

THE PROGRAM

Community History invests in enhancing the expertise of individuals, organizations, and communities across New Jersey.

Through a structured course of learning sessions, individual coaching and project feedback opportunities, and cohort-supported gatherings, NJCH equips community-centered groups with the tools needed to capture and tell their own histories.

During the course of the program and with NJCH seed funding, groups craft their own pilot projects to shape the narrative of their communities' histories. The program is part of NJCH's ongoing efforts to diversify the voices that make up our local, state, and national historical narratives and amplify histories that remain unknown or underappreciated.

THE WORK

Participants receive expert guidance in examining such questions as:

- *How can learning about our community's history help us to understand our present circumstances and look to the future?*
- *How can our organization engage with community histories and share these histories with our community members?*
- *How can we preserve, interpret, and amplify our local histories?*
- *How can we broaden traditional narratives about our local histories to reflect our whole community's experiences and values?*

THE IMPACT

Since 2021, NJCH has helped 20+ organizations create community history projects. With a minimum of 2-3 participants from each organization and seed funding for each project, the program has helped train dozens of "community historians."

Their work is now preserved for future generations in the form of oral histories, multimedia displays, public memorials, published books, and other artifacts.

Project summaries and presentations can be found at njhumanities.org/programs/community-history.



"Stories are precious, and sharing them allows our ancestors to live on especially if their stories aren't usually part of the dominant narrative."

-RAÍCES CULTURAL CENTER, CH '21

ENGAGING COMMUNITY PARTNERS

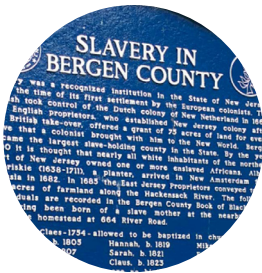
Community History has supported participating organizations with such varied core missions as neighborhood revitalization, secondary education, social services, youth programs, and child advocacy, in addition to historical societies, museums, and public libraries.

NEW JERSEY COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

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PAST PROJECTS

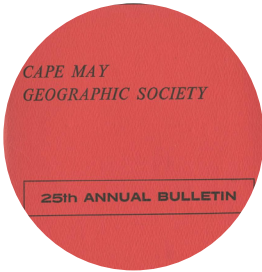


ENSLAVED AFRICAN MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Focusing on Dunkerhook, a 19th-century African community in Paramus founded by two formerly enslaved individuals, EAMC's Community History work included continued archaeological excavation of the site in partnership with Montclair State University and work on a documentary film about Dunkerhook.

"Members of the community were excited to learn about this discovery and had a desire to learn more and offer support to our ongoing efforts to tell the story of slavery in New Jersey."

-ENSLAVED AFRICAN MEMORIAL COMMITTEE, CH '21



GREATER CAPE MAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Greater Cape May Historical Society's project digitized the annual bulletins of the Cape May Geographic Society published from 1947 through 1991. The bulletins are a treasure trove of information pertaining to the natural history of the Cape May region. The project has created accessible historical context for the significant interest today in the ecology of greater Cape May, a destination for ecotourism, birding, and nature photography.

"We learned the importance of getting your organization's mission into the minds and hearts of your community."

-GREATER CAPE MAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, CH '22



CLINTON HILL COMMUNITY ACTION

Clinton Hill Neighborhood History Project is a multi-year, public history project involving oral histories, collections of photos and artifacts, and identification of community and historical landmarks to tell the neighborhood's history. The project also team held a history fair to showcase their project and engage the community in a rich conversation on Clinton Hill's history.

"Perhaps the lesson with the biggest impact on Clinton Hill was that, with some training, we could be our own public historians."

-CLINTON HILL COMMUNITY ACTION, CH '21



PISCATAWAY PUBLIC LIBRARY

After collecting stories from Piscataway residents about life there during major historical events, including 9/11, the Great Recession, and Hurricane Ida, the library published a website and book to tell these valuable first-hand historical accounts.



NEW JERSEY ORATORS, INC.

Community History helped NJ Orators develop an interview framework for their national Oral History Project. High school students interviewed women from Middlesex, Somerset and Union Counties over the age of 90 about their experiences during the Civil Rights Era. The original oratories created based on those interviews will be archived at Rutgers University.

THE PROJECTS ABOVE ARE JUST A SAMPLE OF THE VALUABLE PROJECTS BEGUN THROUGH COMMUNITY HISTORY. VISIT NJHUMANITIES.ORG/PROGRAMS/COMMUNITY-HISTORY TO VIEW MORE, OR GET IN TOUCH WITH US.