Reframing History

Episode 4: Communicating the Value of Inclusive History

Series Description:

As the public debates around history grow louder, it seems there's a gap between how history practitioners understand their work and what the public thinks history is. We need a more productive public conversation about history. But how do we get on the same page? How do we promote an understanding of history that is inclusive and builds trust in the process of nuanced historical research? Over the course of this series, we'll be speaking to historians, history communicators, and educators from around the country about the language we use to communicate history to the public. Hosted by Christy Coleman and Jason Steinhauer, this six-part series delves deep into a new, research-backed communication framework developed by FrameWorks Institute in partnership with the American Association for State and Local History, the National Council on Public History, and the Organization for American History. *Reframing History* is produced by Better Lemon Creative Audio for AASLH.

Episode Description:

Many people–particularly those from dominant groups–tend to treat history centered on white men as the "neutral," depoliticized history. Everything else is considered extra or optional, and our attempts to tell a fuller story of American history are often met with backlash. In this episode, we explore a research-backed framework for engaging audiences in inclusive history (without the backsplash) through specific, place-based, solutions-focused examples. Our guests on this episode are Niya Bates, Susan Ferentinos, and Estevan Rael-Galvez.

Reframing History

Episode Transcript:

[Intro music plays]

Niya Bates: It's essential to insist that doing inclusive history is actually just doing history and doing history well.

Estevan: You know it's easy to work in broad brushstrokes when we talk about institutions, whether we're talking about the US Congress or the educational system or, or farmers or whatever, but I actually believe in the individual stories, right?

Susan Ferentinos: LGBTQ or queer type of questions can lead you into finding the stories that are challenging to people's general assumptions about the past. And that is rich and beautiful and benefits everyone.

Niya Bates: You have to connect with people who have names. You have to recognize the humanity of individuals and families when they have names. So when we talk to our visitors about the Hemings, the Hubbards, the Hughes, the Gillettes, it really puts a fine point on the idea that Thomas Jefferson enslaved a great number of people

Christy Coleman: This is Re-Framing History: A limited series from the American Association for State and Local History.

I'm Christy Coleman, Executive Director of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.

Jason Steinhauer: And I'm Jason Steinhauer, Global Fellow at The Wilson Center and author of *History Disrupted*.

Jason Steinhauer: In this six-part series, we're speaking to history practitioners from around the country about how they communicate the role and value of history to the public. To help frame this conversation, we're using a new report on history communication called "Making History Matter." This research-backed report offers specific language that history communicators can use to bridge the gap between how we talk about history and how the public understands history work. You can download the report at aaslh.org/reframinghistory.

Jason Steinhauer: This is episode 4: "Communicating the Value of Inclusive History."

Christy Coleman: I think we all can agree that inclusive history matters; at the same time, I'm guessing we all have stories of pushback against attempts to tell a fuller story of American history. The Frameworks researchers wanted to understand the shared thinking patterns behind that pushback. So they interviewed a diverse sample of the public, and here's what they found:

Jason Steinhauer: Many people–particularly those from dominant groups–tend to treat history centered on white men as the "neutral", depoliticized history, the stuff that should be taught in schools and put on tests. People with this view often saw narratives about historically oppressed groups–such as women or People of Color, or LGBTQ Americans–as extra, optional, additional material that isn't necessary for people outside those specific groups.

Christy Coleman: Interviewees from historically oppressed groups typically recognized that this is an unfair double standard, but they expressed doubt as to whether this could change in any meaningful way in our schools or society.

So we have the scenario where many people assume dominant groups will inevitably be the focus of history, whether or not they think that's fair or truthful. Not ideal.

Jason Steinhauer: The good news is that researchers found an existing recognition among many participants that having multiple perspectives makes the historical record more accurate. In focus-group-like settings, they tested ways to use that foundation to diffuse backlash to inclusive history.

Long story short, the solution here, according to the report, is to use concrete, location-specific, solutions-focused examples.

Christy Coleman: To help us explore this recommendation and what it looks like in practice, we talked to three public historians: Estevan Rael Galvez, Niya Bates, and Susan Ferentinos. We asked them each the same set of questions, starting with the why: why is it important to tell inclusive histories? Why should everyone learn a diverse story of America?

Estevan: My name is Estevan Rael Galvez, I am the former New Mexico state historian, former Senior Vice President at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. I'm now a writer and consultant, and I'm about to launch a major initiative called Native Bound Unbound.

It's important because every single one of our stories matters whether you are a pope or a president, or whether you're like my father who was a farmer rancher, sheepherder; those stories that reflect the more mundane things that happen in cycles every single day, the story of my mother, an elementary school teacher teaching in Northern New Mexico, those are the individuals whose stories get lost, but why should they matter any less than great politicians or pontiffs?

And from my standpoint, I always come back to some of the core values and teachings I learned growing up where I grew up that, my grandmother would set the table and invite people to tell stories. It was–metaphorically–it was a round table where everyone's perspective–no matter your age–really mattered. And I think I learned that early on that she would turn to me this elder, who was raising me in her nineties, who had been born in the previous century. And yet she valued my perspective as a little 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 year old. And for me, I think that taught me

why those, why everyone's perspective matters. The stakes were less than at a kitchen table. But I think the stakes are so much greater now in terms of civic discourse and how people get taught, what they get taught and why that matters to an individual's self-identity and formation, and really recognizing why that matters.

Jason Steinhauer: Next we asked the same question of public historian and architectural historian Niya Bates. Niya was the Director of the Getting Word African American Oral History project at Monticello for five years before leaving to pursue a Ph.D. at Princeton.

Niya Bates: You know, I think people are engaged in history, the public is engaged in history, perhaps for all the wrong reasons. Our current discourse on history is about public monuments, Critical Race Theory, and what it looks like in American classrooms. There's a lot of pushback against doing inclusive history. There's a lot of pushback in broadening our historical narratives. And I think it's because our ideas of who we are as citizens, as people who live in the United States and participate in a certain process of governance, those things are so innately tied to who we believe we are and our identity. And it's polarizing because people have so many different feelings about who is American, who can be American, what will America be in the future, and this is all tied to our historical narratives in the past.

And so I think it's critical that people consider the practice of storytelling and capturing history as a practice that is done to preserve and protect our futures. And if we don't do inclusive history that doesn't show a variety of different people as historical actors, as people who have a rightful claim to citizenship, to democracy, to freedom, then we do an injustice by giving a false impression that it's possible to move forward without certain groups of people. And that really is dangerous.

So in Jefferson's records, there are only six or seven surnames of the enslaved community that were documented. And through this oral history project, we've been able to get up to 23. The more work that we do, the more families we're able to identify, the more people we're able to reconnect with this place, and the more people we're able to reconnect with each other.

The Monticello story is not different than other plantations. Slavery at Monticello was equally brutal as slavery elsewhere. Families at Monticello were separated in order to fund Jefferson's lifestyle, in order to provide things like French imported wine and Chinese imported decorative items for the house. The real cost of that is the lives of the enslaved community. Jefferson's death, he's deeply in debt, and the family has to liquidate the remaining property in order to try to save Monticello. And that means selling the remaining population of enslaved people, over 130 enslaved individuals put up for sale. And many of them at that point were separated from their families. Every idea Thomas Jefferson ever had, every contribution he made to this country was through the lens of his life as a slaveholder. The work that he's doing is in spaces that are literally heated by the labor of enslaved people who are putting firewood in those fireplaces. And so without the work of Monticello, visitors would have a one-sided view of Monticello, one that doesn't accurately reflect anything about Thomas Jefferson or his life.

Jason Steinhauer: And finally, Susan Ferentinos–a public history consultant and LGBTQ interpretation expert–answered our "why" question with a great example of why inclusive history makes for better history.

Susan Ferentions: When you start looking for LGBTQ history, it also shifts the perspective in a way that you see other difference. It goes beyond LGBTQ history, and I come to it from an experience I had at The Woodlands, former country estate of William Hamilton. William Hamilton lived in Philadelphia during the Founding Era, and he never married, and he had an extremely close relationship with his African American valet, who was not enslaved. They had

an extremely close relationship, which LGBTQ historians know to investigate further when these circumstances arise.

So the historic site hired a researcher with expertise in the Revolutionary Era history of sexuality to do more digging and see what she could find. Unexpectedly, what she found was an illegitimate son. That, of course, does not mean anything about Hamilton's sexual desire, but it definitely complicated the story.

And then we were also considering other aspects of his life, which is he had two nieces who had been orphaned and he took them into his family and he raised them. And that they went on to never marry as well. And so that brings in blended family, which is not at all unusual in the 18th century but isn't talked about as much. It's certainly not talked about in that way.

It's very interesting to me that there are some things that are just considered unchanging or unworthy of investigation. Marriage is one of them. Like how sexuality is expressed and what it means to people, like what a family means, what a normal household would have looked like. There's a lot of assumptions that those are not worthy of interrogating.

So I really like that even if it's not a specifically smoking gun LGBTQ story, that LGBTQ or queer type of questions can lead you into finding the stories that are challenging to people's general assumptions about the past. And that is rich and beautiful and benefits everyone.

[Transition]

Christy Coleman: So clearly one of the things, one of the key threats through all three of our guests here is the idea that a more inclusive history really does benefit everyone. But clearly one of the challenges here is this, this false idea that including the histories of women or people of color, or L G BT Q I bull, is somehow an add-on and not key to the story of us, right. And, and

that's really problematic. And we run into that in our museums and sites quite a bit. And so, you know, we have to be mindful even with this per particular study that while every effort was made to include those different voices, to help us understand as a field, there are elements of this research also that still centers on whiteness. So we have to be kind of mindful of that as we're thinking about this work and why moving forward becomes so much more important. Jason, what do you think about that?

Jason Steinhauer: I think you can't tell an accurate story of the United States of America without a diversity of voices. And I think that is a message I believe Americans agree with if it can get through. And so I think part of the challenge that we all face is how do we get that message through in the various context that we're operating in? Because I think people, when, when put to them like that, I think people do realize that yes, diversity of voices, a multiplicity of perspectives does give us a more well-rounded, holistic picture of this thing we call the United States. So our job as history communicators is to impart that message and then find ways to, I invite people into that process. At least that's kind of how I see it.

Christy Coleman: One of the examples that I can give of how problematic centering on a traditional narrative can be in terms of helping us understand a greater richness is that when I was working at the American Civil War Museum, for example, you know, this is a story, the American Civil War, that has so many challenges in the way that it's remembered by the public. And most of that narrative quite frankly, was framed and pushed out by the losing side, you know, by people who were more Confederate-centric. And then these narratives of sort of reconciliation started to take form. And we started to hear things like, you know, this was a war of brother against brother and, you know, states' rights and all these other kinds of things. And, and really it leaves out the considerable agency of not just people who were formally enslaved or of African descent, but it leaves out of the narrative, the people who joined the fight. You know, I think about some of the Chinese Americans from California who make their way east to

serve and to volunteer, I think about Irishmen who are fighting for this greater ideal of American democracy and make their way here and form their own units and regimens among immigrants that are already here. I think about the roles of women, not just making or keeping the home fires burning, which is this lovely little trope. But the women who are actively involved in spying.

I think about all of those things to help us understand that this was with varying motivations, people shifted their position multiple times during the course of the war. There was no solid line. You know, families were split, but that split would float back and forth. And so I think our ability to, to help our guests understand that in a very different way, not only impacted, the national conversation coming out of the Sesquicentennial, I know that every person that walks through not only sees themself in that story in ways they simply didn't before. And we had a few little, you know, surveys that showed that they felt a greater connection and a greater responsibility in a civic sense.

Jason Steinhauer: Well, I spent a good portion of my early career working on subjects related to the Holocaust in the museum settings. And I think there's a tendency for visitors to think about the Jewish experience related to the Holocaust solely through a victim lens and what was done to us. And one of the things we did at the Museum of Jewish Heritage when I worked there was Mount a couple of shows that tried to flip that narrative on its head. We did a show about American Jewish shoulders in the Second World War, looking at the 550,000 Jews who served in the American military in a whole range of different positions, including women who served in combat support roles. And it was an eye-opening show for many people who maybe thought only about Jewish participation in the war from a European perspective, or only thought about Jewish participation in the US military from a Chief Warren Officer or Quartermaster court perspective. And then a few years later, the museum actually mounted an exhibition about Jewish resistance during the war, talked about partisan fighters, and talked about moments of

both arm resistance, as well as unarmed resistance, in the camps, outside the camps, in the ghettos. And I think that's part of how we expand the view and include more perspectives in the story is by mounting shows that go against people's preconceived ideas or that dispel mythologies that have taken root for one way or another. And those experiences can be very enriching for visitors when they're done well. And when people are invited into those processes.

Christy Coleman: Agreed. Yeah, that's a wonderful example as well.

Jason Steinhauer: So we've been talking about using specific stories to draw visitors into more inclusive, nuanced histories. And that brings us back to the report, which tells us to be specific with our examples when talking about history and making a case.

Grounding examples in specific places and cases makes it harder for people to deny the value of marginalized histories because they'd have to deny the value of learning about a specific set of individuals in a specific place. By connecting the idea of inclusive history to specific examples, it makes it much harder for audiences to escape into general worries about national pride or quote-unquote "objective history."

Christy Coleman: We asked each of our guests to talk about specificity in their work and how it changes the way people understand history. Here's Estevan Rael Galvez again:

Estevan: You know it's easy to work in broad brushstrokes when we talk about institutions, whether we're talking about the US Congress or the educational system or farmers or whatever, but I actually believe in the individual stories, right? So I, I love the specificity–as a slavery scholar in particular. Given this whole notion of point-counterpoint of that the report addresses. I think that when we start talking about slavery, there's a resistance to that without understanding that the specific…individuals had lives, right. And when we start talking about those individual lives…

Rosaria Romero who lived in Taos, New Mexico, who was a Navajo woman who was captured in the early 1860s and taken into this household, who watched her other children–two of her sons–be killed, and her family be killed in that captive raid and then taken into a household in a village that wasn't her own and having to serve in a situation that was alien to her, but also was dehumanizing. We actually start to reveal her humanity and in revealing her specific humanity, we actually start to understand why her story matters.

Christy Coleman: And here's Niya Bates, answering that same question with examples from her work at Monticello, where they recorded the oral histories of descendants of individuals enslaved by Jefferson:

Niya Bates: There is a perception that when you come to a historic site like Monticello, the history that you're going to get is that of American exceptionalism, it's a history of Thomas Jefferson and his family, and it is not one that includes indigenous people or enslaved African Americans. We've really tried over the past three decades or so to challenge those assumptions that visitors brought in. And what we've had a great deal of success with doing is introducing these individual and very specific narratives about enslaved people and enslaved families at Monticello.

And I should say that Monticello is one of the best-documented plantations in the country, and we do have an extensive amount of written information about certain individuals within the enslaved community that we're able to tell these really engaging and exciting individual narratives and use them as representative of the experience of slavery as a whole.

And in so doing, we position Jefferson as being part of this community, that nothing Jefferson did for this country, whether it was writing the Declaration of Independence or designing the state capital building in Richmond, all of these things are done through the lens of his life as a

slaveholder and as someone who is surrounded by a community that is predominantly Black. And how do we capture that? I mean, really it just means populating the space with enslaved individuals so that people are not able to visit Monticello and see just the story of Thomas Jefferson, that instead they're forced to grapple with the realities of his life as a slaveholder.

You have to connect with people who have names. You have to recognize the humanity of individuals and families when they have names. So when we talk to our visitors about the Hemings, the Hubbards, the Hughes, the Gillettes, it really puts a fine point on the idea that Thomas Jefferson enslaved a great number of people, over 600 individuals that he owned throughout his lifetime. And so when we're able to say that an enslaved woman by the name of Frances Hern cooked in the kitchen, then you have to imagine what her life is like. You have to imagine her children, you have to imagine what it's like for her to be sold at Thomas Jefferson's death. There's just a number of things that come with identifying and recognizing the humanity of enslaved people.

So as much as possible, we try to use parallel language when we talk about people. So if you hear someone speak about Thomas Jefferson, you will also hear them speak about Sally Hemings. So that it's an even exchange. Rarely will you hear someone say, for instance, "Jefferson did X, Y, Z, and Sally did this." Because that's not an even exchange, it implies a familiarity that we don't have with these enslaved people. So if we're going to use a first and last name for Thomas Jefferson, then in the same instance, we'll use a first and last name for enslaved people. And that's just to make it as even as possible, even though we know that there is a gross imbalance of power in the relationships between these people, we can give them the dignity and the respect by using full names wherever possible.

Jason Steinhauer: The next step in the report is to connect your examples to place. When they tested this suggestion in focus groups, the researchers found that *local* examples help ward off abstract worries about a “liberal agenda.”

Christy Coleman: When we asked Susan Ferentinos for her insights on how place-based history can help us tell more inclusive stories, she explained what a huge difference local LGBTQ history could make in the lives of vulnerable youth:

Susan: I think that there is an assumption that LGBTQ identity is a predominantly urban expression. That bias in the stories we tell–the urban bias–makes it seem like queer identity is something that those folks do out there, not here. A very common experience of coming into one's LGBTQ identity is feelings of isolation and feelings that you're the only person who has ever felt this way. And while that is certainly less common now that we have representation, and that the internet is available so if one is looking they can find a variety of perspectives and information, it is also in many places or in many subcultures very easy to believe for a young person "Yeah, yeah, yeah, but not here.” Like I'm the only person here in this town who has ever thought this way, or in this church or what have you. And it is so important for such individuals to see representation of themselves in the local context, and I would hope that it would also be so important for everyone else in that place to realize that because part of what makes things so hard for LGBTQ-curious or identifying youth is bullying or the misunderstanding of the adults in their life.

And so it's not just about reassuring individuals who might identify this way, it's partly about intervening with other prejudices that are shaping young people's lives. Because LGBTQ youth, they are three times as likely as other adolescents to seriously contemplate suicide. I know that that particular argument might seem out in the weeds, but to me, it's at the very top of the list of why this work is so important.

To create an understanding of togetherness and cohesiveness as a species, honestly, but also as a nation or as a country, then the understanding of our range of experiences and identities is an important place to start. That is very important work for museum professionals that live in an area where that richness of experience and that diversity of experience isn't super obvious on the surface. It's worth the extra effort to find those stories in those places.

Jason Steinhauer: Here's what Niya Bates had to say about the power of place-based history:

Niya Bates: For me, I think I was drawn to place-based history because in studying enslaved African Americans and their families, traditional archives don't always get us there. There are a lot of experiential things that can be filled in by understanding where someone lived and worked by being in the space, by using your imagination to reconnect with the circumstances that an enslaved person may have experienced in a space. And so in my work as an architectural historian, I've really valued the work of archeologists and the work of other architectural historians in putting together the worlds that enslaved people and their descendants created. And what does it mean to then self-determine space, even through oppressive forces like slavery and Jim Crow?

So I think that's why it's always powerful. Everyone knows what it's like to live somewhere, no matter where that somewhere is. And it gives us a point, a jumping- point for creating histories that connect with personal experiences. And I think using those personal experiences as a way in breaks down some of the resistance to dealing with more challenging topics.

So for instance, I'll say, in my work as an architectural historian working in Black, rural communities that were established after slavery, I really sought to uncover the ways that a population who was formally enslaved organized their communities at the first instance where they had the power and the ability to self-determine what their living arrangements would be,

who they would build with, what those communities would look like and the form and shape that these places would take on the land. And so recovering that–I think–is a step toward recovering some of the things that perhaps wouldn't be visible in more traditional archival sources and have come down through oral histories in these families, through cultural practices, things like homegoing celebrations that mark end of life in the Black community, or whether it's homecomings, which are Black Baptist celebrations of communities returning to their home churches in these spaces. Just capturing all of those–what historians would call intangible aspects of the history–can be done by studying physical space.

Christy Coleman: For Estevan, the value he sees in place-based history is deeply connected to his own personal and family history.

Estevan: I grew up in a locale, a site where place matters and I think that's true of anywhere. I often like to quote these days evoke Architas who was commenting on Aristotle's categories, who first wrote about place as the first of all beings, since everything that exists in a place cannot exist without a place. This very notion of a place being characterized as a living being is something that resonates with how I grew up, with a place where irrigation ditches were fed by the rivers that were coming down from the mountains and the mountains…Like it was, I grew up in a place that, that felt very much alive and was alive. And, and the connection between human beings and physical space geography, the natural world, and the built world really resonated.

I mean it's the way Indigenous people are raised anywhere to recognize that there's the community, there's the hills, there's the mountains, the mountains connect to sky, and all of that matters. So I was raised understanding at a very deep visceral level why place matters. My five-year-old hand touching buildings that were not hundreds of years old, but thousands, like in a place like Taos Pueblo, a place that was once called the roof of the American continent. I

mean, so I am so fortunate to have been raised in a place that was alive that held meaning. And yet those places where I was raised have not necessarily figured into our American national narrative and consciousness. So I think I've spent my entire life sort of inserting the story of places into that.

I'm also influenced by other writers like Maori writer, Linda Tuhiwai Smith who writes in order to do decolonize our histories. We must revisit site by site. I often add to that event by event story by story.

You know, it's not enough to just say we have to study place. We, yes, we have to study place and the importance, but we also have to pull back the layers of places to understand how they've been constructed, how they've been storied in the past, by previous generations, by tourist makers or civic governments. And, you know, placemaking has been part of it, but it's also about how, how we're invited to unmake those places and remake them and understand that bringing a critical understanding to that is why that really matters.

[Musical transition]

Christy Coleman: You know, the idea of being specific, the idea of being place based is so powerful. And the reason for that is simple. You know, when you are within community and you're able to explore the history of a community, it has a greater intimacy, I think, is what I'm going for here. And that greater intimacy enables us to again, see ourselves in the immediacy of that particular historical moment, because it is our community it's names that we may recognize. It's places that we may recognize as we think about the power of place.

Jason Steinhauer: So this part hits home for me because my wife who is not in the history profession will never ever read a history book, but she loves to go to historic sites. And anytime we travel, we go to tons historic sites wherever we are. And I think that she is indicative of a large segment of the population that loves the three dimensionality of physical spaces. It is exciting and invigorating and fun and interesting to see objects from the past and be able to imagine how they would've been wielded. It is interesting to walk on a grounds that has been preserved and explore it and learn about it and it excites and captures the imagination in ways for some people that the two-dimensional page never will. So I love the richness and diversity of public history sites that we have in this country. There is so much to explore and so much to learn. And I love this idea of being like doubling down almost on the specificity of place and the three-dimensionality of these types of public history experiences. I think that there is still so much potential to capture new audiences and young learners in these settings. And again, that is happening across the country and we have a responsibility to elevate and uplift that work as much as we can and connect people to it because there's so much good stuff going on.

Jason Steinhauer: Lastly, we asked Susan, Estevan, and Niya to give our listeners some advice. For those of you listening who want to tell a more inclusive, nuanced history, here's what they had to say.

Susan: Something I find myself doing a lot is trying to empower the museums that I'm working with to interrogate their resistance to identifying someone for whom evidence suggests there was desire for either people of both sexes or of the same sex that they were or identifying gender ambivalence, to ask themselves what that hesitation is all about. We do that all the time as historians. We have to make the best analysis we can make, given the evidence that we have. And then should additional evidence present itself down the road, then we reassess our analysis.

It seems to me and to many other people that identify as LGBTQ, that the unspoken assumption there is that it's the worst thing possible to identify someone as LGBTQ if they were not, or if they were not an ancestor of what we understand now as LGBTQ identity. That's understandable. Heteronormativity, the idea that heterosexuality is the norm and everything else is a deviation of some kind, it's all throughout our culture. We all grew up thinking that. But it does need to be interrogated, because our visitors may be interrogating it or working through it, and so staff needs to be prepared to talk about that and talk about the evidence that provided the analysis that came. And freely admitting that there's a lot of moving parts [laughs] and this is historians' best analysis at this time. But the potential of incorporating LGBTQ history is that it's a good avenue to get into the critical analysis that's involved in history that we don't just have a document that answers the question we have. We have to do all of the steps. That is what makes history so exciting.

Estevan: I would say try. Try it and try it again. I mean, so one of the core values in my work is about experimentation and understanding why trying something and, and even failing that we learn so much from them. And, and so I would encourage practitioners, whether they're in a small historic site, large your museum, a library, um, or they're just a cultural center to actually get outside of your walls, get outside of your walls, go into a neighborhood, walk down the road.

We've used the term outreach–even the language has changed. It's about engagement, it's about participation, but sometimes it literally takes you opening the door of your institution, walking into a neighborhood, but you also have to find where those experts live, the people that can tell you about those places. Sometimes that's a little old lady that's sitting there who has actually just waiting for someone to come to her. Sometimes it's a young 20-year-old hip-hop artist who actually has embodied that wisdom of previous generations. So for me, it's never an older, younger divide. It's like, listen to the people in your community, listen, lean in. So these

institutions are storytellers, right? My grandmother, one of the things that she taught me is the best storytellers are those who learn how to listen. And so that's what we have to do as practitioners.

Niya Bates: And so it's essential, I think, to insist that doing inclusive history is actually just doing history and doing history well. Instead of having a singular narrative of history, we instead focus on a thick description, one where we have multiple people, multiple perspectives, multiple voices, and multiple sources that enable us to tell the fullest story possible, which is the most inclusive way to do history. It includes the enslaved community, it includes women who are often left out, it includes indigenous people, and it includes those who have been marginalized from the professional practice of history.

[Outro music plays through end]

Jason Steinhauer: "Reframing History" is brought to you by the American Association for State and Local History. It is made possible through support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. To learn more about the project and read the report, please visit AASLH.org/reframinghistory

We would like to thank our partners on the project, including the FrameWorks Institute, the National Council on Public History, and the Organization of American Historians. Thanks as well to all our advisory committee and guests. Our guests on this episode were: Estevan Rael-Galvez, Niya Bates, and Susan Ferentinos.

This series was written, edited, and produced by Hannah Hethmon for Better Lemon Creative Audio. Research and support by AASLH's John Marks.

Again, I'm Jason Steinhauer…

Christy Coleman: And I'm Christy Coleman.

If you enjoyed this episode or learned something you'll apply to your history communication toolkit, please let your friends and colleagues know so that this research gets shared as widely as possible.

On the next episode of Reframing History:

[Set of teaser clips from Ep 5 interviews]