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*Historical*  
COMMISSION

# Past Matters

July 2024

The New Jersey Historical Commission proudly presents *Past Matters*, a monthly newsletter specifically written for New Jersey's state legislators.

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# Share New Jersey History

Below you will find drafted text and graphics about New Jersey's history that you can simply copy and paste to your social media accounts.

This month we are sharing the history of the blueberry which was first domesticated here in New Jersey.

A photograph of a woven basket filled with fresh blueberries, some with green leaves, resting on a rustic wooden surface. A graphic overlay with the text 'DID YOU KNOW' in a stylized, bold font is positioned over the basket. The background of the graphic is dark blue with white and light blue geometric shapes and a dotted pattern.

Blueberries were domesticated in New Jersey by Elizabeth Coleman White and Dr. Frederick Coleville in 1916.

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**Suggested Copy:**

In the early 20th century, it was believed that wild blueberries were too small to ever be sold commercially. But in the early 20th century, Elizabeth Coleman White from Whitesbog, NJ and Dr. Frederick Coleville sought to change that.

By crosspollinating different blueberry bushels bearing the largest fruits, White and Coleville produced the first domesticated blueberry in 1916. Over a hundred years later, blueberries are now one of our state's top agricultural products, and blueberry picking is a classic New Jersey summer activity.

For more New Jersey history, visit [history.nj.gov](http://history.nj.gov).

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If you have any questions about the post, would like to look at our sources, or are interested in learning more about the topic, we are happy to assist! Please send an email with your questions to Rachel Thimke at [rachel.thimke@sos.nj.gov](mailto:rachel.thimke@sos.nj.gov).



# NJHC Grantee Spotlight

**Raíces Cultural Center**  
Highland Park, New Jersey



Raíces Cultural Center is a New Jersey nonprofit dedicated to preserving Caribbean and other cultures as reflected in music, art, dance, history and the natural arts. Raíces Cultural Center's principal goal is the investigation, compilation, documentation, preservation, and dissemination of traditional Caribbean culture in New Jersey through art, history, and ecology.

During the 2024 fiscal year, the Raíces Cultural Center received \$24,513 from the New Jersey Historical Commission as an Inclusive History Grant to conduct oral histories as part of their Ancestral Herbal Narratives Project. This project documents and shares stories, narratives, histories, and memories of herbalists and healers from



diverse cultural backgrounds and healing traditions.

In a recent interview, Nicole Wines shared, "We applied because we knew that we would be included... we saw that there was a funder that could see the importance, and so we went for it, and it helped to support our people to be able to do the work that we do."

To watch the whole conversation, visit [NJHC's YouTube Channel](#).

Raíces Cultural Center Interview

### About New Jersey Historical Commission Grant Programs:

One of the many ways we fulfill our mission of sharing and preserving New Jersey's history is through an active grant program. Grant-making has been an integral part of the NJHC's activities for over fifty years. From its inception, Project Grants, followed by General Operating Support and later County History Partnership Program grants, enable the NJHC to strengthen New Jersey history organizations and activities statewide.

NJHC Grant Opportunities



# NJHC Resource Spotlight

## NJHC Resource Spotlight RevolutionNJ Handbook

America's 250th is arriving in 2026, and RevolutionNJ hopes that all of New Jersey will participate in this momentous occasion. To help organizations develop their own programs for America's semiquincentennial, NJHC's Chief Public Historian has created the RevolutionNJ Handbook.

The handbook dives into RevolutionNJ's key



**RevolutionNJ**

1776 - 2026 | ENGAGE THE PAST. SHAPE THE FUTURE.

# HANDBOOK



A GUIDE FOR ENGAGING THE PAST  
AND SHAPING THE FUTURE

WWW.REVNJ.ORG

Version 1.0

interpretative themes to show how any group, whether they are a small business, a historic site, or a municipality, can participate in this once-in-a-generation commemoration.

To read the handbook and share it with your constituents, visit:

[Resources – RevNJ.org](https://www.revNJ.org)

RevolutionNJ Handbook



## Upcoming Events

**RevolutionNJ Race & Family Fun Walk Series**  
Starting August 10, 2024



RevolutionNJ

# RACING SERIES

In preparation for the 250th, RevNJ will host a series of races at Revolutionary War battlefields and other historic sites throughout the state. Races will be accompanied by historical activities.

## 5K & FAMILY FUN WALK

8/10 Monmouth Battlefield  
9/8 Princeton Battlefield  
10/13 East Jersey Old Town  
11/9 Greenwich

**REGISTER AT [REVNJ.ORG](http://REVNJ.ORG)**



RevolutionNJ is hosting a series of races and family fun walks through Revolutionary War battlefields and other historic sites across the state.

The first event will be held at Monmouth Battlefield State Park on August 10th. Participants can sign up for a 5K race or a one-mile family fun walk around the site of one of the longest battles of the American Revolution.

Registration for the 5K includes a shirt, commemorative magnet, and medal. Registration for the family fun walk will include a shirt and a commemorative magnet.

Upcoming Races:

- [August 10: Monmouth Battlefield State Park](#)
- [September 8: Princeton Battlefield State Park](#)
- [October 13: East Jersey Old Town Village](#)
- [November 9: Historic Greenwich Township](#)

RevNJ Race  
Series

# Black History Events in New Jersey



**Explore, enjoy and learn at Black history museums and events in New Jersey.**

Learn more at:

[www.linktr.ee/blackhistorynj](http://www.linktr.ee/blackhistorynj)



Did you know the African American History Program launched a Black History Events in New Jersey list in June? It features events from the approved nomination sites of the NJ Black Heritage Trail as well as event listings from the New Jersey Historical Commission's grant program and our regrant program CHPP.

Visit the events list [here!](#)

You can also subscribe directly to the Linktree for reminders.

[NJ Black History Events](#)

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**Call for Proposals: New Jersey History Conference  
Due August 23, 2024**

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

## New Jersey History Conference

Now accepting proposals for conference panels, individual presentations, & lightning sessions on the **history of civics and politics in New Jersey**.

[history.nj.gov](https://history.nj.gov)

**Due: August 23, 2024**

Lightning session proposals will be accepted through October 11, 2024.

Submit your proposal at [bit.ly/imperfectlycivil](https://bit.ly/imperfectlycivil)

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 **RevolutionNJ**  
1776 - 2026 | ENGAGE THE PAST. SHAPE THE FUTURE.

The New Jersey Historical Commission and RevolutionNJ will host the 2024 New Jersey History Conference, in partnership with the Eagleton Institute of Politics, on December 3, 2024, at the Rutgers - New Brunswick campus.

This year's theme, *Imperfectly Civil: History of Politics and Civics in New Jersey*, will examine how New Jerseyans have historically engaged with civic life through elections, public debates, activism, and beyond in addition to exploring how the history and public history fields can support democracy today.

Proposals for individual presentations and full conference sessions will be accepted through August 23, 2024. To view the call for proposals and submit, visit: [2024-conference-call-for-proposals.pdf \(nj.gov\)](#).

Proposals for lightning session presentations will be due by October 11, 2024. To learn more and submit a lightning session proposal, visit: [2024-lightning-session-call-for-proposals.pdf \(nj.gov\)](#).

2024 New Jersey History  
Conference





# In Other News

## **NJHC Announces FY25 GOS, Project, Co-Sponsored Project, and CHPP Grant Recipients**

After a competitive round of applications, the New Jersey Historical Commission has announced its Fiscal Year 2025 grant recipients encompassing an array of programs to support historical organizations, museums, historic sites, archives, individuals, and county re-grant agencies across the state.

The \$5.2 million in will support the NJHC's General Operating Support (GOS) program, which covers a range of operational expenses for qualified history organizations; Projects and Co-Sponsored Projects, which includes New Jersey-based historical research, exhibits, programs, and archival work; and the County History Partnership Program (CHPP), which provides all 21 counties with funding for local history groups statewide.

[Full Press Release](#)

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**Press Release:**  
**New Jersey Winners of the America's Field Trip Contest**



RevolutionNJ and America250 have announced that five students from New Jersey were selected as inaugural “America’s Field Trip” first-place awardees.

America’s Field Trip is a nationwide scholastic contest encouraging students to reflect on what America means to them, with first-place awardees receiving special behind-the-scenes experiences at iconic American historical and cultural sites. Thousands of students across the country sent in inspiring submissions responding to the prompt “What does America mean to you?” Out of those submissions, 5 New Jersey students were named first-place awardees, and 8 New Jersey students were selected as second-place awardees, receiving a \$500 cash award.

Full Press  
Release

## 4th of July with RevolutionNJ

RevolutionNJ staff joined the 4th of July festivities this year at Morristown National Historic Park and Morven Museum and Gardens.



At each location, RevolutionNJ staff shared how New Jersey is getting ready for 2026 and provided resources on how communities, businesses, teachers, and cultural institutions can join in. For more information about how your constituents can apply to the RevolutionNJ Communities and the RevolutionNJ Proud Partner programs, head to <https://revnj.org/join-us>.

## RevolutionNJ Resources

*Within the New Jersey Department of State, the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) is a state agency dedicated to the advancement of public knowledge and preservation of New Jersey history. Established by law in 1967, its work is founded on the fundamental belief that an understanding of our shared heritage is essential to sustaining a cohesive and robust democracy.*



New Jersey Historical Commission | 33 West State St. P.O. Box 305 | Trenton, NJ 08625 US

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