



# Special Initiative

## Underrepresented Histories

In keeping with the [New Jersey Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan](#) (2023-2028), the [New Jersey Historic Trust](#) seeks to expand representation of marginalized groups and empower meaningful involvement of minority constituencies in the identification, preservation, and interpretation of historic resources. For the [Preserve New Jersey](#) grant round, the Trust encourages applications that demonstrate efforts and/or initiatives that consider underrepresented histories, such as Black history, civil rights history, disability history, indigenous history, Latinx history, LGBTQ+ history, or the history of any other marginalized group.

The needs of sites with underrepresented history associations are as diverse and numerous as the sites themselves, hence the goal of this initiative is to address those needs holistically using any of the activities eligible for the Preserve New Jersey grant program. To be considered for the special initiative, the scope of the proposed project does not necessarily need to engage underrepresented history directly, so long as the subject property represents marginalized history in its significance, or if the applicant organization has demonstrated expanded interpretation of the site's history in the context of current events. Applicants might consider developing projects that fall into the following categories:

### Project Areas:

#### **Capital Investments**

- Physical preservation of historic resources with established or newly understood associations with underrepresented histories, such as Black history, civil rights history, disability history, indigenous history, Latinx history, LGBTQ+ history, or the history of any other marginalized group

#### **Identification & Evaluation**

- New or revised nominations for the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, to bring more underrepresented history sites into the preservation fold and to encourage already listed sites to identify and interpret lesser known or previously excluded stories
- Architectural surveys, archaeological investigations, or other endeavors to identify new sites associated with underrepresented histories
- Historic preservation ordinances, design guidelines, or elements of municipal master plans to empower preservation in minority communities

#### **Interpretation**

- Capital, Historic Site Management, or Heritage Tourism projects which incorporate the interpretation of underrepresented histories, expand a site's interpretation within the context of current events, or expose previously unknown or misunderstood history

#### **Exhibit & Programming**

- Heritage tourism projects that elevate underrepresented histories, re-examine history within the context of current events, and/or specifically engage minority audiences

## Examples

The following New Jersey sites have recently engaged in capital improvement or historic site management activities to further explore untold stories and expanded interpretations associated with their sites, exemplifying the spirit of the Underrepresented Histories special initiative:

- **Ringwood Manor, Ringwood Borough, Passaic County:** Ringwood Manor is perhaps best known for its Revolutionary War and early industrial associations. The manor house, originally constructed in 1810, is interpreted as the summer estate of the Cooper and Hewitt families. The site's stewards received 2020 Preserve NJ capital grant funds to replace the dilapidated cedar shake roof of the carriage barn. Upon completion, previously underutilized spaces will be used to interpret the region's rich Ramapough Lenape history in addition to existing exhibits focusing on Ringwood Manor resident, sportswoman and innovator Sarah "Sally" Cooper Hewitt.
- **The William Trent House, Trenton City, Mercer County:** The Trent House was built in 1719 by Scottish immigrant, merchant, and slave owner William Trent. The settlement surrounding his estate was named Trent's Town, now Trenton. In recent years, guided by a site-wide master plan funded by a 2019 Preserve NJ planning grant, the Trent House Association has undertaken multiple archaeological investigations that have uncovered artifacts that aid in the understanding of Lenni Lenape settlement and early European-Lenape contact. The Association was awarded 2020 Preserve NJ planning grant funds to continue these archaeological investigations, which have the potential to yield additional information on the enslaved people of African descent who lived and worked on the site.
- **The Liberty Hotel, Atlantic City, Atlantic County:** The Liberty Hotel, constructed *circa* 1928, was one of few establishments to accommodate Black travelers in heavily segregated, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Atlantic City. The hotel was prominently featured in *The Negro Motorist Green Book* and hosted several Black celebrities and public figures, including boxer Sugar Ray Robinson. It is one of few extant resources in the Northside neighborhood, the former hub of Atlantic City's Black tourist industry. The hotel was listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 2020 as part of a Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit application.



*Ringwood Manor*



*The William Trent House*



*The Liberty Hotel*  
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## Additional Resources

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's "[Telling the Full American Story](#)" initiative

[The Inclusive Historian's Handbook](#), a joint effort of the National Council on Public History and the American Association for State and Local History, including but not limited to the entries concerning [historic house museums](#), [U.S. founders](#), and [inclusivity in museum collections](#).

[Discover Our Shared Heritage](#) Travel Itineraries, a heritage tourism resource produced by the National Park Service in partnership with the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.

The National Park Service's four-part [National Historic Landmarks Civil Rights Framework](#)

For more information, please contact a Historic Preservation Specialist at (609) 984-0473.