



Dear IDARM Network member,

This month, we head to Cincinnati for the annual conference for **American Association of State and Local History (AASLH)** to present a panel on the IDARM Project. We are excited to introduce our network of repositories to a national audience and share how our tri-state model can be adapted for different research areas. If you are not familiar with AASLH, this national membership association is dedicated to helping the history community thrive and provides leadership and resources to its members who preserve and interpret state and local history to make the past more meaningful to all people.

Thank you to those who reached out after our announcement regarding the withdrawal of our NEH grant. We continue to move forward with the larger project and are staying up-to-date on the news about federal funding. You can read more [here](#) and [here](#) about recent lawsuits brought forth by the **Federation of State Humanities Council** and the **American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS)**, **American Historical Association (AHA)**, and **Modern Language Association (MLA)**.

As always, please feel free to send us updates from your institutions about recent projects, promotions, and awards so that we may share your good news with the IDARM network!

With gratitude,  
Melissa, Lina, and Nancy

---

**Meet the IDARM Network Partners**



## Meet Kenzie New-Walker

Mackenzie “Kenzie” New-Walker has served as Executive Director of the **West Virginia Mine Wars Museum** since 2018, leading community-driven projects that preserve the history, culture, and people of central Appalachia. She coordinated the **Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial** in 2021 and was honored as a West Virginia Wonder Woman that same year. New-Walker oversees the Museum’s fundraising and development efforts, securing national and regional support to sustain its programs, while also leading many of the Museum’s program initiatives and deeply engaging with community-based projects.

New-Walker serves as Project Director for **Courage in the Hollers**, a public history and monuments initiative creating a 50-mile driving trail across southern West Virginia. A Marshall University graduate, she serves as Board Chair of **Coalfield Development Corporation** and proudly carries the legacy of her family as the daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter of union coal miners. She is particularly excited about the IDARM network, as many coal miners immigrated from Eastern Europe—including Italy—and contributed to the rich history of the Mine Wars. New-Walker looks forward to collaborating with these institutions and exploring these connections more deeply.

Recently, Kenzie had the opportunity to share the history of the Mine Wars with Senator Bernie Sanders after his town hall in Lenore, WV. See her tour [here](#).



## Meet Shaun Slifer

Shaun Slifer works as Creative Director at the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, designing and implementing the exhibitions, grounded in the collective vision of the Museum team. Shaun is the lead designer on the Museum's community-based *Courage in the Hollers* public monument project, and serves as the Collections Manager.

An artist, nonfiction author, and museum professional based in Pittsburgh, Slifer is a founding member of the *Justseeds Artists' Cooperative*, and an original member of the now-disbanded *Howling Mob Society*. His investigative people's history book, *So Much To Be Angry About: Appalachian Movement Press and DIY Radical Publishing 1969-79* is available on West Virginia University Press.

---

## IDARM News and Updates

### Announcements

#### **Dr. Nancy Caronia Named Loyola University Chicago's Paul and Ann Rubino Endowed Professorship of Italian American Studies**

**The College of Arts and Sciences at Loyola University Chicago** has announced that Dr. Nancy Caronia will start on August 11, 2025, as a tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Department of English, as the Paul and Ann Rubino Endowed Professorship of Italian American Studies.

Dr. Caronia studies Italian American and Italian diaspora culture and literature, with an emphasis on women writers of Italian descent, Italian American film, and the representation of Italian Americans in popular culture. Her work is interdisciplinary at its core, spanning studies of culture, history, and literature. She will be teaching a variety of courses on the Italian American experience, including Italian Americans in literature and

Italian Americans in film. In addition to her research and teaching, Dr. Caronia will engage with Chicago's vibrant Italian American community. She will oversee College of Arts and Sciences-funded activities that are designed to promote Italian American Studies, including an annual lecture by a distinguished scholar and undergraduate student-oriented activities, such as the involvement of undergraduate students in **the College of Arts and Sciences' Undergraduate Summer Research Experience (USRE) program**.

"Dr. Caronia was the unanimous choice of a hiring process that included faculty representatives from eight different academic departments under the leadership of Dr. Catherine Putonti, Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Initiatives and Academic Innovation," said Peter J. Schraeder, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Loyola University Chicago. "This search was unique in that it also benefited from the input of Chicago's Italian American Community, with Vincent Rubino, a member of that group as well as the son of the original donors, Paul and Ann Rubino, who created the Rubino Endowed Professorship of Italian American Studies, participating in the interview process."

Read full press release [here](#).

### **Western Pennsylvania Disability History & Action Consortium and Heinz History Center to Present at Society of American Archivists Conference**

Tina Calabro, Outreach and Preservation Manager at the **Western Pennsylvania Disability History and Action Consortium**, and Sierra Green, Senior Outreach Archivist at the Heinz History Center, participated in a panel discussion at the August 2025 annual conference of the **Society of American Archivists**. Calabro and Green spoke on panel "Archiving for Justice: Access and Reparative Practices in Engaging Disabled Communities" about the unique collaboration between the Consortium, a disability community-based archive, and Heinz History Center, a history museum with an active research library and archives.

Their talk highlighted how a group of disability advocates successfully launched the Consortium to preserve Western Pennsylvania disability history, and established strategic partnerships - such as with the **Heinz History Center** - to reach its goals. Over the past ten years, the collaboration with the Heinz History Center has resulted in a variety of collections, educational events and publications.

Calabro and Green also highlighted the rich mutual benefits that can be realized in such long-term partnerships between community groups and cultural institutions, including greater representation in large-scale exhibits, strides in accessibility, and other initiatives. They discussed how they have navigated the tension between protecting personal information and providing access to archival collections that document the disability community.

### **Pamela Dorazio Dean Receives *Donna Distinta* Award for Italian American Leadership**

Pamela Dorazio Dean received the June 2025 prestigious *Donna Distinta* Award, presented by the **Italian Sons and Daughters of America** and the **Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations**. This award celebrates outstanding women of Italian descent to spotlight their contributions, from culture and industry to philanthropy and advocacy. Dorazio Dean, a historian, archivist and director of the Italian American Museum of Cleveland (IAMCLE), was recognized for her preservation and celebration of Italian American history and culture. A dedicated leader whose work bridges scholarship, community, and personal legacy, Pamela stands as a powerful example of how honoring the past can help shape a more inclusive and vibrant future.

In 2006, Dorazio Dean joined the **Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS)**, one of Ohio's oldest cultural institutions, as a curator and archivist specializing in Italian American history. Her work included building archives, developing public programs, and curating exhibitions, most notably "Domare: The Art & History of Italian Stone Carving in Northeast

Ohio,” which highlighted a rich but often overlooked contribution of Italian Americans to the region’s built environment.

Perhaps her most impactful achievement has been the establishment, development, curation, and administration of the **Italian American Museum of Cleveland**. As founding director, the museum has expanded its offerings to include educational programming, lectures, workshops, cultural celebrations, and student engagement initiatives. Through this multifaceted approach, IAMCLE not only safeguards history but brings it vividly to life for new generations.

Read full press release [here](#).

## Opportunities

### The Museum Summit

On **Oct. 15–16, 2025**, the **American Alliance of Museums** hosts The Museum Summit, a global virtual event exploring urgent questions about values, mission, and participation in the museum field.

Building on our popular Future of Museums Summit from recent years, the virtual event is attended by hundreds of museum professionals across the field and around the globe. This year’s themes—Mission, Values, and the Politics of Pressure and The Next Era of Volunteerism—confront the challenges and opportunities shaping museums’ relevance, resilience, and role in society.

Museums increasingly face pressure to dilute their values or alter their programming—whether in response to Executive Orders, political influence, or funding constraints. These challenges are rarely one-sided, with expectations emerging from across the political spectrum. How can museums stay rooted in their mission while building resilient financial models and making principled decisions in the face of competing expectations?

**Day 1 of The Museum Summit explores strategies for navigating external pressures with integrity, transparency, and long-term sustainability.**

As cultural and economic landscapes shift, traditional models of volunteerism are under strain. Fewer people may have the time or flexibility to serve, and the benefits of volunteering—social connections, personal fulfillment, professional skills—often remain out of reach for those without financial security. How can museums envision a more inclusive future for volunteerism—one that values all forms of contribution, addresses systemic inequities, and strengthens community ties?

**Day 2 of The Museum Summit explores models for engaging volunteers in ways that are equitable, sustainable, and mission-aligned.**

[Learn More](#)

---

## IDARM Network Spotlight

**Western Reserve Historical Society**  
**The Italian American Museum of Cleveland**  
**Cleveland, OH**

The **Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS)** and the **Italian American Museum of Cleveland (IAMCLE)** are two organizations that are connected in their goal of preserving Italian American history in Northeast Ohio.

WRHS is Cleveland's oldest cultural institution, founded in 1867. From its earliest days, it has collected, preserved, and interpreted the stories of the Western Reserve, a tract of land in northeastern Ohio originally claimed by Connecticut after the American Revolution. Over time, WRHS has expanded its scope to document the experiences of diverse communities across the region. Today, WRHS's **Cleveland History Center** in University Circle houses extensive archives, artifacts, and photographs that illuminate everyday lives as much as headline events.



### Western Reserve Historical Society Library

As one of the community history collections at WRHS, the **Italian American Collection** serves as a dedicated repository for the people, organizations, and traditions that shaped Italian American life in Northeast Ohio. The Italian American Collection was established in 2006 and has grown into a rich resource for students, scholars, and the general public. Its holdings include manuscripts, family papers, organizational records, photographs, and objects that collectively tell a story of migration, work, faith, foodways, and civic leadership.



### Opening Day at the Italian American Museum of Cleveland, Oct. 1, 2021

IAMCLE extends that mission into the heart of Little Italy, where community members and visitors encounter history in a neighborhood that still maintains its connections to the Italian American community. The partnership between WRHS and IAMCLE is practical as well as philosophical. Many photographs, documents, and artifacts displayed at IAMCLE are loaned from the WRHS Italian American Collection, ensuring that community has access to the collections. That reciprocal relationship allows materials to be safely

conserved while still being regularly seen and interpreted in a neighborhood context, where the past remains part of daily life.



### "Louis Prima: A Life in Rhythm & Music" on view at the Italian American Museum of Cleveland

From now until January 3, 2026, IAMCLE is hosting the exhibit "Louis Prima: A Life in Rhythm & Music." This is a traveling exhibit sponsored by the [Gia Maione Prima Foundation](#) that explores the life and music of Italian American singer and musician Louis Prima.

### Contact

**Western Reserve Historical Society**  
10825 East Blvd, Cleveland, OH 44106  
(216) 721-5722

Museum hours: Thursday, 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Library hours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To learn more about the holdings of the WRHS Italian American Collection please visit the [Italian American Collections Landing page](#) or review the [Italian American Collections Finding Aid](#). To access WRHS's digital collections and resources, please visit the portal [Digital Cleveland Starts Here](#).

[Visit WRHS's Website](#)

**Italian American Museum Cleveland**  
12111 Mayfield Rd, Cleveland, OH 44106

Hours: (October-May) Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
(June-September) Wednesday, Thursday, 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Friday, Saturday, 1 p.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday, 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

For inquiries about the WRHS Italian American Collection or IAMCLE, please contact Pamela Dorazio Dean [pdean@wrhs.org](mailto:pdean@wrhs.org) or 216-721-5722 ext. 1523.

[Visit IAMCLE's Website](#)



[Learn More About the IDARM Project](#)

[Subscribe to the IDARM e-newsletter](#)

Senator John Heinz History Center | 1212 Smallman Street | Pittsburgh, PA 15222 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)