

WHA Membership Survey 2005

Total Surveys with Comments: 238

SURVEY#	COMMENTS ON SURVEYS
1	The WHA is not doing a good job of incorporating the new ethnic/racial scholarship. We are losing the next generation of historians because of this omission.
15	Lots of white men are always in charge
21	I formerly attended WHA conferences more frequently and based my responses on that.
22	The WHA is great & has significantly enriched my study of American art.
23	I would like to see more Art-related topics/papers @ the conference.
29	I'm currently inactive, but still interested.
33	The most important things to me are 1) Just belonging to a professional organization in my primary field of interest. 2) Reading the book reviews in the WHQ
35	The WHA needs to be less cliquish at the top- Get rid of what used to be termed the Good Ole' Boys (which includes women, full Prof types) and include new scholars- not just toadies or glory kids of the full profs- but a genuine attempt to be inclusive.
37	I think the WHA is neither "troubled" as some have recently claimed nor as solidly organized as it ought to be. I expect that as we live in "controversial times" we will experience regular "dust-ups" but I'm disappointed that the organization shoots itself in the foot through poor planning. I'm also concerned that our field's best scholarship (esp articles) turns to other venues that WHQ. The journal & our conference should be drawing the BEST work not merely new work by younger scholars.
44	I have enjoyed reading Western history and I have had recent tours of areas in Wyoming and Montana. I have a family tour of the Grand Canyon scheduled for us. Love the scholarship associated with the WHA.
48	The Western History Quarterly contributes greatly to my research in Native American History. I hope to present at a Conference in the future, or contribute a paper for publication in the Quarterly!

49	I have volunteered repeatedly to become involved more in WHA governance & awards committees, but apparently no one is interested in the opinions of community college professors, or those did not attend Ivy League schools, or know someone at Utah, UNM, or SMU!
52	My membership is to stay current in academic scholarship & for my own research and eventual publication.
58	I am one of your oldest members, so do not take my opinions and responses very seriously! Best Wishes!
61	Of the six or so organizations to which I belong, the WHA is my favorite on every level. It's the only conference I always attend and I don't expect that will change.
114	I have felt that some of the recent brou-ha-ha over the conference reflected natural generational rebellion. The people in their 30's want to establish themselves in the profession in part by taking on the "new western historians." Intellectually, however I don't really see much that is distinctive coming from the younger folks' scholarship. Nevertheless their complaints and criticisms need to be addressed and I think the WHA has made an effort to do so. Overall I think the organization is healthy and responsive.
115	I agree with many that the annual banquet should be an event of the past.
116	Reason for joining, maintaining WHA- general interest in Western History. Non-academic, just someone with interest- I wonder if there's a place for us non-professionals in WHA.
117	WHA conferences are stimulating, friendly, and open to various perspectives. I feel welcome, enjoy meeting new (and younger) members, and like the opportunity sessions give for exposing new ideas and introducing me to new publication.
118	Need to better balance crucial scholarship with a more engaged sense of those issues, ideas & categories that make the region a meaningful category of analysis.
119	Western Historians tend to be narrowly focused and their conference reflects that myopic vision. On the other hand, Paul Hutton does an excellent job of making the conference accessible to graduate students though conference costs are sometimes a deterrent to their attendance.
120	I like the informality & friendliness of people at the Western.

121	I have enjoyed and benefited from WHA membership for a number of years. Conferences have been of use to me both socially and intellectually, and the WHQ is a great resource. At the same time, I think that there must be an effort to broaden the scope and membership of the WHA, make its governance more open, make it easier for graduate students to attend annual conferences, and make the WHA more welcoming to a more diverse membership. This could ensure its vitality for a long time to come.
122	The WHA needs to chill out, relax, and not be so paranoid about what people may criticize/say about the group. Having an atmosphere of complete freedom of speech and expression is vital, no matter what the politics may be. Real diversity is diversity of opinion.
123	I was insulted by the 2004 banquet speaker. The newsletter needs to have more diverse photographs of WHA conference attendees, quotes from WHA conference attendees; more diverse panels. I like the WHQ!
126	Letter from the new president of the WHA!
131	The WHA has had a tradition of being intellectual and convivial simultaneously. Encouraging the participation of women and men of color and folks far from the ivory tower- as well as the usual crowd- should not only broaden our academic horizons but help us enjoy ourselves in different ways. Be kind- be inclusive- lighten up!
137	Early in my career- I also attended the annual meeting of the AHA & the OAH. Now I attend only the WHA meetings.
139	Current revisionism is unwelcome.
140	Not enough scholarship is done on Mexican Americans.
144	We have evolved alas, from an organization that embraced the amateur as well as the professional historian, into an academic organization. No wonder why it seemed so dysfunctional in Las Vegas last year!
151	Great colleagues in this organization.
158	The WHA conference should be a place where the open exchange of ideas- on widely topics is expected and encouraged. It should also be a fun gathering time in the profession as well as other interested parties. I don't think we should take ourselves so seriously that all the fun & aspects of the conference are eliminated.
159	The Las Vegas meeting was very unpleasant.

162	WHA conferences always in West- difficult and expensive for those of us in East Coast. WHA conferences always in October- a busy conference month- often conflicts. Montana Magazine of History is worthless, worthless, worthless. Why are we stuck paying for it?? Is there some kind of Big Sky Mafia that made an offer WHA couldn't refuse?? The recent conference fiasco was an embarrassment. We need to either split from the conservative cowboy crowd or find some other way to deal w/the macho Charlton Heston wannabees...
166	Have you considered tracking employment success among members? Currently, I find my degree all but worthless, employment-wise
173	The banquet toast is a divisive ritual and should be dropped. The banquet speakers have been underwhelming as long as I have been a part of the association, and the individuals who speak often seem to have been invited to antagonize another faction of this membership. The cost of the banquet and luncheon also discriminate against poorer members, students, and faculty from institutions with few resources for travel. I would like to see the WHA reimage the banquet as an awards ceremony open to all the members.
175	Thanks
176	I'd like to see more attention to public history and the West
183	Although I have a masters, I am not an academic. So I would like to see more involvement of non-academics. I'm happy to hear from native scholars, glad to see the westerners, and would like to see more outreach to "popular" western writers/editors/publishers/storytellers, etc.
185	As a retired community college professor for over 10 years, I have had little opportunity to be involved scholastically with the main venues of Western History. I've had two primary areas of academic concentration since retiring from teaching: One, is my attempt to publish a scholarly analysis of the letters I sent home from my service in WWII, and two, is volunteering my time in the Special Collections Department of the San Diego State University Library cataloguing the San Diego papers of a deceased Congressman
186	I appreciate the diversity of issues, level of scholarship, willingness to engage in sometimes difficult discussions on the field as well as on specific topics. WHA is never going to be accused of being too narrow or too regional (WHQ is one of the few journals I read cover to cover). How about co-sponsoring some smaller or regional events on special topics like a one day symposium on water in the west, 20th century immigration?

190	I'd like to see greater racial and sexual diversity in the WHA leadership and conference programs. Thanks!
194	Two perennial major issues. 1) Creating and maintaining jobs for historians of the American West (which indirectly affects the health of the WHA). 2) Maintaining enrollments in Western U.S. history courses. Penetrating insights into the perfectly obvious. But these are your major marketing problems. Otherwise I see nothing "wrong" with the field per se.
195	Very predictable articles. Very clubby organization
196	Efforts by a willful minority to dominate the WHA with their special brand of social activist "history " have been counterproductive and damaging. The current president has made the situation worse. We need a return to the cordial civility for which the WHA is famous.
199	It is a very fine medium-sized (smaller!) conference. I am looking forward to Phoenix. The controversy from the fall meeting was interesting but not totally new. I attend the 1992 NH session at Utah State. There were some strong opinions from younger participants then, as well.
201	The inclusivity of this conference- its willingness over the years to allow, academic, public, and amateur historians of all races to mingle- has been most appealing. The current divisiveness and acrimony over diversity is appalling and frankly, not appealing. The number of historians with chips on their shoulders makes for a confrontational and combative meeting- not one I will choose to attend much longer.
202	Work & timing kept me from attending- hopefully I will be able to now.
217	I received a BA in History (European & British Commonwealth). Thinking about studying for and MA or further studies in America West or Canadian History. The WHA journals are helpful, except they don't include the Canadian West.
219	I was unpleasantly surprised to see that the upcoming WHA annual meeting coincides with Yom Kippur. This just reinforces the reputation of the WHA as being unwelcoming or insensitive to non-Anglos.
221	Since moving to Tennessee in August 2004, I'm suddenly aware of how little people really know about the West and of the historiographic/historical debates surrounding it, I'm consistently confronted by the typical "Cowboys n' Indians" view of the West, which is scary. We have lots of work to do, folks!

223	<p>It seems that part of the core of the WHA has slipped away to other organizations, such as environmental, ethno., and other associations. Western History encompasses all those field, and we should strive to re-capture them. Enough of the artsy "re-imagining" crap.</p>
224	<p>The high quality of WHA activities available to me as the wife of a newspaper publisher and as mother enriched my opportunities to answer a huge curiosity about history matters over a half century. I used the WHA to help preserve Portola's discovery site which is now part of the Golden Gate Nat'l Recreation Area. My high school classes with Effie Moma Mack at Reno had evoked curiosities about the Comstock and Nevada that gave me another area for research and reading. This work emphasized how Western History was a part of world-wide history, enrichment for me!!! I still hope to write something that will match the illuminations from recent work on MT. Meadows Massacre, economic history of westerward expansion, up with numerous other realities. Thank you, WHA! Your journal has served me well.</p>
225	<p>Why must I receive Montana Magazine? It's a fine publication, but I don't read it, I don't want it, and it simply takes up space in my house. If you can't discontinue it, I will probably cease to be a WHA member in 2006. Please help!</p>
227	<p>Some academics are on the verge of ruining WHA for instant gratification of their immediate agendas rather than by letting their interests subtly contribute to the broad and inclusive agenda of the field as currently represented by the organization. Their childish and often petulant demands for control will spell disaster in the end. Many member have complained to me about this latest trend, and some have vowed to leave WHA if the present schism does not end. After more than a quarter of a century of membership, this respondent intends to do likewise of the current trend in not reversed and the organization is surrendered to these naive idealists.</p>
233	<p>I decided to become a member and continue membership to make the statement that museum professionals are historians and contribute to the interpretation of western history without the need or value placed on the tradition of "published" research in print</p>
234	<p>RE: sites for hotels-union only. With a "reported membership of 1750" and with "preliminary attendance at 932" how is it possible that only 34 votes could be considered a rated vote to carry Ben Johnson's resolution? Logic might indicate that the membership should be queried.</p>

241	I agree with Pres-elect Iverson's appeal for a more inclusive WHA. That appeal also includes reaching a wider audience with its programs and publications. In response to Iverson's letter, I would nominate the big Jackson Museu and its longtime director (hal Goodyear) as most deserving of special recognition. Please see <i>Traveling the Trinity Highway</i> (MountainHome Books, 2004 3rd printing) p. 92, for a description of the museum and Goodyear's role.
242	I would really like to get more involved in WHA, but am not sure how.
255	In recent years, the scholarly origins of the WHA have been treated as suspect, even debunked! WHA members in good standing have been ridiculed and treated with blatant rudeness. There is an unfortunate "insiders network" and those who oppose this have faltered. Conferences lack orderly advance planning, all materials are consistently late, and the costs are a disgrace for an organization that once looked for ways to nurture student participation. The WHA needs a radical change in the way it conducts business.
256	In recent years the Annual Conference papers, and even the WHQ's articles, have lacked scholarly objectivity. They are dominated by trendy left wing bias. I would be equally critical if the reverse was true.
257	Wish list: Continue to keep costs as low as possible: revamp banquet/awards/address events to increase inclusivity; maintain high standards in accepting papers/panels; but also keep the "big tent" philosophy; cultivate more opportunities for exchange between older & younger members and academics, public historians, & "buffs"; keep things in perspective- it's just as association....Thanks for this effort! (Once every 3-5 years?)
258	WHA could do a much better job by publishing copies of professional papers that are presented at its annual meeting. As an archivist, I am more familiar with the Society of American Archivists' annual meetings- the papers are taped recorded with the better ones going into the American Archivist or other journals. WHA loses an opportunity to make Western history more available.
259	The Association needs to be completely revamped. It must become more reflective of diversity in race, ethnicity, & gender!!! If big changes & new leaders are not forthcoming in the next year or so, I will join the Indian boycott of this conference & association.

260	My primary interest in belonging to the WHA is receiving the WHQ, selected articles in the WHQ, and book reviews in the WHQ. It is, in my opinion, a distinguished journal of professionalism with many excellent articles of scholarly interest to me.
261	Problem with 1) A culture of "ownership" that has emerged among certain older individuals, and 2) paired with culture of "entitlement" by younger scholars who want leadership roles immediately. -Need to get rid of toast/oath and move on without the kitche. -Need more transparent governance. -Need to give option on membership cost and 2nd journal-right to opt out or subscribe separately. -Recognize academic/professional nature of organization & membership- no longer buffs.
262	Western historians need to separate their political agendas from this organization because they are ruining it for the rest of us. We are a scholarly organization, not a political entity. There is also a far too heavy emphasis on 20th cen. Scholarship in the WHQ. We must encourage scholarship in this country's early wests, in order to understand the more contemporary one--that's just basic history!
263	Good luck w. the overhaul. May be good to think of trans. Pacific culture too, i.e. the Atlantic World framework of 16th-18th c.
264	Do we need race/ethnic origins
265	We need to balance on academic v. public/local/popular history. First, however, we need a discussion about whether the concept of a "western" history is even relevant, particularly given that the forces that drove "history" West are present in other regions.
266	WHA has been a lifeline for independent scholars working in Frontier History and Family History. The mentorship of WHS scholars in Western Women's History and Family History has been invaluable, and the organization's open, friendly atmosphere has been a drawing card. The CWWH gathering inspire and empower. Lack of attendance at conference in recent years reflects lack of funding/funds not a lack of interest in being with WHA colleagues.
267	As a grad student and entering professional WHA is important to establish credentials and contacts. I really do not care so much about the receptions, luncheons and banquets.
268	The WHA is not doing a good job of incorporating the new ethnic/racial scholarship. We are losing the next generation of historians because of this omission.

274	Although I have not been able to attend many conferences, I thoroughly appreciate and enjoy (and find hope in) the WHQ and Montana the Magazine.
284	Haven't attended a conference yet
288	The WHA is at a crossroads. It needs to continue its historical commitment to public history, but it also needs to encourage and sustain the most innovative scholarship at its conferences and its publications. And it need to adopt new governance and foster an institutional culture that is supportive and welcoming to a diverse array of scholars and practitioners. In short, the WHA, for all of its many strengths, needs to change with the times-to hold banquets and convene conferences that foster dialogue, not division; to assemble program sessions that speak to the broader field; and to make room for new perspectives to help chart the future of the organization. The Executive Committee know the challenges ahead and the criticisms it faces-and it needs to address them. This member stands ready to help.
295	although the WHA faces definite challenges in meeting the needs of many diverse constituencies with strongly felt needs and desires, it is a remarkable open, encouraging and vibrant organization and provides an essential meeting ground for the many scholars in the field to learn from one another. It is a very necessary feature of the world of western history.
296	WHA should work harder to be a home to scholars and teachers of Chicana/o Latina/o history, and should encourage western historians to see their work in transnational and comparative frameworks.
297	the "problem" as I see it is that of balancing older and newer WHA constituencies. My own preferences lean toward privileging newer constituencies, particularly historically underrepresented and disadvantaged groups/ such as people of color, sexual minorities, working-class people, and women and those who make intellectual sense of their historical experiences. It will take a generation of such sort of redress before a workable balance can be achieved.
299	The WHA is in danger of drifting into irrelevancy. The "Scholarly" emphasis on "theory" and the race/class/gender trinity is alienating many scholars in the discipline and seems to be creating an intellectual "closed shop" with no room for most of the sub-disciplines of interest

300	<p>WHA once consisted of a healthy mix of academic and professional historians plus buffs and others interested in the American West. Unfortunately, too many academic historians have closed their minds to the serious contributions of the buffs and other non academics and are seeking to make WHA a stuff shirt organization only for academics. If these narrowed minded individuals succeed, WHA will die. WHA was founded by academics, buffs, and others interested in the West. The meetings provided (1) an annual opportunity to learn about the history of the West, (2) engage in meaningful conversations with others interested in western subjects, and (3) have a little fun. The narrow minded academics have seriously hurt the purposes for which the organization was founded and should be encouraged to change their ways or leave WHA. Common sense needs to be restored to WHA. The Quarterly must change. It must attract readers. It must contain interesting information on western history and be more than just a forum for academics seeking publication credit on usually narrow subjects or topics. While Montana Magazine is fine for Montana, it is not representative of the American West.</p>
303	Life Member
308	<p>I believe that Paul A. Hutton has done an absolutely terrific job and should be given a golden parachute of upwards of 100,000. Anything less would be an insult.</p>
309	<p>Sentimentally past friends occupy a strong place in my memory. I liked Western History as it came out of the MVHA immensely. Too good to have been involved. Thanks to WHA Staff for keeping it going.</p>
310	What makes one an historian?
311	<p>I joined because Gibson asked me to and have never regretted the membership</p>
314	<p>One reason I recently joined is the role of a number of historians whose work I greatly respect, especially Peter Iverson</p>
322	<p>I write western regional history. Six Titles to date, looking for a publisher</p>
323	<p>One of my deepest regrets is that my active involvement in Western History has been limited, first, by costs and family responsibilities, and second, by considerations relating to health and longevity</p>
325	See you at Phoenix

333	I attended every conference from 1971-1999. In 1997 my income decreased so that I can no longer afford plane fares or hotel rooms. If I could still afford to attend I would continue to do so. I am going to try to make it to this year's meeting in Scottsdale, AZ. George Richards
335	WHA is still a strong organization -include more younger members in organizational structure
337	Last conference was 1998
338	Too bad that Montana Magazine became so local. It used to have western articles; I do not read articles on only on state--it needs a regional thrust. It once did. Use more reviewers!
339	Raised in CA. History is a lifetime interest
345	I attended 2 or 3 conferences more than 5 years ago. I have the impression that political correctness has done away with collegiality. I understand from others that the last conference was unpleasant. Much of the publishing in the field is no longer of much interest to me. Sorry to be negative. There is still a lot to be hopeful for in Western history, and for western historians.
346	Each year I struggle to decide whether to continue my membership. I do not get much benefit from WHA but I do enjoy seeing friends at conferences.
347	Didn't get my MA til age 45! I'm new to the WHA. I like its emphasis on sc scholarship, even though I'm, unfortunately, not working in a scholarly setting. I think that the precise call to include more museum workers as opposed to just academic members was inclusive. As to Anglo, I can safely say that WHA is like other historical organizations, too Anglo. Let's include Mexico! Let's foster education of minority cultures to the field of history with scholarships to conferences and universities. Thank you.
354	I really object to the forced choices on this form. It is BOUND to produce misleading and pernicious results. I would get rid of the evening banquet, and ESPECIALLY the banquet speaker, given how rarely the talk is any good. Put the awards that evening, and rely on the President for our talk.
355	I have never attended a conference--usually too far away, too expensive, won't fit into my schedule.
358	Books for young readers about historical figures, incidents, etc.

359	I believe if Conferences were NOT during the academic year, attendance could improve--especially among students and those in public (K-12) Education (when I was in public education-nearly impossible to attend). Consistency in WHA newsletter publication would be appreciated. An early release of conference programs, sessions, tours...would be beneficial
360	Not active in history anymore. Have always loved the topics, tours and the people. Do not like politically correct B.S. Love to hear the papers presented! Most public school boards are failures in history curriculum for high schools.
361	In the 1960s and 70s WHA conferences were a good mixture of "academics" and "buffs" who got along well. The world has changed, and we won't get back to the 70s, but today many western historians push their own special agendas ("New" western history, etc.) in an oh so scholarly way so the field will be respectable. I wish they could still be serious scholars, but have some fun at WHA activities.
362	I thoroughly resented the recent letter sent to WHA members regarding "diversity" issues--and considered withdrawing my membership due to the arrogance/impudence of the letter's tone. "Diversity," as promoted by today's "true believer," is a grossly overrated and is irrelevant throughout the academy. It is a silly anti-intellectual fad that needs to be dropped from WHA's concerns.
363	Since retirement in 1991, I no longer attend conferences
369	Only ill health in recent years has precluded active participation. The WHQ and Montana are my sole contacts (and the annual program literature).
375	We need banquet speakers and conference sessions that bring members together and that address topics and issues of interest, and concern, to all. The banquet speaker at the Las Vegas meeting last year was a disaster. I support Peter Iverson's efforts to reform the organization.
377	I've been retired for 15 years, and with each passing year I find less and less of interest in WHQ, presumably because I'm increasingly out of touch with current scholarship.
381	When I was working on my Master's the professors stressed the importance of keeping up with our field of interest by joining appropriate professional organizations
382	Thanks. I love the WHA

383	Change is a constant or the organization sours, withers, then dies. Make the changes that are necessary to sustain the organization's growth and those that can accommodate the broadest sweep of interests without diluting the forces of the organization. Thanks!
384	Flexible/More creative Programming at meetings--i.e. allow some time to discuss topics that were not prescheduled one year + in advance.
385	We (WHA) need to look at less expensive meetings. Other associations meet with lower costs (Southern, OAH). It would be nice if the program could be determined at a later date, to allow more flexibility. We need more "fun" activities and more Westerners (corral) presence.
386	Papers too narrowly focused. I'm getting tired of too much emphasis on gender, race and ethnicity. The WHA is getting too academic (and I'm an academic). It used to be more fun. We need the folks who just like western history. We need more fun sessions. The toast (mountain man) by Sam Arnold is fun!
387	I have to say that over the past 4-5 years, my interest in the WHA has really waned--in large part because the WHQ just doesn't seem all that interesting anymore and the conference programs seem to be following suit. Same old topics, over and over.
388	Conferences are becoming too expensive and so are membership dues.
390	Price
393	Life member; reason for joining now somewhat dated.
402	WHA should advocate for undergraduate public history programs and work with western states on improving "inclusive" western history in elementary, M.S., H.S. programs. Western history should not become a political mouthpiece.
403	I find Montana not to be a magazine of the American West but a Montana Magazine. It should be that but I don't see why I must receive it as a WHA member. It meets none of my needs. I feel the WHQ reflects the current (or past) trends of race, ethnic, etc. I wish it would expand.
404	Until two years ago the WHA had been an inclusive, welcoming, and fun organization. Lately there are parts of its membership that are making it deadly, confrontational, too serious, lacking humor or tolerance. It is not becoming the organization that attracted me to the field.

405	Been to all conferences since 1961. Two years ago I would have circled #1 (on "the reputation of the WHA as an open, professional organization.") Today a clique is seeking to make it less open and narrowly professional
406	Location must be in a town or city, not a hotel on the freeway (as in Colorado Springs). Good tours are essential--worth the price, I think, but one must also be able to explore a town/city on foot. I will never go to Las Vegas again as long as I live! (but glad I saw the abomination once). I will never attend another annual banquet if you don't choose a good speaker worthy of a professional group--The only good speaker I can recall was Richard Rodriguez. No more sexism!! (Las Vegas banquet 2004). Or instead of a speaker, have some really worthwhile cultural entertainment--no silly stuff. Let's be an organization of real diversity! Thank you--I criticize because I love the WHA.
407	I think the current leadership of the WHA is taking the proper course in addressing concerns that emerged in the wake of recent annual conferences (which I have followed on-line and in discussions with friends and colleagues).
420	Thanks for all your hard work!
421	I am very encouraged by the recent letter from the 2005 WHA President, Dr. Iverson, and the program he has helped put together for the Scottsdale meeting. Frankly-the WHA has suffered from an "old guy network" and needs to focus on being more open and inclusive to new members, in order to be relevant to the next generation of Western Historians
422	An important consideration for me in attending (or, in recent years, not attending) the conferences in recent years has been time! My workload has made it hard for me to go to any history conferences, including ones held close to where I live.
423	I appreciate the access to the opportunity to present at a WHA conference. All three of my proposals (the last for Phoenix) have been accepted. Not all organizations are so accessible!
424	While I do enjoy WHA publications, it seems that as often as not some aspect of my membership benefits fail to reach me. I have had to call/email the WHA office to clear things up--it gets a little annoying. Also, while in grad school I applied for the conference scholarship. I never received any kind of response from the committee or WHA concerning my application.

425	The conference banquets need to be democratized. Less formal, less expensive, more open. They should be a celebration of the conference--a chance for people to socialize and visit--more like opening reception. No speaker!
426	I had hoped to attend last year but parent's ill health prevented it.
427	Conferences now appear to be the forum for graduate students to express ideas about race, class, and gender in narrow geographical and intellectual terms. I attend to see my friends. The WHQ is a jargon-filled, badly written representation of what is wrong with the WHA! It has lost focus with general public and lacks grace and confuses obscurity with profundity.
428	It seems as if the "non academic" western history "marketers" to the public are not longer welcome at WHA. It appears to be moving to an academic-only organization--How many Nat'l Park Service members are WHA members? I don't feel welcome anymore at WHA. I'll still support the organization, but am also very sad that Paul is leaving!
429	Once WHA conferences the best-attended forum for scholars who do what I do, it was virtually an automatic decision--whether to attend...But close proximity of ASE meetings (in time) and recent decline in quality of WHA panels have inclined me to choose ASE sometimes.
430	I'm a new member and look forward to attending the next conference.
431	Charter member since 1981 in Santa Fe. It is difficult for me to attend WHA conferences because of physical disabilities restricting my travel. Also, I have lost interest in conference programs and articles in the WHQ (which I cancelled) because of limited topics on Spanish Borderlands, and Mexico (originally part of the WHA).
432	Membership in WHA has been an important part of my professional life. Being a member of the governance of WHA added considerably to my life as an historian, where I was able to associate on a personal level with leading historians in the fields in which I worked most of my professional career.
433	I always enjoy the conferences, but more could be done to reach out to graduate students, such as a free lunch like the SHA does at its conferences. Also, consider a joint conference with the SHA. The focus could be on regionalism.
434	Thanks for allowing a person such as myself to be part of this organization.

435	At this point in time, my strongest concern is for this organization to demonstrate inclusivity, an ability to change, and an ability to incorporate new voices. I was appalled at some incidents at the Ft. Worth meeting let alone Las Vegas.
465	The WHA's history is unusual, compared to other organizations to which I belong, because of its recent founding and its tension between popular and academic history. It isn't clear to me how many members are deeply invested in these tensions. The organization might consider broadening the conception of "popularizers" to include writers of literary fiction and non-fiction (Terry Tempest Williams to Kent Hanf). Although I've valued the conferences, the atmosphere is very clubby-perhaps this is due to the size of the organization. The conferences also were divided by generation to a greater extent than the other conferences I've attended in fields ranging from public history to Women's history.
466	Thank you for finally organizing this survey!
467	You need to have MINING as a topic--it's a crucial part of western history.
468	Just became member so unable to answer IIB fully.
469	The organization is rapidly degenerating into balkanized groups incapable of carrying on serious dialogue with one another. The same humorless, self-important posturing that has MADE other professional organizations unpleasant battle zones has now arrived at the door of the WHA. What a pity.
470	It is getting so partisan. Militants on a number of issues seem to be pulling the WHA apart. They also seem to be no where near the interested public. There seems to be a lack of true academic freedom--everything is ok as long as certain lines aren't crossed but if the "PC" line is crossed, militants immediately start bashing. Whatever happened to good scholarly work rather than "it has to be this way because we say so" without scholarly evidence?
471	It's a historian with public and private clients, I sometimes feel the gap between me and university historians is exceedingly wide.
472	Things don't always have to be perfect--I just always go for ALL the above reasons. I just always go! I wouldn't stay away for any of these (referring to part IIB) reasons.
473	I really, really like Paul A. Hutton!

474	This survey does not really address the issues brought up at the last WHA conference--the banquet speaker, ethnic issues, and all of that. You need to ask more probing questions.
475	I dream of presenting some of my work at one of your conferences but assume it would not be welcome (my reconstruction of vegetation at historic battle site at the time of the battle). I will attempt to get it published, however.
476	Western studies needs to be more interdisciplinary, less self-congratulatory, and less defined/obsessed with geography.
477	WHQ and to a lesser extent Montana are my reasons for maintain membership. WHQ Book Reviews are a major interest to me.
478	1.Opportunities to develop networks of people interested in similar topics. 2.Expand the conference to open new ideas--2006 call for papers looks good.
479	As a blind member I appreciate the online quarterly at the History Cooperative and would enjoy seeing more quarterly on-line and the Montana online.
480	There needs to be more attention paid to the costs for attending conferences. Not all who attend or want to attend are highly paid professionals. Many are retired, part-time, or low-paid historians or students. It makes it difficult to attend.
481	In the interest of piling on to recent H-West discussions, I must say that in the last few years the WHA has moved further and further away from its original mission. Designed as a meeting place for both academics and non, the WHA is not only dominated by academics, but a certain cadre of academics who routinely present the same papers and engage in the same conversations. The meetings have become little more than an ego stroke for the established.
482	I have found the WHA to be a welcoming organization until I experienced hostility as a non-native historian in the field of Indian history. (This issue has become too divisive in general!) I have always found the banquet, and especially banquet speakers, irrelevant to the profession.
483	Need to get more people involved, especially younger people. Contextualize western history more, for example, relationship to U.S. foreign relations. More programs related to popular culture, see ACA/PCA conference.

484	I'm well into retirement, but still enjoying the Quarterly.
485	I am relatively new--so I will let you all know more next year!
486	This survey didn't ask what changes we might want to see in the conference structure or program, or in the content of the journal.
487	Under IIIB above, there can be a discrepancy between the "factors" and whether one thinks the WHA is doing well and good in those areas!
488	I do not feel the WHA is in a crisis although the status of Western History as a field certainly may be.
489	I like the Utley and other internship programs at USU. Enjoy doing book reviews--but WHQ reviews should be more prompt.
490	1. Conference panels focus on trivia more often than not. 2. Conference panels are too self-congratulatory. 3. Conference panels do not reflect most of the key themes in western development. HBO's "Deadwood" is far closer to western reality.
491	I try never to miss a WHA meeting. I enjoy the sessions although they tend to be too sociological. Prefer papers on historical figures, movements, and events. On the whole, I feel the organization is doing a good job.
492	Recent disputes reflects poorly on organization. More assertive leadership is required.
493	The organization needs to change, but should not overreact to events at the Las Vegas meeting. There is a lot about the WHA that works well and intellectually the field strikes me as vibrant, albeit diffuse.
494	My undergraduate major was History of Ideas--I find western history a great mix of concrete/material history, intellectual history, and cultural history--and I find it the most welcoming/open professional historical discipline.
495	I am new in the association and hope to attend the conferences in the future.
496	Need more Midwest convention sites.
497	Enjoy western history, participate as time permits, WHA Life member.
498	I've always felt welcomed and accepted by members of the WHA. I disliked the rude demonstration at the recent banquet.

499	Regardless of some covert criticism, I've always found the WHA to be the most open, friendliest of all the professional meetings and organization which I regularly attend. Much more open and friendly than the AHA, OAH, or Amer. Soc.for Ethnohistory.
500	I am not a professional in the field. My interest is art eclectic.
501	Panels and speakers are top heavy with academics. You need to get non-academics to participate.
502	The WHA is a strong organization that can benefit from greater professionalism in leadership while maintaining its strong sense of collegiality. Certain errors may have been made at the Las Vegas meeting, but we must presume on the goodwill of those who planned the program. Greater inclusion may be needed, but so should civility of discourse among ourselves.
503	I see the organization moving away from its roots and find that disturbing. As well, I see an increasing emphasis on socio-history as reflected in the conference programs.
504	I have not attended a conference yet, but definitely plan to in the future.
505	Any trip outside D.C. is a treat: my agency reimburses me for most expenses; but the conference falling so close to the beginning of the federal fiscal year makes planning a bit ticklish. Combined with a few days' vacation time, the conference gives me a chance to get back out West, visit places I haven't see before, and talk to old friends.
506	As the only western historian at my institution, I miss contact with other colleagues in the field (email notwithstanding!). The WHA is my opportunity to reconnect with other historians of gender in the West, in person. I value that. It's also a chance to meet up-and-coming young scholars in the field. I value that too.
507	Grounded--not politically correct. Ward Churchill, gender, amarind BUT always in greater context, not PH.D. Snobbery--always room for the armature.
508	I find WHA much more relaxed and less intense than OAH. I like meeting in a variety of western cities and I have really gone on some many valuable conference tours. I basically like everything about the organization, even though I am not a western historian.
509	The recent letter from Peter Iverson has had a very negative impact and may influence some to drop their membership.

510	Attentions paid to Native Americans is disproportionate to the interest.
511	I am not an historian although I majored in history in college. I have enjoyed reading the quarterly and Montana and keeping up with the state of western history.
512	I was in Las Vegas when you had your 2004 conference. I like history and the west. Growing up in the 60s I loved the western movies and T.V. shows that I can watch again on the western channel.
513	Costs of hotels must be lowered; the banquets are way too expensive; avoid the "same old" people being in charge...At least it's not just "old boys" but it's "old girls" now too; how do you get involved?; let others in; only certain ones are asked to participate.
514	Colleagues in other fields of US history often tell me that they consider western history the most vital and innovative area of American Studies.
515	Patty's right. We need an infusion of the sardonic--not taking ourselves so damn seriously (and not doing enough to look after our beloved organization and bringing along the younger members).
516	D. Duane Cummins, 255 Sears Lane, Swanton, MD 21561
517	The WHA must resist the current trend by some members or factions to attempt to pigeonhole it into certain ideological positions or historiographical opinions. The strength of the organization is in its diversity and we cannot sacrifice that diversity to assuage the demands of a few vocal, disruptive, and ultimately harmful factions that could threaten to tear the WHA apart. Losing the diversity of the WHA to satisfy a few toddlerish people could be the death toll of our unified institution.
518	I am very concerned about the direction of the WHA and the seemingly Old Boys (White boys at that) network. I've not yet turned in my renewal membership as I'm embarrassed by the behavior of the leadership (sans Peter Iverson) over the last few years.
519	Now in my 80s with a handicapped spouse I no longer can travel.
520	WHQs literary substance has declined. Growing emphasis on social history is principal reason. More "tap root" articles should be encouraged.

521	I read many western historical journals. The state historical quarterlies are still doing a good job at presenting well-researched, well written, and lively articles. Their counterparts--The journals written by and for the academic community exclusively--are becoming more obtuse and less relevant. It's difficult to find the "western" in their history. I'm trusting this exercise is one done with good intentions...
522	WHA is one of my favorite conferences.
523	High school teachers have little travel \$ and have to pay for subs. This makes it difficult to attend conferences during the school year.
524	Biggest COMPLAINT: How does one contact you? I can find no address, phone, or email (this being the exception) to change an address--advise you of a problem--whatever. Don't even have a cheap card board membership card. Give me a break. Give me a call. I am not frightened of giving my phone #: 239-437-9032. William McLandsborough, Ph.D.
525	As a graduate student, I appreciate the good membership rates for students.
526	Remember; you are doing most things correctly
527	The WHA, like many other organizations, has succumbed to political correctness as witnessed in some of the papers presented at the annual conferences.
528	1. Have presidential address at the banquet 2. Award prizes at the luncheon 3. If we must have a speaker--make sure they have a western focus and a proven track record: Stuart Udall, Fred horus, prominent journalists, etc. and what about distinguished senior members of the WHA.
529	I believe we must encourage and support minority students more than we have although I was impressed with the inclusion and participation recently (last year). The conference attendees were awfully white in years past. I have friends (really) who have volunteered for committees and have been largely ignored. A more inclusive attitude might encourage new participants. I love the WHA and hope it continues to thrive.
530	Am excellent professional organization, occasionally moved by post-meeting stresses. The WHA embraces good scholarship vitally important to national and global audiences.

531	One of the biggest issues facing the Western History Association is the growing irrelevance of the WHQ. The articles appearing in WHQ over the past several years have made little contribution to the field. These articles have often spanned large expansions of time thus lacking any type of meaningful periodization (as is required in other historical fields) and often have little or no connection to historiography or to the larger themes running through the field. Sadly, scholars who are interested in the American West are turning to other journals to both submit their articles and read cutting-edge work. The Pacific Historical Review has essentially surpassed the WHQ in terms of quality, originality, and rigor.
532	I joined in October (at the conf) and have yet to receive ANY WHQs! Please send the back issues due. A. Reinhardt, Towson University.
533	Since 1981 I have missed only one WHA annual meeting. I feel deeply committed to the organization. It has been good to me in many ways. I am now deeply troubled by a sessming return to generational/ideological conflict.
534	As a long-time government historian and now a reader of H-West postings, I still get the feeling that the WHA is mainly a professors' club.
535	I've enjoyed every minute of membership.
536	As a member of the Council for three years and as a program participant, I have seem the association's work from several different angles. I believe that the present leadership is doing a fine job of maintaining the high standards originally set for the organization.
537	I think the WHA is fulfilling its major purposes. I don't favor the changes some WHA members have called for after the past two WHA meetings.
538	As a graduate student, I am honored to have presented a paper at a WHA conference. This was one of those memorable moments--to be listed in the program with professionals whom I admire. I consider WHA conferences the Hollywood of Historians.
539	I was one of the founders of WHA--keep up the good work!
540	I deeply respect the position of Western History Assn in its support of western historians and geographers--Excellence in Scholarship.
541	Sorry this is so late—got mixed in with other papers.
542	Keep up the good work

543	Although I have concerns about western history as an intellectual endeavor, most of my doubts lie with the WHA as an association. An all-white officer slate and governing council is so many decades behind the times as to defy credulity.
544	I want to say how deeply disappointed I was in the events at the Las Vegas conference—and at the lack of progress visible in such things as the comments of the banquet speaker and the lack of elected officers who are faculty of color. I found it so depressing that I won't be back next fall—after that we'll have to see...
545	WHA has marginalized itself over the years, limiting work to odd-ball, trivial issues. It has become a <u>hostage</u> to a social history <u>range</u> , and ignores <u>broad</u> issues, esp. ideas of economics and politics. It has defined itself <u>so</u> narrowly that there remains little of value here. By the way, I <u>myself</u> a social historian, and <u>head</u> of <u>cultural</u> studies—but WHA has simply gone to far in this direction! Whatever happened to <u>Contact</u> ? The <u>BEST</u> in our field (Cronon and E. West, etc.) <u>do</u> know and practice this! Why is the Association so skewed?
546	By many measures, the WHA is in very good condition. I am concerned, however, that despite efforts in recent years to move the field and the association in directions that would make the experiences and concerns of historically racialized peoples more central, this hasn't fully happened. It seems to me that the WHA is at a moment at which an opportunity to push forward in this area may be lost.
547	When I became active WHA led the history profession in openness to women, people of color, new ideas. I'd like to recapture and extend the excitement of that openness to inclusion and new ideas.
548	Provide better technical support ad hardware for multimedia/digital media presentations at conferences. Embrace and encourage a variety of formats in addition to paper panels.
549	Enjoy less formal atmosphere—enjoy papers which seem more accessible.
550	Get rid of the banquet 2. Expand awards ceremony/reception 3. Hit up major figures in field to participate intellectually, not just as commentators or roundtable participants 4. Don't schedule on Yom Kippour and then act as if it doesn't matter!
551	My attendance at conferences (I would like to attend every year) is governed substantially by whether I am able to present a paper. University funding generally is not available unless I am presenting.

552	<p>All aspects of the conferences, journals, newsletters, and other communications contribute to the WHA’s distinctive, intellectual, social, and professional atmosphere. I appreciate the fact that WHA conferences and publications feature the work of leading scholars, while also encouraging students, honoring elders, and valuing non-academic historians. It is important that the WHA remain inclusive and continue to welcome a wide range of interpretations of Western history. WHA members owe a debt of gratitude to the executive director and his staff and to those who have served over the years as president or on the council and committees. Through their dedicated efforts, the WHA has become an outstanding professional organization of exceptional effectiveness in nurturing the study of Western history and bringing together those who share a passion for it.</p>
553	<p>As an “outsider” (geographer), I enjoy watching your historians squabble—makes me realize that all academic organizations are quite similar.</p>
554	<p>I use western historical material as a writer (non-fiction).</p>
555	<p>The WHA convention is the <u>only</u> history conference I actually look forward to. I’m an academic, but we must make sure the WHA remains open and welcoming to the lay-history public.</p>
556	<p>The WHA is the first organization available concerning WH. I’m still honored to be a member.</p>
557	<p>I maintain a membership in retirement because I am still an historian.</p>
558	<p>The foregoing survey mixed membership and decision to attend conferences. I stopped attending conferences when the sessions became politically correct, especially with panels (as opposed to formal papers).</p>

Please see attachment—

#### Addendum to WHA 2005 Membership Survey

I have been a member since 1970 or 1971 and have attended approximately 90% of the conferences sine then. My activities include membership on the nominating committee, membership on the WHQ editorial board, chair of five or six standing and ad hoc committees, including chairing the program committee. I have been on many programs in all capacities. I say these things as a measure of my interest in WHA.

Some of the recent problems facing WHA are a reflection of social problems—mainly selfishness and an obsession with matters relating to ethnic and gender issues. The association was founded to further the study the American West in all of its aspects and that would include the so-called mountain men and fur trade. Actions of the present president of not participating in the silly (and it is silly) but light-hearted toast were extremely selfish, petty, and even childish. The WHA Council should have decided to have the toast and give the knife to the Westerners to auction if the president did not want it—protest or no protest.

One big mistake made a few years back was the idea of stating a program theme—even if the themes were not closely followed. A stated theme discourages proposals and attendance and makes some people feel like second-classed scholars because their interests may not match that of the president and/or program chairs. I strongly, and I mean strongly, advocate abolishing themes. Obviously we should pay tribute to the regions where the program will take place, but other than that, the quality of proposals should determine inclusion—not someone's self-appointed interest.

If the Council wants a tradition that the president can select up tot four sessions to use as he/she sees fit, that is fine. Otherwise the sessions should be selected on the basis of quality and balance of ALL kinds of research.

The Council should take a more active role in the management of affairs. I am NOT in favor of reading LONG financial reports, but a rather detailed financial accounting of each years operations—all of the association's operations—should be printed and handed out at the business meetings. Cost of conferences should be kept as low as possible to encourage attendance.

We should do more to encourage participation by buffs at every level. Thanks for your service to the WHA.

## IV. Comments:

It is hard to discern just what is the intent of this survey or what results (if any?) will accrue from this exercise. Peter Iverson indicated in his letter that the WHA “has work to do”, but he then proceeds to trot out the old “diversity” theme as if increased diversity or political correctness or another award (God forbid!) would be the answer to the waning interest in the WHA and western history.

The reasons for this decline are many, but they would have to include the dominance by the “good old boy” scholarly elite whose over-inflated egos and personal self-interests gushingly pour forth as they prance about the annual conference. One might suspect that the purpose of this meeting would be to provide a forum for open discussion and exchange of ideas about western history. Not so! The self-elected elite seems to be more transfixed with enhancing their personal egos and more dedicated to preserving and perpetuating their annual preening in front of the unsuspecting rubes in attendance.

This situation is not unique to the WHA, but I have not found this practice as prevalent in other organizations or at other historical meetings. The WHA hierarchy periodically recognizes this when they make their annual plea for new faces, ideas, etc., but once the newly installed leadership has voiced their perfunctionary plea, it is soon forgotten. Peter Iverson’s recent letter (“We are the Answer and the Problem Both”) represents the latest refrain of the same old song.

## Comments (brief-I promise!)

1. It's a good idea to send out this canvass. The instrument has to cover a lot of ground, and sections II and III are a little awkward, but never mind—it's a good step.

2. Section III raises issues that cut to the heart of why many of us persist in belonging to the WHA, despite the varied places our careers have taken us (too close to the Mississippi, in my case). For me, the most crucial elements over the last few years have been the social and intellectual collegiality—the chance to catch up with friends and to hear some new ideas. The program has waxed and waned as a major concern of mine; I have enjoyed and learned much in sessions far removed from my usual professional interests, although the slant of the schedule has in recent years meant that there hasn't been much else!

Along with the storied collegiality of the WHA, its great attraction has been its reputation for openness—your questionnaire has it as “open, professional” but that pairing gives me pause, for some reason. It's better to think of openness as generosity and a readiness to accommodate many “persuasions” under a big organizational tent. Frankly, in recent years I have had cause to suspect that this crucial element of the WHA is fading away, replaced by a “professional” orientation that is mainly academic and openly dismissive or even contemptuous of those outside of academe. Sniffy comments by grad students and “cutting edge” scholars directed at the Westerners and other “outsiders” in recent years come to mind.

This drift is understandable, perhaps, but not a Good Thing—either for the organization or the broader field. *And it is evitable.* One major strength of the WHA has been its mixture of academic and popular, and the mutual respect practitioners of each have maintained for those of the other. This is far less in evidence now than it was when I first joined. Each year's program seems to offer fewer sessions likely to appeal to non-academics than that of the preceding year; sessions focusing on race, class and gender (sorry to invoke the usual suspects, folks!) offer little to the non-specialist. In recent years I have come away from too many sessions (and yes, I go to sessions—I want young scholars to know that they're being listened to, - and- to hear what they have to say) shaking my head at the rising tide of obscurantist drivel...and I know that I'm not alone in this opinion. I learn from the new scholarship but much of it does little to encourage new or, popular, interest in our field.

So, what's to be done? These comments were to be short, so I'll save most prescriptions for some other time. Scheduling a few more sessions likely to appeal to non-specialists might be a good start; surely, someone in the organization is interested in mining, or transportation, or the military-

	<p>history aspects of the Indian Wars? Such sessions need not be aimed squarely at the “buffs”-after all, even blasé hardened tenure-aspirants enjoy a good story told well with new insights. Or ought to.</p> <p>3. One final plea: puh-leeze, never, never, never again plunk a conference famous for the quality of its conversations into a venue that is purpose-built to discourage sitting around and talking. And yes, I’m talking about the 2004 meet. In recent years the WHA annual has become way too pricey—the hosting hotels are luxurious enough and amenities abound, but maybe the organization ought to rethink its criteria? The Copper Queen down in Bisbee could probably accommodate most of us, given a bit of advance booking...well, maybe not, but there are other places “closer to the landscape” that could host the Western gracefully.* The <u>next</u> time the WHA convenes in Law Vegas, I can only hope that it will be Las Vegas, NM!</p> <p>Happy trails!</p> <p>*Perhaps a conference center like the Ghost Ranch, up north of you-all a ways, ight be just the place.</p>

Total Surveys with Comments: 238