

New Jersey State Historical Marker Program Research Guide

This document was adapted from the Texas Historical Commission, History Programs Division's Research Guides for Historic [Communities](#), [Events](#), and [Individuals](#). It is intended to assist applicants in their research process and curate a strong nomination.

Suggested Sources for Creating a Historical Marker Nomination

As part of the nomination process, applicants are required to identify the primary sources used to craft the proposed text for the marker. **Primary sources** are original or contemporary accounts of a topic or event. Examples include photographs, advertisements, census records, deeds, letters, meeting minutes, and newspaper articles published in the immediate aftermath of an event. To further support the nomination, applicants are welcome to attach **secondary sources** which are not contemporary to the topic or event in history. Secondary sources use primary sources to analyze or interpret historical events or trends and can include monographs, journal articles, and newspaper articles that reflect on historical events or trends.

Government Records

- Contracts (abstracts of title, court records, probate records, tax records)
- Federal (census)
- Military (pension records, biographical information)

Institutional Records

- Cemetery (family relationships, birth and death dates)
- Church (biographical information on birth, death, marriage; congregational records)
- Fraternal (membership information, dates, building information)

Published Histories

- County (information on buildings, people, institutions, events)
- Community (information on buildings, people, institutions, events)
- Business (commercial trends, economic base of community)
- Biographies

Family Papers

- Deeds (ownership, property value, associated improvements)
- Letters and diaries (biographical information, building information, social and economic history)
- Photographs (biographical information, building information)
- Genealogical information (family relationships)

Directories and Gazettes

- City directories (addresses, approximate dates, occupations)
- Social directories (biographical information)

Photographs and Printed Images

- Family photographs (biographical information, building evolution, landscape changes)

Newspapers and Journals

- Advertisements (owner information, dates, building information, neighborhood development)

- Society pages (biographical information on civic leaders, institutional history)
- Obituaries (biographical information)
- Articles (significant local events, economic history, social history, building information)

Oral Histories

- social history, business history, building evolution and uses

Online Sources

- New Jersey: Local History & Genealogy Resource Guide (<https://guides.loc.gov/new-jersey-local-history-genealogy/introduction>)
- New Jersey State Archives (<https://www.nj.gov/state/archives/index.html>)
- New Jersey State Library (<https://www.njstatelib.org/>)
- Rutgers University New Brunswick, Special Collection and University Archives (<https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/new-brunswick/visit-study/locations/special-collections-university-archives>)

Crafting the Proposed Text

The proposed marker text is the crux of the application. It is responsible for outlining the significance of the subject at either the local, statewide, regional, or national level as well as the subject's connection to one of RevolutionNJ's themes. The components of the text include an overall statement, additional detail, and the significance of the site at a local, state, regional, or national level.

I. Overall Statement: The first component must introduce readers to the subject of the marker in a brief one to two sentences.

II. Additional Detail: This space can be used to include pertinent information that will help readers understand the relevancy of the marker's subject and recognize its context within broader historical trends.

III. Historical Significance: The conclusion of the text should identify how the marker is significant at the local, state, regional, or national level. Through research using primary and secondary sources, the degree of the subject's significance can be determined by understanding how it shaped the course of historical events at its respective level. Some guiding questions to address this question are: What individuals, communities, or groups does the marker refer to? How did the subject of the marker influence or impact the course of history? What is the context of the marker in terms of local, state, regional, or national history?