



NEW JERSEY
Historical
COMMISSION

Past Matters

September 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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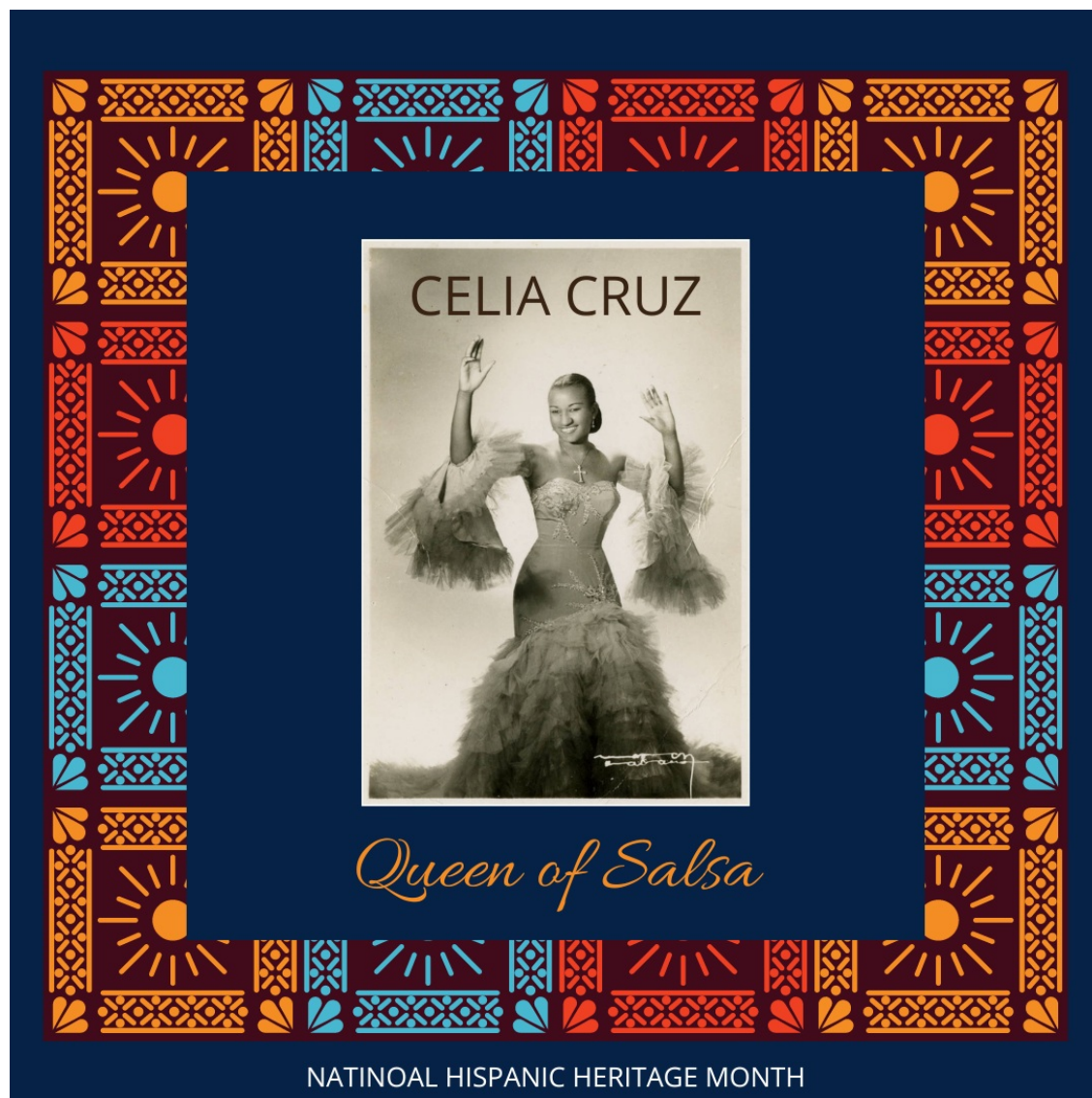
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Share New Jersey History

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 uplifting Celia Cruz and her contributions to Latin music in the United States.



Suggested Copy:

In honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month, we are sharing the story of the Queen of Salsa herself, Celia Cruz.

Cruz was born in Cuba in 1925. Cruz's big break came at the age of 25 when she became the lead singer of La Sonora Matancera. While on an international tour, the band denounced the Castro regime. This led to Cruz and her husband leaving Cuba and settling in New Jersey where she would reside the rest of her life.

Cruz was known for her beautiful voice, colorful costumes, and prolific artistry. She was also known for her signature "¡Azúcar!" shout. These moments were both a punctuation in her performance style and a tribute to the enslaved Africans who built Cuba's wealth through their labor on

sugar plantations.

For more New Jersey history, visit history.nj.gov.

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.



NJHC Grantee Spotlight

Absecon Lighthouse General Operating Support Recipient



The Absecon Lighthouse in Atlantic City is one of the oldest lighthouses in the country and the tallest lighthouse in our state. Opened in 1857, the lighthouse has undergone a multi-million-dollar restoration through which they created a stunning replica of the Lightkeeper's dwelling, an educational museum, and a Fresnel Lens exhibit in the original Oil House and expansive grounds.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Absecon Lighthouse received \$30,077 from an NJHC General Operating Support grant. This support enabled them to dedicate staff to their educational programs, school tours, family field trips, and all other fundraising events. The funding is vital to their continuation as a cultural destination in Atlantic City year-round, but

particularly during the summer, when they are open daily from late June through early September to accommodate visitors to their seaside community.

Absecon Lighthouse

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 Families First Discovery Pass Program



The **Families First Discovery Pass** program provides families and individuals enrolled in state assistance programs with free or highly discounted admission to arts and history organizations, venues, and programs - both in-person and virtual.

Under this initiative, we encourage historical organizations to sign up to offer discounted or free admission and/or virtual registration to individuals and families with a Families First card or eWIC card. We

work with all participating organizations to provide guidance on implementation of the program.

The Families First Discovery Pass Program is a collaboration between the State Council on the Arts, the Historical Commission, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Health.

Families First Discovery Pass



Upcoming Events

Whose American Revolution?

October 24th at 6:30pm

WHOSE AMERICAN REVOLUTION?

**The Independence Legacies
of Puerto Rico,
India,
and Nova Scotia**

**Thursday, October 24, 2024
at 6:30 PM**

ZOOM WEBINAR

Registration: <https://bit.ly/whoserevolution>



Who owns the legacy of the American Revolution? This panel explores some of the ways that communities in the former British Empire and the United States have embraced and challenged the ideals of the American Revolution.

Panelists will discuss the monumental and consequential movements for independence that happened during and after the American Revolution and what their repercussions are today. Andrea Davis, Black Loyalist Heritage Centre Juber Ayala, Newark Public Library Hispanic Resource Center Dr. Seema Sohi, Author of “Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anti-colonialism in North America.”

This program is presented by the African American History Program and RevolutionNJ.

Whose American
Revolution?

RevolutionNJ Quarterly Update
October 8th at 12:00pm



Join RevolutionNJ on October 8th at 12:00pm for their last Quarterly Meeting of 2024.

The team will provide updates on upcoming programming and share new resources to support your 250th planning. The Cumberland County Historical Society and the township of Sparta will also join to share how they are preparing for this once-in-a-generation commemoration.

Register for the zoom link at: bit.ly/REVNJOCT2024

Register
Here

RevolutionNJ Race Series
October 13th at East Jersey Old Town



REVNJ RACE SERIES

Join us for a 5K race and family fun walk around East Jersey Old Town!

Registration for the 5k includes a shirt, magnet, and finisher medal.

Registration for the family fun walk includes a shirt and magnet.



October 13, 2024
8:30AM - 10:00AM



1050 River Road
Piscataway, NJ 08854

REGISTER NOW

bit.ly/EastJerseyRace

Don't miss the next installment in the RevolutionNJ Race Series at East Jersey Old Town on October 13th! These events are a great way to enjoy the outdoors while connecting to the past. Participants can run or walk along the Raritan River before returning to the East Jersey Old Town for the awards ceremony and to explore the historic village.

Registration for the 5K race includes a shirt, magnet, and finisher's medal. Registration for family fun walk includes a shirt and magnet. Awards will also be given to the fastest runners in ten-year age categories.

Learn more and sign up at bit.ly/EastJerseyRace.

RevolutionNJ Race
Series



In Other News

The William “Count” Basie Birthday Celebration



On August 21, 2024, Noelle Lorraine Williams who directs the African American Program and Black Heritage Trail at the New Jersey Historical Commission was invited to speak at The William “Count” Basie Birthday Celebration. The Count Basie Center for the Arts is an approved nomination on the New Jersey Black Heritage Trail.

Count Basie Center for the Arts

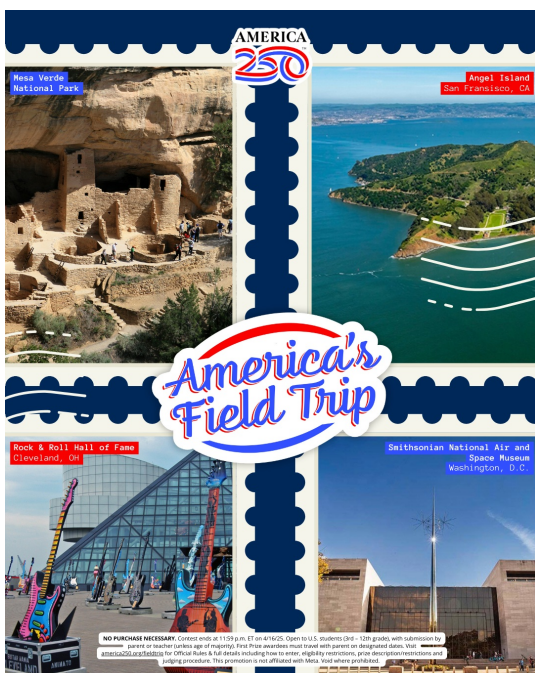
Connecting Youth to the 250th



We were excited to join the Youth250 Summit held at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia on 9/6/2024. Sophia Hudzik and Marc Lorenc from the NJHC/ RevolutionNJ team were in attendance representing Millennial professionals. The workshop was designed to create intergenerational conversations with Gen-Z on planning for the 250th. Information gathered from the workshop will be used to create

materials that help foster engagement with the 18-30-year-old demographic in time for the 250th in 2026.

America's Field Trip Now Open for the 2024-2025 School Year



America250, the nation's 250th commemoration committee, has opened up their America's Field Trip contest for the 2024 - 2025 school year.

America's Field Trip is a contest that invites students across the country in grades 3-12 to be part of America's 250th anniversary by sharing their perspectives on what America means to them – with the opportunity to earn an unforgettable field trip experience at some of the nation's most iconic historic and cultural landmarks.

America's Field
Trip

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.



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