memory producers and *techne* of power, rely. These systems are increasingly under pressure from shifting patterns of power and participation spurred on by new media technologies. As Sian Bayne, Jen Ross, and Zoe Williamson have noted in their work on digital collections, the affordances of these technologies creates the impression of a museum without walls,[1] which "gives users unprecedented ways of *re-claiming, re-contextualizing and re-forming knowledge* into personally meaningful, and very public, configurations" (110) (emphasis original). At the same time, however, the traditional modes of "transmitting knowledge" in a more top-down, institutional fashion endure, necessitating ongoing and often contentious negotiation and, ideally, reconciliation (Bayne et al. 110). Currently, these negotiations often take shape in the form of institutional web sites, online exhibits, and touchscreen interactives that attempt to bring the museum into the digital sphere and, at the same time, incorporate new media technologies into the on-site museum experience.

The manner in which such shifts will impact public memory production remains to be seen, as the materials, technologies and systems involved in public memory production continue to expand. What is clear at this time is that the boundaries between the digital and the non-digital have become blurred, and will likely continue to become increasingly so. Because the occupation and negotiation of digital and non-digital space so often occur simultaneously, the time to address questions of space, presence, representation, and status has never been more urgent. Yet given the way institutions like the NWHM inhabit multiple spaces, how such questions are addressed is perhaps as

critical to the kinds of answers we may find as the questions themselves. To examine the NWHM as merely a visual or digital text, or even a digital collection, is to ignore the complex interconnectivity of this particular digital-material entity and all other digital and/or material entities. The mission and determination of the NWHM, the intense drive toward materiality, can only be fully understood by looking at it through the current status of women's history in our most revered national history museum. Similarly, the NWHM as a digital-material entity has endured a process of becoming that has indelibly shaped the character of the organization, its mission and cybermuseum, negotiating for presence within the often invisible constraints and affordances of object-making institutions (Kidd).

In this dissertation, I have argued that an examination of the NWHM offers a productive way to address the critical questions of space, presence, representation, and status that face so many of our cultural institutions in the face of a rapidly changing media environment or mediascape. Over the course of my investigation, I have worked toward a robust understanding of the consequence and implications of the tensions that arise from the struggle for presence, for relevance, and for legitimacy across multiple cultural platforms. My approach has been necessarily limited by the constraints of time and opportunity, as well as the accessibility and relevance of information. To be able to explore selected aspects of the NWHM in depth, I elected to focus on those that best illustrated the traits and functions that define the rhetorical agency of this evolving institution. In Chapter 1, I proposed exploring the rhetorical significance and consequence of the NWHM by asking four related research questions:

- How is space "made" – rhetorically, digitally, and materially – for women's history in the United States? Why is this necessary?
- What does a material-digital rhetorical analysis of national history museums and their corresponding museum web sites reveal about the consequentiality of digital-material commemorative space?
- In what ways can we understand the rhetorical agency of the National Women's History Museum? Of national history museums in the United States in general?
- How do understandings of this agency inform other aspects of digital-material life in the U.S.?

To fully explore these questions, it has been necessary to examine how the NWHM has created discursive space and presence for itself within the national cultural narrative (Chapter 2), in which spaces women are currently present within American history as represented by the National Museum of American History (Chapter 3), and the troubled negotiation for attention taking place via the NWHM cybermuseum and website in cyberspace (Chapter 4).

In this final chapter, I discuss in depth the insights gained from asking the four questions, above, from the perspective of each of the three preceding chapter studies. Among the more prominent insights emerged a list of traits characterizing the hybrid digital-material entity (a rhetorical entity), traits which I describe in more detail in the sections that follow. Cultural institutions that draw on and perform simultaneously within multiple rhetorical spheres have gained prominence and influence in recent years, inviting a reconsideration of the theoretical lenses through which they can be most productively understood. The final sections of this chapter theorize a rhetorical

framework capable of accounting for complexly situated digital-material entities involved in public memory production and conclude with some of the possible implications for future research.

Question 1: How is space "made" – rhetorically, digitally, and materially – for women's history in the United States? Why is this necessary?

As a product of the dominant culture in the United States, the national historical narrative is constituted and maintained by traditions of American exceptionalism and white patriarchy. Such traditions give rise to a "memoryscape" (Phillips and Reyes) that is resistant to alternative versions of the nation's past, versions not focused exclusively on the political and military achievements of powerful white men. This hostile "scape" influences not only the content of the collective public memory that is produced and re-produced in the U.S., but the structure as well. Women's history, for the most part, is not considered a central element of national public memory. For this reason, it continues to exist marginally, alongside "mainstream" narratives, contributing heavily to the belief that women's lives, experiences and contributions are not significant to the nation or its past. Recovery efforts, including specializations in Women's History in the academy, however vital to our understandings of the past, nonetheless tend to reify this point of view, holding women's history separate from simply "history."

Given the hostile environment of public memory and national sentiment, my research has confirmed that in the United States there is a discernible and constant pressure to erase or subvert women's history in favor of a simpler, more streamlined mythology of the victorious (white male) American colonists and their grand experiment. Space must be made for women's history, constantly, repeatedly. The case for the

importance of the history that women collect, write, and live is forever being made, and then made again. The NWHM argues that this is because women's history does not have the permanence and legitimacy that only a physical presence on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. can provide. Lacking the weight and solemnity of a granite monument or museum, the spaces in which women's history can be found (outside academia) often show the strain of hard-fought presence and status, the wear and fatigue of constant space-making.

In Chapter 2, I examined the rhetorical negotiations involved in making space for the National Women's History Museum, an organization dedicated to fixing women's history permanently on the National Mall, a national commemorative landscape that functions as the beating heart of national public memory production. As the NWHM has worked for presence, stability and legitimacy within national commemorative culture, it has been involved in rhetorical, digital and embodied forms of space-making on behalf of women's history. By creating an organization, a web site, a cybermuseum, and a tradition of honoring and sharing the contributions and achievements of women in the United States, past and present, the NWHM has pried apart the tightly-woven threads of public memory and attempted to insert new threads in between. In this way, making space for a women's history institution provides insight into the process of making space for women's history overall.

The manner in which this space has been reluctantly, tenuously ceded for the NWHM, is in evidence through examples including the installation, removal, defacement, and then battle to re-install the Portrait Monument in the Capitol rotunda, or in the dozens of bills granting permission to build a women's history museum introduced into the

House and Senate over the years that have been outright ignored or sent to committee and allowed to expired there. Such examples are highly indicative of the challenges that face any concentrated effort to make space for women's history in the United States, challenges that remain largely unmediated by new media technologies. Early utopian conceptualizations of the internet envisioned a new kind of space, one free of the kinds of social and political constructs that restrict and define other cultural institutions and relationships. As new media technologies have matured, this has clearly proven to be idealistic at best; internet users bring their referential frames of understanding with them everywhere. Carving out a digital space for women's history online, with websites, social media feeds, blogs, and other platforms has certainly contributed to the growing public and political support such efforts currently enjoy. However, digital presence is clearly not enough to establish the kind of indelible presence that would begin to make real differences in the status and influence of women's history on national historical narratives.

My examination of gender performance at the National Museum of American History in Chapter 3 clearly demonstrates this deficit. Despite a thriving online presence and a proliferation of feminist and pro-women groups and organizations online, such social and political shifts are not reflected in the material traces of our national commemorative culture. As space is currently constituted in our national history museum, women remain circumscribed by domestic roles and limited representation in what are assumedly some of the most important moments of our past. Seriously out of step with the growing recognition of the value of women and their contributions, the gendered configurations of history as exhibited at the National Museum of American

History are a clear indicator of the manner in which materiality matters in regard to the constitution of public memory. Physical, and not only digital, presence, continues to contribute heavily to perceptions of value and significance within national public memory production. What is exhibited, where, and in what manner, matters. The sheer presence of artifacts in the NMAH endows these items with a sacred significance unmatched by other public memory outlets.

For this reason, Chapter 3 clearly underscores the need to sustain critical attention on the process and production of public memory affected in this and similar spaces. The constitution and maintenance of that space is a complex process that my research has only begun to investigate. But my research does provide clear evidence that supports the NWHM's claims that there is an urgent need to create better and more inclusive spaces for national history, and barring that, additional and more permanent spaces for women's history and for the representation of women in history in general. As the work of Carol Mattingly, Maureen Daly Goggin, Beth Fowkes Tobin, Elizabethada A. Wright, Gaby Porter, and others has convincingly shown, even when space-making efforts are successful, and public monuments or commemorative objects or spaces pointing to or honoring women are created, such artifacts or displays are often short-lived, dismissed as trivial, or quickly subsumed under the opposing priorities of patriarchal hierarchies of status. Simply by virtue of belonging to, used by, or made by a woman, objects and spaces are automatically tainted with perceptions of lesser importance. Denying access to a usable past has, for too long, been wielded as a weapon against the vulnerable, the "undesirable," and the circumscribed (see, for example, Young, *Texture of Memory*). What is more, the impulse to do so is a foundational tenet of oppressive dominant

cultures, particularly elitist, capitalist cultures like the United States, a nation with long traditions of denying the fundamental rights of citizenship to its own members.

This impulse is made visible in the way that the NWHM, a longstanding and professional organization dedicated to bringing women and their work to the fore, struggles constantly to maintain the place it has made for itself on the national memoryscape. As discussed in Chapter 4, the organization's heavy reliance on digital media and the inherit insecurity of artifacts that are "born digital" creates a feedback loop between these insecurities and those that always already surround women's productive, reproductive and commemorative activities. Given the situation, it is perhaps expected that the NWHM would seek stability along the most traditional of routes to status in the United States – a physical space and monument whose materiality and existence is undeniable.

More than anything else, it is vulnerability, or the desire to mitigate it, that drives the NWHM toward materiality. As discussed in Chapter 4, digital presence is an important step toward securing and maintaining a stable presence within national cultural narratives; indeed, as my research has shown, it is perhaps a critical first step in the overall space-making process. Given the hybrid character of the NWHM and its simultaneous negotiations within object-based museum culture and media-based digital space, making space within a national narrative that is, itself, formed out of the constant circulation of material and digital artifacts also becomes a multi-faceted, multi-media process. By examining that process through a lens of rhetoric's materiality, as Carole Blair has suggested, space-making for the NWHM is revealed as a simultaneous effort not only rhetorically, but digitally and materially at the same time.

That women remain at the margins of national historical narratives, mis- or under-represented in national history museums, and absent from cultural representations of our collective past contributes significantly to the slow progress women's rights advocates have made toward full equity in U.S. society. Without a past, women find themselves embroiled in fighting the same battles their predecessors thought they won, bogged down in the constant reclamation of rights and status won, and then re-won, repeatedly throughout the last two centuries. Instead of focusing energy on participating in the collective welfare of our nation, women must divert attention to fend off an unending stream of assaults on their persons, bodies, autonomy, intelligence, and presence, to name a few. For example, in 2016 women found themselves facing an onslaught of media reports claiming that their right to vote was under attack due to a "Repeal the 19th" movement.[2] Despite the short-lived nature of the movement due to a lack of public support, it is disturbing that a woman's right to vote could be brought into question so easily after nearly a century of female enfranchisement. Equally troubling are even more recent attacks on the reproductive rights of U.S. women, highly partisan efforts at both the state and federal levels to circumvent Roe vs. Wade by defunding essential public health providers including Planned Parenthood.[3] By targeting providers designed to make basic reproductive care accessible and affordable, such laws attempt to legislate the female body by obstructing the personal bodily autonomy of American women, something virtually unthinkable when applied to American men. This persistent double standard based on sex underscores the inherent vulnerability of status that women face on a daily basis in the United States, a vulnerability reflected in and supported by the

silences and absences that characterize women's history in mainstream media and culture.

Question 2: What does a material-digital rhetorical analysis of national history museums and their corresponding museum web sites reveal about the consequentiality of digital-material commemorative space?

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that digital-material commemorative space is composed of and governed by a host of complex influences: the affordances and constraints of both the digital and material spheres, for example; the conventions of the national history museum (in the case of the NWHM) and the museum website; the conventions of the storytelling institution and the public monument; the consequence of the artifact and the rhetoric of the museum display; the educational function that flows across both; the public service function that flows across both; and many more. Due in large part to this complexity, I have narrowed my focus to the examination of a single digital-material entity and selected spaces with immediate influence and consequence. I would imagine that, with enough time and resources, scholars could continue to trace the consequence of additional facets and factors that contribute to the shape and performance of commemorative space in the United States. However, my research has also shown that a study of the NWHM does offer valuable insight into the consequentiality of digital-material commemorative space in a number of ways.

For example, I have referred many times to the manner in which web sites and digital exhibits continue to retain a secondary status in museum culture, leading to a state in which consequentiality is still always already tied to the traditions and cultural acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the physical museum. Despite clear evidence that

public memory production occurs in both digital and physical spaces, the cybermuseum or digital exhibit is perceived as less capable of making a lasting change in national historical narratives than a physical museum, exhibit or monument would be. The physical museum, by contrast, inheres a weighty responsibility, functioning as repository and educator, an authority on cultural representation and ideology, encouraging visitors and researchers alike to worship the material object as the "objective" bearer of truth (Knell). In addition, the traditional role of the physical museum is that of modifier of public behavior as well as perception; as the body moves through a physical space devoted to revering and assembling sacred objects, it is trained to move reverently, slowly, and respectfully down the aisles (Wallace). The cybermuseum is, by design and by contrast, a space of irreverence, noise, and emotion. Professional design and carefully chosen text and images can mediate this irreverence for individual websites (perhaps); in fact, the official web site of the National Museum of American History (americanhistory.si.edu) clearly attempts to do so with a muted color scheme, images of some of their most treasured artifacts, and a clean, professional layout. The website and the museum itself work in tandem to convey the solemnity and import of the history exhibited in both spaces; however, the intent of the web site (to encourage visitors to come to the museum) is never in doubt, thus assigning a supplementary status to the digital iterations of the museum's presence.

Within this power hierarchy, the consequentiality of the cybermuseum or digital exhibit is easy to overlook. However, I have argued that doing so is a mistake; due to the increasing inter-penetration of the digital and material cultural spheres, public memory production now heavily incorporates the digital interactions and artifacts that have

become a new reality in American culture. Regardless of whether a particular member of a public makes use of or has access to digital technologies or not, they are nevertheless influenced by its presence and influence on American publics as a whole. From this perspective, the consequentiality of the cybermuseum, the digital exhibit, and the digital-material commemorative culture from which they arise is made visible and subject to tracing through its seemingly infinite intersections and iterations. By looking at public memory production as it occurs both digitally and materially at the same time, we can examine the differences and simultaneities of the process itself, one of the key purposes of rhetorical analysis, and allow ourselves to expand what "counts" in rhetorical studies along with the expansion of the modes and venues through which public memory production is accomplished.

Question 3: In what ways can we understand the rhetorical agency of the National Women's History Museum? Of national history museums in the United States in general?

The rhetorical agency of the NWHM is, like other cultural institutions, circumscribed by the traditions of the past as well as the conventions of modern commemorative culture. As a hybrid entity, the NWHM performs a kind of activism that is both challenging these traditions and, at the same time, attempting to adhere to existing frameworks of valuation and legitimacy. Heavily influenced by the tenets of white feminism, the NWHM often forgoes opportunities to be truly oppositional in favor of attempting to gain mainstream acceptance. For this reason, there is no easy relationship between the NWHM and either feminist/liberal groups nor conservative ones. The organization is both feminist and anti-feminist, depending on the angle of view.

Nationally, history museums like those supported by the Smithsonian Institution enact a kind of rhetorical agency that behaves reflexively with national historical narratives and material and commemorative culture. Forming complex relationships with diverse publics, museum culture, public memory, political figures, academia and education, among others, national museums operate at the nexus of a complex network of relationships, tensions, and exigencies.

More and more, one of the pressing exigencies of museums is to create and maintain a public appeal – to attract visitors (Hein). While the educational and research functions of museums like the NMAH continue to justify and legitimate the enormous cost of its existence, it is public support that the museum needs and craves. As with all cultural institutions, the ability of the NMAH to do so relies upon the continuing interpellation of supportive publics, a process that is necessarily customized to the needs and goals of the particular institution. In the case of the NMAH, it bears a distinct advantage in its place on the National Mall and among the offerings of the Smithsonian Institution, both locations that elevate the status of the museum by association, widen its potential realm of influence and ease (somewhat) the urgency of its attempts to solicit public support.

By comparison, the NWHM's realm of influence is wholly and urgently contingent upon the continuing interpellation of supportive publics, the subject of Chapter 2, and its ability to position itself among museum culture in such a way that it is able to rely upon the ethos of that culture. The NWHM must also do so without the distinct advantage (within the context of museum culture) of a physical site upon which their publics can ground their expectations and cultural associations. It is forced to

challenge existing narratives while also seeking a stamp of legitimacy at the institutional level. Unlike the fairly straightforward challenges of national history museums like the NMAH, such a dual and perhaps conflicting aim severely restricts the NWHM's ability to enact the kind of agency that institutions like the Smithsonian and its museums have available. As the last three chapters have demonstrated, because it is a cybermuseum with material aspirations, the NWHM enacts modes of persuasion that differ significantly from other museums. Its influence, ability to interpellate more diverse publics, and ability to gain the political and financial backers it needs to achieve its goals all rely upon a carefully orchestrated set of strategies and appeals that span the digital and the material spheres. While the same could be said of national history museums in general, the difference here is in the emphasis on particular strategies and appeals over others. While a visible degree of simultaneity and hybridity exist for the NMAH, for example, as visitors manipulate touchscreen displays as they walk through exhibit halls or look up information about an artifact on the museum web site, the materiality of the NWHM is momentarily only embodied in a constellation of events, digital exhibits, and in the persons of its supportive publics. Missing the tangible simultaneity of engaging in a physical exhibit enhanced by digital media, the rhetorical negotiations in which the NWHM is engaged may seem less impactful to American publics inculcated to respect physicality and geographical location as markers of importance.

While this impact may seem reduced, however, that is not to say that the NWHM does not lack consequentiality. In fact, as national history museums attempt to retain the status and influence of decades (and centuries) past, they must follow the modern impetus that emphasizes the unhindered access to and malleability of a digitally-enhanced

mediascape. This shift away from the object itself as the focal point of museum culture creates distinct opportunities for hybrid entities like the NWHM to assert a greater rhetorical agency into the discourse around commemorative culture and to wield greater influence on the processes of public memory production. We can thus understand the rhetorical agency of the national history museum as an agency under duress, compelled toward change but heavily resistant to it, and the NWHM as a one of many significant contributors to that duress.

By contrast, and in relation, the rhetorical agency of the NWHM can be understood as an agency that is limited but expanding, an unstable but persevering influence through which the illusion of the stability upon which physical museums rely becomes transparent. In fact, the ability of the NWHM to act persuasively is, in significant ways, interdependent upon the agency and status of the NMAH and others like it. To fully understand and appreciate this capacity, scholars will need an analytic approach that considers not only the rhetorical negotiations in which the entity is engaged but the context and conditions of that engagement, as well.

Question 4: How do understandings of this agency inform other aspects of digital-material life in the U.S.?

The affordances of new media and digital technologies has fundamentally transformed the way that many of today's "routine" tasks are performed. In fact, for those who are privileged enough to access the internet from a hand-held device, such as a smartphone or tablet, a significant portion of everyday activities occur online: communicating with others and with businesses or government entities; exploring activities and events; shopping, planning meals and tracking eating habits; registering for

or attending classes; engaging in or creating various forms of entertainment and media; scheduling appointments and creating calendars for personal or professional use; and so on. In fact, those who cannot afford or opt out of the affordances of the internet often find themselves at a distinct disadvantage as the speed at which information is exchanged and collaborations are formed and carried out continues to increase.

That is not to say that materiality has lost its importance in what many now call the "digital age," however. In fact, scholars including Eileen Hooper-Greenhill have argued that the more society at large moves away from interpersonal interaction and embodied engagement, the more important reconnecting with material culture becomes. This counter impulse may stem from the way that we, as embodied beings, learn from and orient ourselves amidst the physical world. When we "go online," we limit the number of physical artifacts that function as the landmarks we instinctively use to confirm our movement through space. Instead, the digital artifact is emphasized, an entity that sometimes behaves in ways that resemble the physical world but are inherently more ephemeral, insecure, and mutable. We may be tempted, given the differences between them, to assume that because of these characteristics digital artifacts are less consequential in "real life" than the physical. We may be tempted to assign agency to humans and, following Ian Bogost, Arjun Appadurai, Hooper-Greenhill, and a number of other scholars, to certain physical "non-human" entities, making materiality a condition of agency.

However, I argue that such an assumption should be avoided. As my research has shown, digital artifacts rely upon and are inextricable from the material realm: merely accessing the internet requires various pieces of hardware, a screen or interface, and the

interactivity of the human body and mind, to name a few elements of the situation. The embodied frame of reference people use to navigate the "real" world haunts our interactions online. It has influenced our interactions, relationships and understanding in ways we are just beginning to explore. If this is so, then it follows that the digital artifacts we create would also be influenced by these same referential frames.

Perhaps for this reason, digital artifacts have a presence and materiality of their own that, although different from physical objects or bodies, still function in overtly rhetorical ways. Following my discussion of the NWHM cybermuseum in Chapter 4, we begin to see an inherent agency enacted by certain digital artifacts that certainly relies upon and is situated among other digital entities, but that involves a materiality that we would be remiss to ignore. In this way, life becomes less a dichotomy between "real" and "virtual" and more a blending of the two, a "digital-material" existence and rhetorical mode of being that does not always discriminate (nor need to discriminate) between the two spheres. Technology extends and enhances the functions of our minds and bodies, and in return, we insert ourselves into the machines we build.

If we accept that digital artifacts have agency, this encourages us to think about them in terms that remind us of the way that the material world interacts with and constitutes lived reality. From the perspective of agency, of exigency, and performance, the digital and the material artifact can behave in similar ways, inviting scholars to develop analytic approaches that are capable of accounting for both the divergences and similarities they enact. Perhaps this is why digital-material life is still, inescapably, bounded by flawed structures that dictate social and political roles, hierarchies of doing and being that attempt to govern behavior both digitally and in the physical world. For

example, the affordances of social media provide ample platforms to voice opinions and construct counter-narratives, and feminist activists in particular have embraced the potential of the internet to facilitate collaboration and the free exchange of ideas. However, in making unpopular opinions public, activists have also experienced digital assaults that include name-calling, slander, and threats of violence against their persons and even families. In one notable example, Anita Sarkeesian was forced to cancel a conference appearance and move her family to a new, undisclosed location to ensure their physical safety (Wingfield). Other celebrities and outspoken leaders have deleted social media accounts or otherwise altered their lives in response to the violence threatened against them online (Feldman).

Just as the online interactions in these examples had immediate, material consequences in the physical world, so too do acts performed in the physical world tend to make their way into digital media via amateur video and audio recordings. It is common practice for individuals moving about in public spaces to record events or interactions they encounter and then share their recordings in digital spaces. This sharing then invites response and reaction, which then sometimes cycles back out into public spaces, influencing the behavior of individuals, groups, and sometimes even public policy. For example, passersby may record a particularly confrontational encounter with law enforcement, video that is then posted online, shared, and commented upon. If, in the case of the arrest of Freddie Gray, the encounter is perceived as unjust, collective outrage quickly emerges, leading to public outcry, which then must be addressed by officials. Sometimes, the situation motivates groups of people to come together in public space to protest; sometimes, these collective actions explode into physical violence if concerns are

not sufficiently acknowledged ("Freddie Gray"). These actions and events are then recorded and shared, and the cycle of consequentiality continues indefinitely.

Perhaps the most important caveat to all this is that digital-material life is often experienced uncritically, functioning in a vernacular realm beneath the notice of the academy. This attitude creates a real danger of allowing a vast network of digital-material rhetoric to remain unscrutinized while it still brings considerable influence to bear on rhetorical negotiations at all levels. Unacknowledged agency is still agency, informing and acting upon collective and individual life; scholarly distance is rapidly becoming an increasingly difficult rhetorical device to sustain.

Characteristics of a Digital-Material Entity

Based on the insights produced by asking the four questions, above, it is now possible to describe more precisely the defining characteristics of a digital-material entity, and how understanding these traits invite a theoretical approach to rhetorically analyzing them that combines the affordances of digital and material rhetorical theory, as well as that of a number of other disciplines. This interdisciplinarity is critical to allowing the amount of breadth and depth necessary to trace the complex entanglements between digital-material entities and the relationships among which they operate. Each of the chapters in this dissertation has brought different combinations of theoretical stances to bear upon distinct aspects of the rhetoricity of the NWHM, an approach that has made visible a number of key insights about the nature and (function) of multi-modal entities.

For example, exploring discourse and public interaction in Chapter 2 supports the assertion that the NWHM, as a nascent cultural institution, has negotiated for and sustained presence and, as such, is visibly and materially consequential. This materiality

and consequentiality was further explored in Chapter 3, where not only the existing status of women in the National Museum of American History has been explicated but, in addition, looking through the lens of national history museums shows the NWHM to be situated against and compelled toward the kind of embodiment it enacts. The situatedness of the NWHM has been further explored in Chapter 4, as well as the embodied aspect of the digital exhibits found online. The NWHM's performance amidst the affordances and constraints of digital space and public space has also been explored, revealing an entity that is interactive, performative, and inherently rhetorical.

Based on these summative assertions, I have identified five core traits that distinguish rhetorical entities like the NWHM, entities that operate across a multiplicity of spaces. These traits reveal an entity which is situated, actively present, consequential, simultaneous and embodied. While the NWHM shares some of these traits with rhetorical entities in general, it is the combination of multiple situatedness, active simultaneity, and hybrid embodiment that form the unique core of the digital-material entity's functionality and realm of influence. For the sake of clarity, in what follows I name and discuss these traits as distinct from one another. However, it should be noted that in practice there is a great deal of overlap and interplay between the traits, as well as a number of secondary traits that emerge upon closer examination.

Situated

A rhetorical entity is always already situated within the conditions of its existence and performance. Digital, visual, material, or corporeal, such an entity operates amidst a plethora of other agents, institutions, artifacts, media, history, traditions, and so on. Meaning emerges out of the situation in which the entity is embedded and the elements of

which it continuously negotiates. For example, in Chapter 2, I explored several methods employed by the NWHM to interpellate supportive publics, making visible the interdependency of the NWHM and these elements. Defined by its quest for materiality, the NWHM has also been indelibly shaped by the demands and expectations of traditions of public memory production, as well as the aspirations of not only activism but also new media technologies. Negotiating among and between multiple tensions, the NWHM can be understood as complexly situated within a mediascape that is, itself, under immense pressure toward change. It is perhaps for this reason that the NWHM has been most successful in its cultivation of beneficial relationships when it invites and utilizes modes of collaboration with many different agents and entities, human and non-human. For example, in Chapter 2 I explored the relationship between the quantity and quality of the NWHM's social media posts and indications of public support. As detailed in that chapter, it is clear that utilizing social media greatly increased both the organization's digital presence and public awareness and support for its mission. Although such a relationship may seem a bit too obvious to be worthy of closer examination, taking this correlation for granted leads to dismissing a critical mode of situatedness (one of many) in which the NWHM actively centers itself.

Actively Present

Through the cultivation of a consistent presence on social media, the NWHM demonstrates the importance of presence within public memory production. Physical museums, monuments, and other public memory spaces build presence through claiming public space and tapping into traditions of reverence for and veneration of the authoritative commemoration. While physical presence is not a guarantee of endurance,[4]

it is a kind of cultural shorthand for the nation's various publics, signaling importance and demanding respect by virtue of its being. In the absence of a physical space, the NWHM has discovered that it is critical to constantly and actively remind their supporting publics of its existence and agenda. Evidence of the success of such efforts lies in the fact that the NWHM now exists at the center of a complex web of recognitions and interactions, the interchange of information and expressions of support an essential feature of its presence. For example, the NWHM continues to actively engage in self-promotion through various social media platforms and its web site, as well as to engage the public by sponsoring events, contributing to other organizations, arranging for public appearances of key organizational leaders, giving awards, hosting a variety of educational and celebratory functions, preparing and circulating exhibits and materials, and so on. In this way, the NWHM continues to increase and enhance its presence as a consequential contributor to national public memory production and, ideally, to convert a weighty digital reality into a brick-and-mortar one.

Consequential

There are several ways to utilize a concept like consequence due to the way that it signifies both the effect or result of a past action as well as significance or import. In the case of a rhetorical entity like the NWHM, I would like to consider consequentiality as a condition of potential. It is impossible to determine with any certainty what, ultimately, the overall significance of the NWHM and its mission will be. As it continues to actively pursue a physical women's history museum on the National Mall, the organization's realm of influence will continue to expand and contract, the relationships with its publics and to material culture will continue to shift and change. However, the inherent

rhetoricity of the NWHM does allow a glimpse into the possible outcomes of enacting the kind of hybrid agency the NWHM has developed. Already, in its efforts to first come to be and then to achieve its goals, the NWHM has introduced and solidified the possibility of a women's history museum in Washington, D.C. As evidenced by its growing "audience" on social media (see Chapter 4), the frequency and quality of the organization's posts have already produced enough public and political support to warrant the formation of a Congressional Committee to examine the NWHM's plan for a museum and to make a formal recommendation to our nation's governing body. That their requests have been given serious consideration is itself a signal of the NWHM's growing influence and conceptual stability.

Whether this kind of consequentiality will translate into the NWHM's ability to shift national historical narratives, in which women's history remains marginal, is a question that can only be answered in time. However, there are clear signs now that evidence the potential of the NWHM to do so, namely, the sudden interest demonstrated by Smithsonian Magazine in women's history. Unlike its museums and research facilities, Smithsonian Magazine solicits and publishes a range of articles on historical women, distributing them through its website, on social media, and in print. This renewed interest in women's history can be dated to early 2015, just months after Congress approved the formation of the American Museum of Women's History Congressional Commission.[5] Such an effect supports the view that the consequentiality of the NWHM has enough potential to enact change of this kind, at the least, and points to the possibility for improved access to and wider dissemination of women's history in the future, one of the NWHM's foundational aims. However, unless and until that change is reflected in

national history museums, and not just in their media, the ability of the changes to outlast their digital artifacts remains an open question.

Simultaneous

A fourth trait evidenced by the NWHM is its simultaneity; in other words, it enacts a distinct rhetorical agency in multiples spheres at the same time. Unlike institutions like the Smithsonian, in which there tend to be blurring but still easily distinguishable demarcations between digital activity and physical representation, the agency of the NWHM operates in a way that encourages the digital and the material to complexly intertwine, expanding upon and enriching one another. Of course, given the increasing amount of interpenetration of the two, as the digital exhibit is invited into personal or public space via a computer screen or handheld device and museum visitors bring (and expect) the affordances of digital technologies with them into an exhibit space, the trajectories of the national history museum (as a physical iteration) and the cybermuseum currently has them moving toward one another. Functioning at the intersections of the rhetorically material and the materially rhetorical, the NWHM engages and utilizes the materials available to it without regard for the fact that digital artifacts and material artifacts are generally perceived to belong to distinctly separate spheres.

Enhancing this trait is the ever-increasing speed at which interactions and events occur in a digitized world. Moving at a frenetic pace, any given public can be present in any number of spaces simultaneously, accessing a physical artifact via embodied interaction while tapping into a digital ocean of information about that artifact. As a cybermuseum, the NWHM lacks the physicality of the museum object to ground a

visitor's experience; instead, it must rely upon a visitor's past embodied experience and the traditions of public memory production founded on material culture. Because of this, while other museums struggle to incorporate a degree of digital-material simultaneity into the visitor experience, the NWHM works toward that original physical interaction, trusting that the supportive publics it has gathered value it as much as the organization does. The simultaneity that the NWHM seeks is thus a simultaneity of equity, of parity, with existing institutions, rather than the unanchored sort it currently enacts.

Embodied

This discussion of the physical versus the digital artifact or exhibit leads to the final core trait I discuss in this chapter – embodiment. Like consequentiality, the term can point in number of connotative directions; for my purposes, I mean to use the term to signify the relationship between the fact that all human consciousness is embodied and that it is through this condition that we perceive and make sense of the world around us. For this reason, I assert that no analysis of a rhetorical entity is complete without consideration of its materiality and relationship to the physical body and non-human entities. This is perhaps the greatest departure on my list from more traditional modes of rhetorical analysis. To treat digital rhetorical occurrences as though the human being interacting with it and the hardware used to access them are transparent or of no consequence ignores these entities as important aspects of the way in which digital space (in many real ways) is an extension of the configurations of social and political culture organized around the physical (sexed, gendered, raced) body. As my research has shown, digital artifacts and interactions are always already outgrowths of these configurations. Because we understand a museum exhibit in relation to our body and our sense of

relationship to the human and non-human entities around us, so too do we understand digital artifacts and entities this way. Website or exhibit hall, the often unacknowledged presence of the embodied mind haunts our rhetorical interactions and gives shape to rhetorical performance.

The NWHM is thus always already embodied, shaped by it, responsive to it. It is also a unique case, in that the premise of the organization and its mission is based upon gendered bodies, their erasure from national history museums, and the need for that erasure to be reversed. It assumes that "woman" is a category that needs no further definition, that "woman" and "man" are opposites, fully in line with the gender binaries that have long formed the foundation of American society and politics (Glenn). Thus although the organization is primarily identifiable by its cybermusem and digital activity, it is an entity complexly tangled in the embodiment of gender, gendered history, and the gendered public memory production at the core of all public memory sites, online or off.

Toward an Analytic Framework

Together the five traits I've identified point toward a theoretical approach that facilitates a robust and flexible engagement with an entity of this type. At this stage, it is perhaps most helpful to begin by describing such a framework as an heuristic of functions, a listing of the work that such a framework must do. As Carol Blair has argued, rhetorical analysis must not only ask questions meant to uncover the meaning-making in which an entity is engaged, but more specifically it must examine the depth and breadth of the work in which that entity is engaged. Thomas J. Rickert provides additional support for this assertion, insisting that rhetoric must be "grounded in the material relations from which it springs, not simply as the situation giving it its shape and

exigence, but as part of what we mean by rhetoric" (x). For this reason, any analytic framework must account for materiality as a core feature of its function, and given the wide range of disciplines traditionally or currently confronting matters of the material, it follows that the framework I propose here pulls from a wide range of disciplines and theories. At the same time, however, this framework is also an outline, a starting point, and perhaps an encouragement to think about rhetorical entities and analysis from a different perspective.

To account for the rhetoricity of an entity that exhibits the five traits of situatedness, active presence, consequentiality, simultaneity and embodiment, it may be most helpful to begin by creating a graphic to visualize the manner in which these traits combine to enact their collective agency. In Chapter 4, I argued that embodiment is a characteristic that offers a critical center point for performing analyses on hybrid entities including the NWHM cybermuseum. Pierre Levy, in particular, offers a view on the relationship between embodiment and digital technologies that eschews notions of disembodiment in favor of "a reincarnation, a multiplication" of the human (44). Ken Hillis extends this argument even more specifically by stating that it is through embodiment that we experience ourselves and the cultural sphere; the embodied consciousness cannot, in Hillis' view, escape the bounds of the body itself (172). By centering embodiment, and then envisioning the other four characteristics of the digital-material entity as complexly interlocked, moving non-linearly across and through one another as they combine to enact a particular form of agency in multiple spheres, an image like the one in figure 22 begins to emerge.

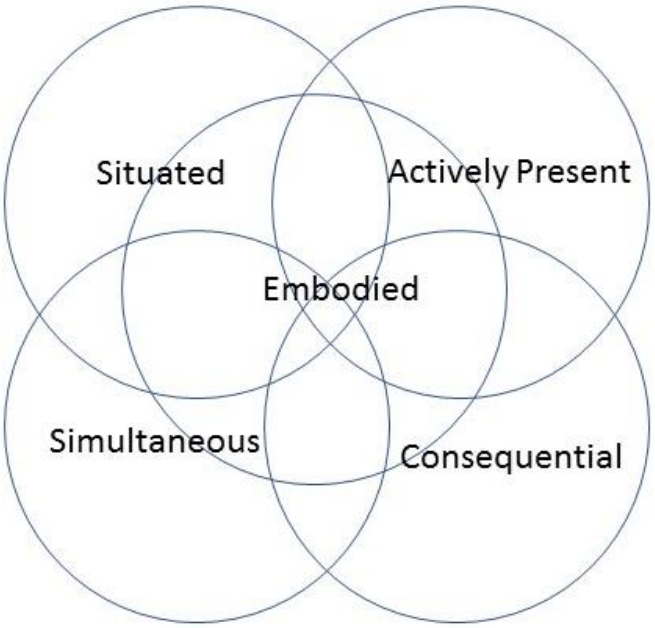

Figure 22. Map of Characteristics for Digital-Material Entities

By circling around and through the characteristics, an analysis could potentially focus in on any number of overlapping points and thereby shift the resulting view. In order to do so, however, a framework must first be conceptualized, one that is capable of accounting for each trait as it is enacted in relation to and through embodiment. Pulling from rhetorical theory across the discipline, as well as valuable insights from a range of others, it is possible to begin to do so.

In this first attempt, I describe a digital-material framework as a list of functions. I have included ten here as a starting point:

1. It must be broad enough to allow for the exploration of diverse aspects
2. It must be robust enough to pull diverse aspects together in infinite combinations in order to generate new perspectives and insights
3. It must be narrow enough to provide focus for analysis, as well as offer productive boundaries
4. It must be open, and resistant to dismissing or discounting certain foci or interactions that seem superficial or inconsequential
5. It must resist assumptions based on a Cartesian split and other unproductive binaries
6. It must resist facile categorization, as much as possible
7. It must be interdisciplinary, willing and able to incorporate arguments and theories outside of the primary discipline
8. It must resist drawing conclusions too quickly; the questions are more important than the answers
9. It must focus on agentive relationships, including those formed by and between human and non-human entities
10. It must contend with and account for hybridity, collaboration, and its own characteristics (situatedness, active presence, consequence, simultaneity, and embodiedness)

Taking the relationship between embodied human consciousness and vibrant matter as a given, such a framework requires much of any analytic investigation. It requires embracing the dissonance and learning to be comfortable with circumstances of "both/and" rather than "either/or." It is wholly feminist, interdisciplinary, and mutable: as

circumstances change, I would fully expect the framework to expand and/or change shape to accommodate new insights and approaches.

As with many rhetorical approaches, the focus here is on the modes of becoming through which a digital-material entity must navigate as it enacts a unique hybrid agency within a milieu of other artifacts and agents. It is necessarily open to interpretation, inviting further adaptations and creative applications in future scholarship. Through my investigation of the emblematic struggle of the National Women's History Museum, I have examined discursive, material and digital modes of rhetoricity that together illustrate the complexity of public memory production in a digital age. In tracing the NWHM in its process of becoming, a process that continues today, I have sought to uncover the hidden nodes of rhetoric's materiality that undergird the structures upon which notions of the digital and the material are constituted. One can only hope that with a better view of these structures, we can continue to engage in more comprehensive and more effective methods to gain visibility for the representation of women in our museums and national historical narratives, as well as in leadership, achievement, and civic, cultural and economic contribution – past, present and future.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. The phrase "museum without walls" appears to have originated in André Malraux's 1953 *The Voices of Silence*, a volume discussing the state of the visual arts in Europe at the time; the phrase has more recently been picked up by museum scholars and applied to the uncharted territory of the digital archive, collection, museum, and so on. For example, see Bayne, Ross and Williamson (2009).
2. See, for example, http://www.msnbc.com/kate-snow/watch/why-are-people-asking-to-repeal-the-19th-785426499920 [cite]. While the movement itself failed to garner public support, media reports tended to legitimize it as a potential threat and makes visible a troubling tradition of normalizing attacks on women's rights in America.
3. See, for example, H.R. 354 of the 115th Congress, "Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2017," dated February 8, 2017.
4. See, for example, Carol Mattingly's work on memorials commissioned by the Women's Christian Temperance Union that no longer exist.
5. The Congressional Commission for an American Museum of Women's History was established on December 19th, 2014, by HR 3979. The Commission was created to study independently a potential American Museum of Women's History, D.C. The Commission's final report was presented to President Obama and Congress on November 16th, 2016.

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APPENDIX A

LEGISLATIVE TIMELINE, NWHM

October 7, 1998	Bill S.2576 and H.R.4722, “To create a National Museum of Women's History Advisory Committee,” introduced in the 105th Congress (passed/never voted on)
March 24, 1999	Bill S.706 and H.R.1246, “To create a National Museum of Women's History Advisory Committee,” introduced in 106th Congress (passed/never voted)
October 16, 2003	Bill S.1714, “National Women's History Museum Act of 2003,” introduced and passed by the Senate (died in the House, 2004)
March 3, 2005	Bill S.501, “National Women's History Museum Act of 2005,” introduced and passed by the Senate (died in the House, 2005)
July 20, 2007	Bill S.1841, “National Women’s History Museum Act of 2007,” introduced (only)
July 17, 2008	Bill H.R.6548, "General Services Administration Portfolio Enhancement Act of 2008," introduced in the House
March 25, 2009	Bill H.R.1700 and S.2129, “National Women’s History Museum Act of 2009,” introduced and passed by the House, introduced in Senate (died)
March 30, 2011	Bill H.R.1269 and S.680, “National Women’s History Museum Act of 2011,” introduced in House and Senate (only)
September 9, 2011	Bill H.R.2844 and S.1870, “National Women's History Museum and Federal Facilities Consolidation and Efficiency Act of 2011,” introduced only

September 14, 2012	Bill H.R.6421, “Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum Act of 2012,” introduced only
September 19, 2012	Bill S.3567, “National Women's History Museum Commission Act of 2012,” introduced only
February 27, 2013	Bill H.R.863 and S.398, “Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum Act,” introduced and passed the House, introduced in Senate
December 10, 2014	Senate Report 113-290, "Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum Act" orders creation of the commission

APPENDIX B

TIMELINE OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES, NWHM

June 26, 1997	Woman Suffrage Statue Honored in U.S. Capitol Rotunda
June 8, 1998	Staser speaks at Sacagawea dollar coin advisory committee session
July 10-20, 1998	NWHM Unveils Sculpture of Sojourner Truth at 150th Anniversary of First Women's Rights Convention, Seneca Falls, New York
September 25, 1998	Staser Testifies before President's Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History
September 27, 1998	Second Annual NWHM Polo Benefit
September 28, 1998	Staser announces the first annual "Women Making History" Awards at the National Press Club launch of the NWHM CyberMuseum
September 28, 1998	The Launch of the NWHM CyberMuseum
October 7, 1998	Bill S.2576 and H.R.4722, "To create a National Museum of Women's History Advisory Committee," introduced
October 19 - November 22 1998	"Rights for Women" Exhibit, World Financial Center
November 14, 1998	Meeting of Scholars and Museum Professionals to begin Development and Program Design of a National Museum Dedicated to the History of Women in America
N.D., 1998 or 1999	NWHM Councils in New York, Phoenix, and Los Angeles host fundraising events
March 1, 1999	President's Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History issues final report

March 24, 1999 Bill S.706 and H.R.1246, "To create a National Museum of Women's History Advisory Committee," introduced in 106th Congress

October 29, 1999 2nd annual "Women Making History" awards presented on October 29th at a gala dinner at the Biltmore Hotel in Phoenix.

November 10-12, 1999 1st Forbes Executive Women's Summit

January 28, 2000 Edith P. Mayo, Curator Emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution, kicks off the NWHM "Untold Story" luncheon series

March 16, 2000 Dr. Sharon Harley, Associate Professor of Afro-American Studies at the University of Maryland, gives a presentation titled "The Untold Story: Women Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement" at NWHM's Congressional Education Luncheon Series

June 8, 2000 Edie Weiner gives a presentation titled "Trends Affecting Women-Past, Present, and Future" at NWHM's Congressional Education Luncheon Series

2001 No news items

March 26, 2002 – January 22, 2003 "Clandestine Women: The Untold Stories of Women in Espionage" exhibit at the Women In Military Service For America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery

July 22, 2002 "The Tucker Letter" describes a willingness to work with the National Political Congress of Black Women to incorporate a

	likeness of Sojourner Truth into the Portrait Monument in the Capital Rotunda, Washington, D.C.
October 16, 2003	Bill S.1714, "National Women's History Museum Act of 2003," introduced and passed by the Senate
November 3, 2003	Twenty-three National Organizations declare support for NWHM's mission and proposed site (reaching over 8 million members)
May 30, 2004	"During World War II" exhibit opens at the Women In Military Service For America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery
March 3, 2005	Bill S.501, "National Women's History Museum Act of 2005," introduced and passed by the Senate
March 10, 2005	Sarah Winnemucca, Native American Activist, honored as Nevada places her statue in the National Statuary Hall Collection in the United States Capitol
April 19, 2005	*Smithsonian Magazine* honors NWHM Membership Chair Dr. Sally Ride as one of its "35 Who Made A Difference" in the November 2005 special anniversary issue
January 30, 2006	The Smithsonian's Board of Regents approves a museum site for the National Museum of African American History and Culture
March 2, 2006	The NWHM launches a nationwide campaign at the National Press Club to promote enactment of The National Women's History

	Museum Act, and to designate the vacant annex next to the old post office pavilion as a permanent museum site
March 19, 2006	The National Foundation for Women Legislators Education & Training Policy Committee passes a resolution recognizing the importance of establishing a National Women's History Museum in Washington, DC
April 19, 2006	Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton and Representative Louise Slaughter, both members of the NWHM Honorary Board of Directors, introduce The Votes for Women History Trail Act, legislation that aims to establish the "Votes for Women History Trail" and authorize the National Park Service to establish an auto trail in upstate New York
April 19, 2006	A call for donations is issued from Ronnie Lapinsky Sax of the American Political Items Collectors (APIC)
May 3, 2006	George Washington University design class presents NWHM staff and board members with museum design project
May 23, 2006	Lurita Doan, the newly named Administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA), voices support for the NWHM at her confirmation hearing
June 15, 2006	NWHM Coalition Members sign a letter, urging members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to support legislation providing NWHM with the museum site already allocated to them by the Senate (S.501)

August 19, 2006	“Rights for Women: The Suffrage Movement and Its Leaders” cyber-exhibit launched by the NWHM in Equality Day celebration
September 6, 2006	The U.S. Senate approves legislation to display a donated statue of Sojourner Truth in the Capitol Building, the first African American woman so honored
March 5, 2007	NWHM co-hosts a congressional reception for women legislators at the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum on Capitol Hill
March 26, 2007	NWHM announces the redesign of its website for Women’s History Month 2007
July 20, 2007	Bill S.1841, “National Women’s History Museum Act of 2007,” introduced
July 21, 2007	NWHM elects a new board of officers; Joan Wages becomes NWHM President
September 19, 2007	National logo contest announced, requesting submissions for new logo and branding designs for the NWHM
October 11, 2007	“Building the New World: The Women of Jamestown Settlement” cyber-exhibit launched
July 17, 2008	Bill H.R.6548, "General Services Administration Portfolio Enhancement Act of 2008," introduced in the House
March 25, 2009	Bill H.R.1700 and S.2129, “National Women’s History Museum Act of 2009,” introduced and passed by the House, introduced in Senate
March 26, 2009	New NWHM blog announced

April 16, 2009	Winning architectural design for the African American Museum announced
April 23, 2009	NWHM calls on the public to request subjects for their next "cyber-exhibit"
April 28, 2009	Sojourner Truth bust dedicated in Emancipation Hall of the new Capitol Visitor Center
August 20, 2009	"Chinese American Woman: A History of Resilience and Resistance" cyber-exhibit highlighted
September 24, 2009	Bill H.R.1700, which establishes a National Women's History Museum on the Mall in Washington, DC, passes the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure by a voice vote
October 14, 2009	The U.S. House of Representatives passes HR 1700, also known as The National Women's History Museum Act of 2009
October 29, 2009	U.S. Senator Susan Collins introduces legislation in the Senate (S.2129) to create a National Women's History museum on a site near the National Mall in Washington, D.C.
December 16, 2009	NWHM announces a new mission statement
February 24, 2010	"Claiming Their Citizenship: African American Women From 1624-2009" online exhibit launched
April 19, 2010	Benefit event "Shine On: Celebrating 125 Years of Women Making their Mark" held in New York City
April 21, 2010	The Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee passes HR 1700 and S. 2129 by a voice vote

May 5, 2010	The NWHM announces the launch of its redesigned website
September 21, 2010	"Our Nation's Daughters" benefit event featuring actor Meryl Streep held in Washington, D.C.
October 29, 2010	The NWHM releases *A History of Halloween*, a short video that explores the ancient origins of the holiday as well as the early practices by American women at the turn of the 20th century
March 30, 2011	Bill H.R.1269 and S.680, "National Women's History Museum Act of 2011," introduced in House and Senate
April 8, 2011	Inaugural Women's History in Washington Lecture Series presentation given by Marjorie J. Spruill, "Women's Rights, Family Values, and the Polarization of American Political Culture" and exhibit opening, "Women on the Move: The First National Women's Conference, Houston, 1977"
April 12, 2011	Shine On gala, celebrating women making history, held in New York
April 15, 2011	Legislation (S.680) Passed Unanimously out of Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
May 5, 2011	South Carolina General Assembly adopts resolution H. 4183 to support the establishment of "a national women's history museum in Washington, D.C."
July 12, 2011	Wages announces that the NWHM has been awarded a grant of $300,000 from the Hearst Foundation

September 8th, 2011	Bill HR 2844, the "National Women's History Museum and Federal Facilities Consolidation and Efficiency Act of 2011," passes out of the House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
September 9, 2011	Bill H.R.2844 and S.1870, "National Women's History Museum and Federal Facilities Consolidation and Efficiency Act of 2011," introduced only
November 16, 2011	The de Pizan Honors gala event held in Washington, D.C.
November 17, 2011	Lecture series *The Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Women's History*; presentation by Dr. Thavolia Glymph, Associate Professor of African and African American Studies and History, "African American Women Refugees in the Civil War"
January 30, 2012	NWHM announces the launch of its first interactive game, "Progressive Era Women"
March 1, 2012	President Obama Proclaims March to be Women's History Month
March 2012	Celebrating Computing Women series (multipart)
March 20, 2012	NWHM hosts Women's History Trivia Night at the Biergarten Haus, Washington D.C.
April 10, 2012	"Daring Dames: A Photographic Exhibit" online exhibit launched
April 14, 2012	Neiman Marcus benefit event and fashion show, featuring the Eileen Fisher Spring 2012 Collection

May 15, 2012	Biographies of five prominent Americans on NWHM blog announced in conjunction with an exhibit of digital composite portraits by photographer Robert Weingarten
June 10, 2012	NWHM conducts focus groups at National History Day celebration
June 13, 2012	Texas social activist Carey C. Shuart announced to serve as Interim Chair of the NWHM's Board of Directors
June 14, 2012	The NWHM expands staff and services with two new positions, an online exhibit and education programs consultant, and a volunteer coordinator
June 19, 2012	Girl Scouts of America "Rock the Mall" event, Washington D.C.
July 24, 2012	NWHM launches new PSA campaign, "Don't Tell Me I Can't"
July 27, 2012	Under the direction of Volunteer Coordinator Joanie Moser, volunteering for the campaign ramps up
September 19, 2012	Bill S.3567, "National Women's History Museum Commission Act of 2012," introduced
September 14, 2012	Bill H.R.6421, "Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum Act of 2012," introduced
November 14, 2012	The de Pizan Honors 2012 gala event held in Washington, D.C.
January 15, 2013	NWHM hires staff member Elizabeth Maurer as the Museum's Director of Programs
February 27, 2013	Bill H.R.863 and S.398, "Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum Act," introduced and passed the House, introduced in Senate

March 1-3, 2013	NWHM takes a leading role in the *Suffrage Centennial Celebration* event, Washington D.C.
March 3, 2013	The Delta Sigma Theta Sorority organizes a march to commemorate their 22 founders and the 100th anniversary of the 1913 Woman Suffrage Parade in Washington, DC.
March 21, 2013	Launch of new Online Exhibit: "From Ideas to Independence: A Century of Entrepreneurial Women"
May 13, 2013	NWHM sponsors a fashion presentation of the Tory Burch Spring Collection at Bloomingdale's Friendship Heights location
June 18th, 2013	President Obama Proclaims June as LGBT Pride Month
September 2013	NWHM President Joan Wages speaks at the Military Sealift Command's Women's Equality Day celebration
September 2013	Christine de Pizan hat auction event
October 24, 2013	NWHM's Los Angeles Regional Committee hosts its 2nd event
November 12, 2013	Making a Business of Change: American Women in Business forum held in Washington, D.C.
December 11, 2013	HR 863 presented at a House Administration Committee hearing by Reps. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-N.Y.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.)
March 4, 2014	NWHM Lobby Day event
March 25, 2014	NWHM President & CEO Joan Wages joins Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) and testifies in support of Bill HR 863 at a hearing before the House

	Natural Resources' Public Lands and Environmental Regulation Subcommittee
April 2, 2014	The House Administration Committee meets to consider HR 863 and all members vote in support of the bill's passage
April 9, 2014	The House Resources Committee passes HR 863, The National Women's History Museum Commission Act, on unanimous consent
May 7, 2014	The U.S. House of Representatives passes Bill H.R.863, legislation to form a Congressional Commission on the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum in Washington, DC
May 22-25, 2014	NWHM presents a panel titled "Making the Case for a National Women's History Museum on the National Mall" at the Berkshire Conference on Women's History and the American Alliance of Museums in Toronto, Canada
August 8, 2014	The National Women's History Museum is awarded the "Best In America" Seal of Approval by the Independent Charities of America
August 23, 2014	Women Making History Brunch event in Los Angeles, CA
October 6, 2014	The addition of Catherine Allgor, Ph.D. to the NWHM Board of Directors is announced
November 17, 2014	Christine de Pizan 14 event
November 25, 2014	President Joan Wages launches her own blog on the Huffington Post

December 10, 2014	Congress votes to create Congressional Commission to study the creation of a National Women's History Museum
Early 2015	Several new board members announced
May 11, 2015	Women Making History event, Washington D.C.
May 15, 2015	Eight commissioners appointed to the Congressional Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum
August 16, 2015	Walking Tour: "In Their Footsteps: Women's Suffrage Trail" event, Washington, D.C.
September 19, 2015	4th annual Women Making History Event, Los Angeles, CA
October 18, 2015	Walking Tour: "In Their Footsteps: Women's Suffrage Trail" event, Washington, D.C.
November 7, 2015	Find the Women Scavenger Hunt held at the National Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C.
November 2, 2015	"Crusade for the Vote: Woman Suffrage Resource Center" launches on the NWHM website
December 28, 2015	NWHM releases the results of an online survey conducted by the Museum

APPENDIX C

CHRONOLOGY OF NWHM CYBEREXHIBITS

At the time of writing, there were a total of 28 digital exhibits accessible on the NWHM website.

September 1998	Launch of cybermuseum and first digital exhibit announced, "Motherhood, Social Service, and Political Reform: Political Culture and Imagery of American Woman Suffrage," curated by Edith P. Mayo. Exhibit is no longer accessible via the NWHM website. Source: https://www.NWHM.org/about-NWHM/press/press-publicity/cyber-launch/
Mar 2002 – Jan 2003	"Clandestine Women: Spies in American History" unveiled as a Traveling exhibit.
May 2004	"Partners in Winning the War: Women in WWII." Opened to coincide with the dedication of the World War II Memorial and on view through March 2005 at The Women's Memorial located at the gateway to Arlington National Cemetery. Source: https://www.NWHM.org/about-NWHM/mission/NWHM-accomplishments
August 2004	"American Women in the Olympics" unveiled in honor of those women who were pioneers and champions in past Olympiads as well as women competing in the 2004 Summer Olympics held in Athens, Greece. Source: https://www.NWHM.org/about-NWHM/mission/NWHM-accomplishments
Spring 2006	"Women in Industry 1800-1945" examines the development of women's participation in the paid labor force during three major

periods: the Industrial Revolution (1800-1880), the Progressive Era (1880-1930), and the Depression/World War II Era (1930-1945). Curated by Dr. Robyn Muncy, (The University of Maryland, College Park).

N.D., 2006 "Partners in Winning the War: American Women in World War II," online version launched, which shows how women helped the war effort through their service in nearly every area of American life. The original *Partners* temporary exhibition was on display in 2004-5 at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. https://www.NWHM.org/about-NWHM/mission/NWHM-accomplishments

August 2006 "Rights for Women: The Suffrage Movement and Its Leaders" is a cyber-exhibit launched by the NWHM as part of the Equality Day celebration. Curated by Edith P. Mayo.

Fall 2006 **"**The History of Women in Education" explores the history of women's education in the United States from the 18th through the 20th centuries.

Fall 2006 "Reforming their World: Women in the Progressive Era." Discusses women's roles in the reform movement during the Progressive Era (1890-1920), when millions struggled with increasing industrialization and urbanization. https://www.NWHM.org/about-NWHM/mission/NWHM-accomplishments

January 2007	"Clandestine Women: Spies in American History." The online exhibit, which highlights American women who made significant intelligence contributions during America's wars, is based upon NWHM's temporary exhibit that was on display in 2002-2003. Curated by Linda McCarthy (CIA Museum), Founding Curator.
May 2007	"The Chronicle of American Women," an online archive that will recognize the women who have contributed to the story of America, providing Museum members and supporters with the opportunity to create biographical profiles, tributes, and remembrances for themselves or for other special women.
N.D., 2007	"Women with a Deadline: Female Printers, Publishers, and Journalists from the Colonial Period to World War I." This exhibit was curated by Stephanie Edwartoski, NWHM Spring 2007 intern, and Tamar Rabinowitz, NWHM Summer 2007 intern. Historical consultation was provided by Doris Weatherford, NWHM Vice President of Program and author. Web design by David Bovey.
October 2007	"Building the New World: The Women of Jamestown Settlement" cyber-exhibit launched to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, Virginia. The exhibit anchors the redesign of the NWHM website, which includes a new layout along with dynamic features such as *This Week in Women's History*, current news items, and frequently changing highlights

	and photos. An exhibit on the history of NWHM National Coalition organizations has been added as well. Curated by Doris Weatherford, Historian and Author.
March 2008	"First But Not Last: Women Who Ran For President," a cyberexhibit that features 12 women who have ran for president. NWHM also held a panel discussion at the Sewell-Belmont House and Museum to celebrate the launch of the exhibit.
August 2008	"Chinese American Women: A History of Resilience and Resistance," a CyberExhibit that chronicles the lives of Chinese American women from their arrival to their first 100 years in the US. The launch coincided with an event at the National Conference at the Organization of Chinese Americans. Curated by Dr. Jean Pfaelzer, (University of Delaware).
September 2008	"Young and Brave: Girls Changing History," in collaboration with Girls Learn Inc. The exhibit includes biographies of 30 girls, ages 6-29, that have made an impact on history. The bios were researched and written by teenage members of Girls Learn and feature comments on how they were affected by what they had learned. Curated by Doris Weatherford, Historian and Author.
December 2008	"Women Wielding Power: Pioneer Female State Legislators," in collaboration with the National Foundation for Women Legislators. The exhibit includes biographies of the first female state legislators from each state. To NWHM's knowledge, this is

	the only collection that features information on the first female state legislators from each state. Curated by Doris Weatherford, Historian and Author.
March 2009	"This Isn't Right!: Women Reform Leaders from 1847-1952." The exhibit includes the items currently on display in NWHM's administrative office from over 20 different female reform leaders. NWHM also unveiled a new cyberexhibit to correspond with the collection in May. Curated by Bob Schramm (West Liberty State College), Professor of Physics & Archivist, Museum Curator.
February 2010	"Claiming Their Citizenship: African American Women from 1624-2009." Curated by Dr. Ida E. Jones, (Howard University)
April 2011	"Leaving Their Stamp on History." Curated by Doris Weatherford, Historian and Author. Source: https://cynthiapricecommunique.wordpress.com/tag/national-womens-history-museum/?iframe=true&preview=true
April 2011	"Women on the Move: The First National Women's Conference, Houston, 1977." Source: https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/ongoing-exhibit-women-the-move-the-first-national-womens-conference-houston-1977. Currently unavailable; not housed on the NWHM website.

May 2011	“Profiles In Motherhood,” a dynamic new Online Exhibit. This exhibit is unique and a preview of a future exhibit in the physical Museum that will be focused on "Everyday Women."
June 2011	Launch of first online interactive, "Progressive Era Women." The game allows users to select artifacts from five key areas of the Progressive Era—Temperance, Settlement Houses, Worker's Rights, Suffrage and Civil Rights —and connect them to complete the story of women's involvement in the Progressive Era. The interactive corresponds with NWHM's popular Online Exhibit “Reforming Their World: Women in the Progressive Era.” Source: https://www.NWHM.org/about-NWHM/mission/NWHM-accomplishments
April 2012	“Daring Dames: A Photographic Exhibit” launched. Curated by Donna Henes, (Kaplan-Henes Photographs Collection), author and artist.
March 2013	“From Ideas to Independence: A Century of Entrepreneurial Women.” Curated by Dr. Kristen Gwinn-Becker, Historian and Dr. Debra Michals, (Merrimack College), Independent Scholar and Instructor. Source: http://entrepreneurs.NWHM.org/#/introduction/1
N.D., 2014	“Game Changers: American Women & Sports.” Curated by Dr. Bonnie Morris (The George Washington University and Georgetown)

Spring 2014	"Pathways to Equality: U.S. Women's Rights Movement Emerges." Source: http://www.bwaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/NWHM_SpringNewsletter.pdf
N.D., 2015	"New Beginnings: Immigrant Women and the American Experience." Google Arts & Culture. Source: https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/u/0/exhibit/5gLSyiVkZcVkLw
July 2015	"Breaking In: Women in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics." Source: https://www.linkedin.com/in/elmaurer
November 2015	"Crusade for the Vote: Woman Suffrage Resource Center." Curated by Dr. Allison Lange, (Wentworth Institute of Technology)
Feb 2016	"Standing Up for Change: African American Women & the Civil Rights Movement." Source: http://bestshoescoupons.com/NWHM.org
April 2016	"Harriet Tubman." Source: http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/national-womens-history-museum-launches-new-exhibit-on-harriet-tubman-applauds-decision-to-put-tubman-on-20-300255738.html
July 2016	"First But Not the Last: Women Who Ran for President." Curated by Doris Weatherford, Historian and Author. Source: http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/national-womens-

	history-museum-launches-women-who-ran-for-president-online-exhibit-2142227.htm
N.D., 2016	"Getting into the Game: Women & the Olympics." Curated by Elizabeth Maurer
Undated exhibits	"Women in Early Film." Curated by Dr. Alison Landsberg, (George Mason University)

See also https://www.NWHM.org/about-NWHM/mission/NWHM-accomplishments

APPENDIX D

LIST OF CURRENT NWHM CYBEREXHIBITS

Twenty-eight exhibits are featured on the NWHM home page; they are listed, below, roughly in order of appearance (top to bottom, left to right):

- Getting into the Game: Women & the Olympics
- Chinese American Women: A History of Resilience and Resistance
- Entrepreneurial Women
- Crusade for the Vote: Suffrage Resource Center
- Reforming Their World: Women in the Progressive Ers
- Women in Early Film
- Partners in Winning the War: Women in WWII
- Political Culture and Imagery of American Woman Suffrage
- Rights for Women
- Claiming Their Citizenship: African American Women from 1624-2009
- Women of Jamestown
- Women in the Olympics
- Young and Brave: Girls Changing History
- This Isn't Right! Women Reform Leaders from 1847-1952
- Profiles in Motherhood
- Clandestine Women: Spies in American History
- Women in Industry
- A History of NWHM's Coalition Organizations
- Daring Dames
- Women with a Deadline: Female Printers, Publishers, and Journalists from the Colonial Period to World War I
- Game Changers: American Women & Sports

- Pathways to Equality: U.S. Women's Rights Movement Emerges
- Leaving Their Stamp on History
- Standing Up For Change: African American Women & the Civil Rights Movement
- Breaking In: Women in Science, Technology, & Mathematics
- New Beginnings: Immigrant Women and the American Experience
- Harriet Tubman
- First But Not the Last: Women Who Ran for President

APPENDIX E

LIST OF CURATORS AND CONTRIBUTORS, NWHM

The following historians, authors and museum professionals have worked with NWHM to curate Online Exhibits ("Scholars"):

1. Dr. Ida E. Jones, (Howard University): *Claiming Their Citizenship: African American Women From 1624-2009*
2. Daile Kaplan, (NYU, Swann Auction Galleries), author
3. Donna Henes, (Kaplan-Henes Photographs Collection), author and artist, *Daring Dames*
4. Dr. Alison Landsberg, (George Mason University), *Women in Early Film*
5. Edith P. Mayo, (Smithsonian American History Museum), Curator Emeritus, *Votes for Women* and *Rights For Women: The Suffrage Movement and Its Leaders*
6. Linda McCarthy (CIA Museum), Founding Curator, *Clandestine Women: Spies in American History*
7. Dr. Jean Pfaelzer, (University of Delaware): *Chinese American Women: A History of Resilience and Resistance*
8. Jeanne Schramm (Mobile Women's History Museum), Collector, Librarian and Co-Founder
9. Bob Schramm (West Liberty State College), Professor of Physics & Archivist, Museum Curator, *This Isn't Right: Women Reform Leaders*
10. Doris Weatherford, Historian and Author, *Women With a Deadline: Female Printers, Publishers, and Journalists form the Colonial Period to World War I, First But Not the Last: Women Who Ran for President, Young and Brave: Girls*

Changing History, *Women of Jamestown*, *Women Wielding Power: Pioneer Female State Legislators*, and *Leaving Their Stamp on History*

11. Dr. Kristen Gwinn Becker, (HistoryIT), Independent Scholar and Founder: *From Ideas to Independence: A Century of Entrepreneurial Women*
12. Dr. Debra Michals, (Merrimack College), Independent Scholar and Instructor, *From Ideas to Independence: A Century of Entrepreneurial Women* and writing biographies
13. Dr. Bonnie Morris, (The George Washington University and Georgetown): *Game Changers: American Women & Sports*
14. Dr. Robyn Muncy, (The University of Maryland, College Park): *A History of Women in Industry*
15. Dr. Allison Lange, (Wentworth Institute of Technology), *Crusade for the Vote: Suffrage Resource Center.*
16. Dr. Amy Schneidhorst, Visiting Professor, *Women in Peace and Conflict*

Scholars Assisting NWHM with ***A Different Point of View*** (Quarterly Newsletter):

1. Dr. Catherine Allgor (University of California-Riverside)
2. Dr. Marjorie Spruill (University of South Carolina)
3. Dr. Bonnie Morris (The George Washington University and Georgetown)
4. Dr. Barbara Ganson (Director of Caribbean and Latin American Studies, Florida Atlantic University)
5. Dr. Despina Stratigakos (Professor of Architectural History, University at Buffalo)
6. Karen J. Blair (Central Washington University), Professor Emerita

7. Suzanne Gould (American Association of University Women), Archivist and Records Manager