

# Peter Alter

## Historian & Director, Studs Terkel Center for Oral History



### Experience:

Chicago History Museum (Historian & Director, Studs Terkel Center for Oral History, 2015-present; Archivist, 2010-2015; Curator, 2003-2010; Public Historian, 1999-2003); University of Arizona (Graduate Teaching Associate, 1993-99)

### Education:

Ph.D., United States and Balkan History, University of Arizona, 2000; M.A., United States and Eastern European History, University of Washington, 1992; B.A., History and International Studies, Wabash College, 1990

Peter Alter is the Museum's Historian and Director of the Studs Terkel Center for Oral History. In his role as the Historian, he works on exhibitions and online projects and teaches in DePaul University's public history program. As the Director of the Studs Terkel Center for Oral History, he develops new Museum oral history projects and collaborates with other organizations on the digitization of the Studs Terkel Radio Archive.

Prior to his current role, Alter worked with the Museum's archival and manuscript collections, processing, building, and promoting the holdings. This activity included the Shoeless Joe Jackson Social Media Project on Tumblr and Twitter (2013) and the exhibition *Chicago Law and Disorder, 1968* in the Google Cultural Institute Platform (2014).

In 2010, he co-curated *Facing Freedom*, a United States history exhibition that focuses on conflicts over freedom. For the Museum's renovation, he helped develop the Museum's *Chicago Treasures*, an installation in the lobby, which features a 1979 Chevrolet Monte Carlo lowrider created by the Amistad Car Club of Cicero, Illinois.

Alter also curated and co-curated many other Museum exhibitions: *Lincoln Treasures* (2009); *Is It Real?* (2007); *A Compassionate Eye: The Photographs of Declan Haun, 1961-69* (2004); *Outspoken: Chicago's Free Speech Tradition* (2004) at The Newberry Library, Chicago; *Harold Washington: The Man and the Movement*, (2003); *Chicago Sports! You Shoulda Been There* (2003).

From 1999 to 2002, he coordinated the documentation project, *Global Communities: Chicago's Immigrants and Refugees* which explored five of Chicago's recent immigrant and refugee communities.