

My name is Brooke Garcia, and I was the Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM) 2018 West Tennessee Scholarship Winner. I am the Registrar/Librarian at the Metal Museum and the co-chair of the Memphis Emerging Museum Professionals (Memphis EMP) group. When I applied for the scholarship, I thought attending TAM would help me expand my general museum knowledge and forge connections with professionals from across the state, but in the end, I experienced more than I ever imagined. I am so grateful to TAM for selecting me to attend this year's conference at Pickwick Landing State Park!

One of the main reasons to attend a conference are, of course, the sessions offered. The session topics at TAM were quite diverse, and there really was something for everyone. I appreciated the opportunity to learn about all the projects TAM members are working on. I mostly attended collections and curatorial-related sessions, but I also saw some of my former colleagues and fellow emerging professionals presenting at A



(From left to right) Taylor Hopkins and Emily Neal (C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa), me, and Nur Abdalla (Pink Palace Family of Museums; TAM 2018 Emerging Museum Professional Winner for West TN)

*Small Museum's Tale of Connecting Exhibits, Communities, and History* and *Positioning your Museum as a Critical Community Asset: Three Case Studies*. One of the sessions I learned the most from was *Museums as Archives: Making Archival Collections Within Museums Publicly Accessible*. As the Metal Museum does not have an archivist on staff, it falls to me to care for our archives. Myers Brown and Sarah Horne gave many helpful tips about managing archives that I have already begun implementing at the Metal Museum. As a Memphian, the session *Monuments and Memorials: A Discussion of the Role of Museums* was also informative. With everything going on here concerning the removal of the Confederate statues, it was interesting to hear from members of Project Say Something, who have had had similar experiences in Alabama, and specifically how they are working with the community to contextualize their monuments. The diversity, equity, and inclusion roundtables were also especially important to me as a person of color in the field, and I hope TAM continues to have similar sessions in the future. This is a big issue facing museums, and I hope by having these open discussions, we can put ourselves on the path of change.



*Me at the Corinth Contraband Camp Memorial*

and Corinth, and generally West Tennessee's involvement in the Civil War. I plan to go back to the area for a longer visit soon. Additionally, Cheryl Will's lecture about her genealogy research really touched me, as my mother and I are working on researching our own family history. Her speech truly inspired me to keep on searching for where I come from and celebrating my culture.

In many ways, TAM was both a reunion for me but also a chance to make new friends and meet colleagues from across the state. In addition to being able to attend this year's conference, I am very grateful to TAM for providing a space for the East TN EMP and Memphis EMP Meet-up. It was a great way to meet EMPs from across the state, and I hope to continue having these meetings at future conferences. I can say without a doubt, TAM is by far one of the best conferences I have been to, and I encourage all students and emerging museum professionals to apply for a scholarship. I am so grateful for my TAM Fam for giving me this opportunity, and I look forward to going to Clarksville in 2019!



*(From left to right) Rebecca P'Simer (Co-chair of the East TN Emerging Museum Professionals; TAM East TN scholarship winner) and I at the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center*

In addition to the sessions, the excursions and lectures TAM provided were truly invaluable. I have been to a couple other conferences, but I believe TAM is the best at taking advantage of their conference location. I really appreciated being able to visit so many different cultural institutions in West Tennessee, some I did not even know existed. For example, I did not even realize that Shiloh National Military Park was so close to home! It was very sobering to learn about the contraband camps, the history of the Battles of Shiloh