

Battles for the Ballot: New Jersey Voting Rights, Then and Now

November 13, 2020

UPDATE—Conference to be held virtually



2020 NEW JERSEY HISTORY CONFERENCE: CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) and New Jersey State Archives are pleased to announce the 2020 New Jersey History Conference, *Battles for the Ballot: New Jersey Voting Rights, Then and Now*, to be held virtually on Friday, November 13, 2020. The history of voting rights and suffrage in New Jersey is one of competing visions of who deserves a voice in American society. For centuries, activists, policymakers, and everyday people have fought to define that vision, especially on the basis of race and gender. As New Jersey marks the 150th anniversary of the 15th Amendment and the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment—against the backdrop of a presidential election year and a global pandemic—*Battles for the Ballot* will explore how the right to vote has changed over time and the meaning of participation and representation in a democracy.

We encourage proposals that feature diverse figures, events, and narratives. Presentations exploring the history of voting rights and suffrage in New Jersey may address topics including: who has had the right to vote and who has not throughout history; how various factors (e.g. race, gender, class, geography, economy, society, culture, etc.) have influenced voting rights over time; efforts to disenfranchise segments of society; grassroots and activist efforts to gain the right to vote and/or fight disenfranchisement; voting patterns in New Jersey; New Jersey legislation related to voting; election administration and policies, such as early voting, polling place locations, and maintaining voting rolls; the legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and machine politics. **While the Conference Planning Committee will review proposals on any New Jersey history topic, the Committee will give special consideration to proposals related to the 2020 conference theme.**

The New Jersey History Conference is an annual program that highlights the importance of studying and sharing local history and invites established and emerging scholars, educators, public historians, and a broad spectrum of social science and humanities researchers to present new research that facilitates greater public awareness of New Jersey history. **The focus of the conference is New Jersey, though topics relating to the broader Mid-Atlantic region will be considered.**

The conference attracts a mixed audience that includes scholars, public historians, and history enthusiasts. We strongly recommend that presenters do not read their papers; presentations that summarize research or projects and encourage audience discussion receive better feedback from attendees. As such, the Committee accepts proposals for individual presentations and does not require a full paper submission. The Committee will also accept proposals for a full panel of speakers presenting on a given topic. Some presentation summaries and papers may be selected for publication in [New Jersey Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal](#), the online journal co-sponsored by Monmouth University, the NJHC, and Rutgers University Libraries.

Submission

Please submit your proposal via [this link](#) by the **extended deadline of June 26, 2020**. Your submission will be reviewed by the Conference Planning Committee, and you will be notified of the acceptance of your proposal no later than August 2020. **We will only consider one submission per individual/group. If you are accepted as an individual, it is highly likely that the Committee will combine your proposal with other accepted proposals to form a panel session.** Sessions will likely last 75 minutes.

Proposals MUST include:

- Contact information (address, telephone, email).
- The title of the paper or presentation.
- A one-paragraph bio. **If you are submitting for a group panel, please include a bio for each speaker.**
- Your preferred name, title, and affiliation stylization (how you would like to be listed in the conference program). **If you are submitting for a group panel, please include this information for each speaker.**
- An abstract of no more than 500 words.

To access the call for proposals online, please visit history.nj.gov. To submit a proposal, please click [here](#).