

Utah History Summit: History in Practice

Sept. 22, 2026



Utah Historical Society
Museum of Utah

About the Summit

The Utah History Summit is a high-vibe gathering dedicated to the heart of our work: the people. This event brings together Utah's history community to celebrate our shared passion, spark new connections, and showcase the "heavy lifting" of this community-driven practice. This isn't just a meeting; it's a space to exchange actionable ideas and find inspiration in the work of fellow practitioners from across the state.

Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2026

1–7:30 p.m.

North Capitol Building

450 N. State St.

Salt Lake City, UT 84114



Schedule

1–2 p.m. | Keynote: Peoples of Utah Revisited PechaKucha

Learn about the Peoples of Utah Revisited project from the people who helped create it. In this fast-paced presentation, researchers and community partners will share how their project has helped widen the lens on Utah's history.

2–2:30 p.m. | Break

2:30–3 p.m. | "Utah Stories" Parallel Sessions

Session A: "Out of Myth Into Light" – This discussion panel will focus on the practice of history as a living act rather than a checklist of facts.

Session B: "Community-Driven Work in Your Practice" – This panel offers a deep dive into the logistics, ethics, and triumphs of community-driven history projects.

3:30–4 p.m. | Break

4–5 p.m. | "The Hive: Discussing Challenges Facing the Field"

Choose from seven different discussion topics and join other attendees in moving beyond the heavy headlines to exchange ideas, build solidarity, and shape the path forward.

5–5:30 p.m. | Break

5:30–7:30 p.m. | Optional Evening Reception at The Alta Club

UTAH HISTORY SUMMIT

Session Details

Keynote

Peoples of Utah Revisited PechaKucha

Learn about the Peoples of Utah Revisited Project from the people who helped to create it. In this fast-paced presentation, researchers and community partners will share how their project has helped to widen the lens on Utah's history and share the stories of the past through the present.

Presentations include:

- "Deaf History" by Jodi Becker
- "Queer History" by the Mildred Berryman Institute
- "Guatemayans in Utah" by Daniel Hernandez
- "Samoans in Early 20th Century Utah" by Laneta and Jake Fitisemanu
- "Scan & Shares/Oral History – Community History Efforts of the Peoples of Utah Revisited" by Monique Davila and Katherine Kitterman

Please note: The views and opinions expressed in content from partners do not necessarily reflect the views of the Utah Historical Society.



Concurrent Session

Out of Myth Into Light

Every place has its own historical myths – stories that are passed down and help define a place or people in collective memory. Utah's own historical myths continue to lean heavily on the tropes and imagery of the western frontier, replete with Native peoples, pioneers, and open land. Yet these cultural myths shroud a complex and continually changing history that invites contemplation and nuanced storytelling. Join us as we explore lesser known histories that move well beyond familiar stories. This discussion panel will focus on the practice of history as a living act rather than a checklist of facts.

We will explore creative ways to spark curiosity by sharing histories that unpack modern frontier mythologies:

- "After the Railroad: Chinese American history in Utah," by Max Chang
- "Federal Impact On Rural Areas," by Brian Cannon
- "Japanese American History Before and After WWII," by Alana Blumenthal and Alex Hirai
- "Urban Native American Communities," by James Toledo

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Concurrent Session

Community-Driven Work in Practice

How do cultural institutions move from transactional engagement to deeply rooted, community-led collaboration? This panel offers a deep dive into the logistics, ethics, and triumphs of community-driven history projects. Bringing together grassroots organizers, oral historians, and community leaders, the discussion will examine the methodologies required to build trust, share authority, and co-create histories with communities rather than about them.

Presenters:

- Cambodian Buddhist Temple, Jenny Hor and Chanda Chuon
- Moab Museum & Their Work with Uranium Oral History Project, Tara Beresh and Megan Vickery
- Utah Museum of Fine Art Exhibit Redo, Annie Burbidge-Ream

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Discussion Groups

The Hive: Discussing Challenges Facing the Field

While the cultural sector faces unprecedented challenges, we don't have to navigate them in isolation. This collaborative session leverages our collective "hive mind" for a hopeful, practical look at the state of the field – turning shared hurdles into forward momentum. Guided by moderators to keep conversations productive rather than circular, each topic will have a designated note-taker to capture key insights, which will be compiled into a post-session report for all attendees. Together, we'll move beyond the heavy headlines to exchange ideas, build solidarity, and shape the path forward.

Attendees are invited to select a moderated discussion group about the following topics. These discussion groups will last 60 minutes. Attendees are welcome to move between groups during that time if they choose.

Legacies of Commemorative Events – A Debrief of a 250th Year

When the confetti settles on the 250th anniversary, how do we keep the momentum alive? Roll-up your sleeves for a practical discussion on transitioning from major event commemoration to long-term impact. Together, we'll explore real-world approaches to preserving project assets, maintaining audience engagement, and brainstorming ideas for your organization's next chapter.

Moderated by Nicole Handy



Focus on K-16 Education: Integrating Utah history

History comes alive when students can connect broad concepts directly to their own backyards. Join us for a collaborative discussion on strengthening Utah Studies and building creative, cross-curricular integrations across disciplines. Together, we'll share practical strategies for embedding local history into existing coursework, exchanging classroom resources, and keeping local history vibrant, accessible, and impactful for students statewide.

Moderated by Wendy Rex-Atzet and Etiana Coley Mells

Wikipedia and the Production of Knowledge

Every day, people encounter Utah history through Wikipedia before they ever visit a museum or archive. This discussion explores Wikipedia not simply as a website but as a living system for producing public knowledge — and what that means for historians, cultural organizations, and community storytellers.

Moderated by Brandi Burns and Rachel Helps

Divestment in the Humanities Sector – Its Impact in Utah

From program consolidations to lost grant opportunities, disinvestment in the humanities is reshaping Utah's cultural and educational landscape. Join us for a candid discussion on navigating these financial headwinds. Together, we'll analyze where the funding shifts are hitting hardest and work collaboratively on real-world approaches to demonstrating the economic and civic return on investment of humanities work.

Moderated by Jodi Graham

AI Ethics in the Field

AI is out of the box and actively in use across work and educational spaces whether we like it or not. How might we navigate the use of generative AI in the humanities sector and what sort of guardrails are we implementing to ensure our work continues to be people centric? Come with your questions and concerns about AI, and share how you hope to see UHS and others in the room shape their approach to its use through policy and other forms of guidance.

Moderated by Jennifer Ortiz and Matt Basso

Censorship in the Academic World

With rising legislative challenges, curricular restrictions, and ideological pressure facing educators today, navigating censorship has become an urgent reality across higher education and research spaces. Join us for a candid, open-floor discussion to share front-line experiences, analyze the real-world impact on academic freedom, and build strategies to protect critical inquiry. Together, we'll brainstorm actionable ways to support targeted peers, maintain intellectual integrity, and foster resilience within our institutions.

Moderated by Greg Smoak

History of STEM/History and STEM

The future of the humanities relies on our ability to break down traditional silos and demonstrate value across every sector. Join us for an active discussion exploring how integrating the history of STEM into historical work creates vital bridges to scientific, technical, and medical fields. Bring your ideas and experiences as we brainstorm practical ways to build cross-disciplinary partnerships, expand audience engagement, and keep history essential in an evolving landscape.

Moderated by Sue Reddington and Becca Robison



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About The Alta Club

Established in 1883, thirteen years before Utah statehood, the landmark Alta Club has served for more than 140 years as one of Salt Lake City's premier social and civic gathering place. Located in its historic 1898 Italian Renaissance clubhouse, the club brings together leaders across business, law, finance, technology, medicine, and the arts to foster connection, dialogue, and community progress across the Intermountain West.

Optional Evening Reception

5:30–7:30 p.m.

100 E. South Temple St.

Salt Lake City, UT 84111



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