Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum
Meg Poole, Program Coordinator

Colorado Springs
PIONEERS MUSEUM

ABOUT THE CSPM

MISSION

The CSPM is committed to building a lasting connection to the Pikes Peak region by preserving and sharing our cultural history and accomplishes this mission through innovative exhibits, educational outreach and programming, and preservation of its object and archival collections.

OUR VALUES

Storytelling

Authenticity

Stewardship

Respect

OUR HISTORY

- **1896:** El Paso County Pioneers Association began gathering objects from early Pikes Peak Region families
- **1909:** first display artifacts in the hallways of the new County Courthouse
- **1937:** the City of Colorado Springs had formally established the Pioneers Museum
- **1979:** the Museum moved to the partially restored 1903 El Paso County Courthouse building, which was saved from demolition in order to serve as the CSPM's new home

COLLECTION QUICK FACTS

- Starsmore Center for Local History (SCLH): 80,000 archival items
- Object collection of over 45,000 items
- Represents: poetry, literature, the fine arts, historical geography, the social sciences and history
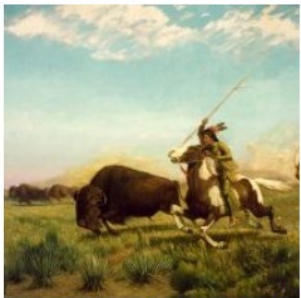
Francis W. Cragin Manuscript Collection

Helen Hunt Jackson & The Jackson Family

Artus and Anne Van Briggle Collection

Charles Craig, Renowned Local Artist

Outdoor Sculpture Collection

World War I

Did you know? You can make a research appointment at the SCLH!

PEOPLE

14 Staff Members

100+ Volunteers

100,000+ Annual Visitors

Public-Private Partnership

TODAY

The CSPM is fully accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, a recognition only received by 3% of the nation's museums.

American Alliance of Museums

Accredited Museum

Colorado Springs
PIONEERS MUSEUM

CELEBRATE
COLORADO SPRINGS
150
1871 — 2021

Sesquicentennial Commemoration

Interpreting Difficult History

AAM: Museum Facts & Data

- The American public considers museums the most trustworthy source of information in America, rated higher than local papers, nonprofit researchers, the U.S. government, and academic researchers.

- Museums preserve and protect more than a billion objects.

- Museums are considered a more reliable source of historical information than books, teachers or even personal accounts by relatives.

What is Interpretation?

Freeman Tilden: An educational activity which aims to reveal meaning and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.

- The revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact.
- Should capitalize mere curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit.

National Park Service: Learn about the value of preserving the resource to encourage support of the care of the resource.

Sam Ham: Pleasurable, Relevant, Organized, Thematic

Wallin: Feeling – sensitivity to beauty, complexity, variety, interrelatedness of the environment: a sense of wonder, a desire to know

Difficult History

- As guides and interpreters how would you define "difficult history"?

- Why is difficult history a challenge for us to interpret? For our audiences to engage with?

- Why does this history matter?

(DIS)INFORMATION

The exhibit includes dozens of pictorialist photographs of American Indians taken by Roland Reed in the early twentieth century. Reed saw himself as both an artist and an ethnographer; his images are strikingly beautiful but deeply problematic. Reed constructed romantic scenes that situated American Indians in an imagined past versus contemporary reality. The exhibition encourages visitors to examine the role "retrospective photography" plays in shaping our understanding of American Indians.

Roland Reed (1864-1934)

- Pictorialist style: artistically interpret subjects rather than strictly document them.
- Reed constructed romantic scenes that situated American Indians in an imagined past versus contemporary reality.
- Created or posed according to his own memory or artistic vision.
- How does "retrospective photography" shape our understanding or misunderstandings of American Indians?
  - Can create misunderstandings, myths, and a false sense of history.

Gregg Deal, Pyramid Lake Paiute

- Romanticism
- Stereotype
- Ownership
  - Who owns images of indigenous people and how are those images used?
- Responsibility
  - "The reality is that most of what you've been told about indigenous people up to this point is wrong. Sure, there are bits of truth sprinkled in, but too often the stories of indigenous people aren't told by or for indigenous people at all. And that's crucial to understand if you want to be in better relationship with the first people of these lands."

UNA FAMILIA GRANDE

Artifacts, photographs & stories will put this once vibrant neighborhood back on the map. Through a community-based history project, former residents tell their own stories and visitors will gain insight into the Conejos Neighborhood's unique community identity, history and culture.

Una Familia Grande

- 1930s-1950s
- Few dozen tight-knit working class families
- Conejos Neighborhood Project
- Blight, neglect and indifference
- 2005: America the Beautiful Park

Challenging Community Lore

"Difficult" in Different Ways

EVIDENCE

By examining newly unearthed archaeological evidence along with extensive archival materials, visitors will test assumptions, challenge myths and gain new insights into Palmer and his family.
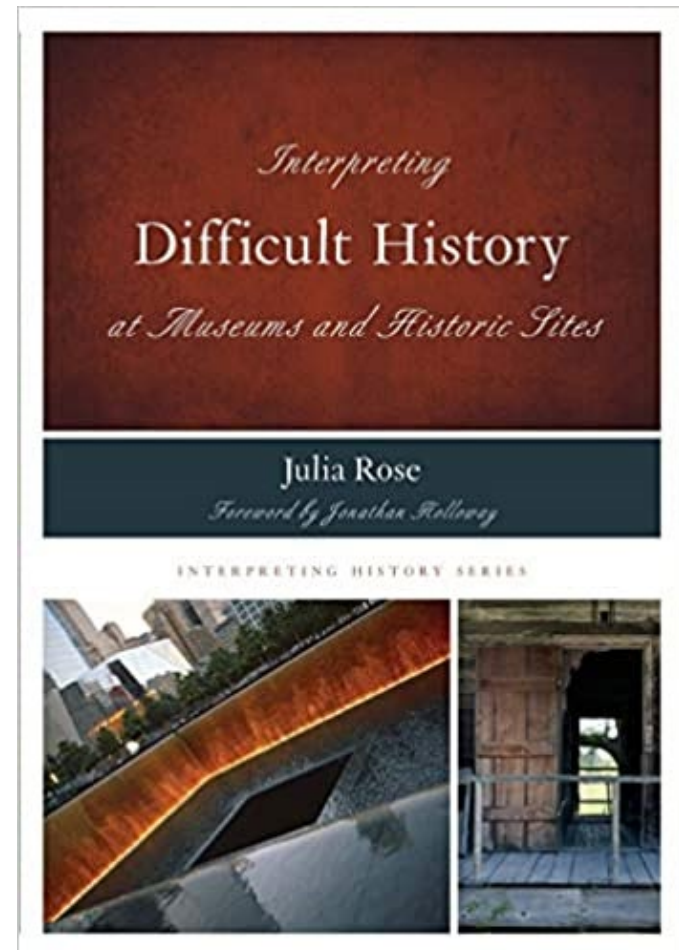
RESOURCES

- **Book**: "Interpreting Difficult History" by Julia Rose
- **Video**: "Grieving Difficult History: There's a Place for That: Theresa Coble | TEDxGatewayArch
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ME8fresK5cc
- **Article: "**Teaching difficult histories" by Stanford Graduate School of Education
  - https://ed.stanford.edu/news/making-history-class-more-inclusive

CONNECT WITH US

- **Visit**
  - cspm.org
- **Virtual Resources**
  - cspmstoryofus.org
- **Programming**
  - cspm.org/events
  - cspm.org/cos150
  - cspm.org/scholarseries