

“Exploring Black History in New Jersey” RESOURCES

This list includes resources for researching Black history in New Jersey, interpreting under-represented narratives at museums and historic sites, and developing inclusive practice in public history work.

FEATURED PROJECTS

- **Monmouth County Historical Association** (<https://www.monmouthhistory.org/>)
This organization collects, preserves, and interprets the history and culture of Monmouth County, NJ, making it available to the widest possible audience. The “Living & Breathing” initiative focuses on reinterpreting the organization’s colonial-era historic house museums to include the stories of the enslaved African-Americans who lived at the four properties.
- **Scarlet and Black Project Digital Archive** (<https://www.scarletandblackproject.com/>)
This project works to examine the legacy of slavery and dispossession at Rutgers University, from slavery to the contemporary Black Lives Matter movement. The digital archive is a publicly accessible educational resource that makes available digitized historical documents for educators and researchers. It serves as a companion to the project’s published books listed in the print resources section below.
- **Siloam Hope First Presbyterian Church** (<https://shfpchurch.org/shfpc-documents>)
The First Presbyterian Church, known today as the Siloam Hope First Presbyterian Church, was built in 1668 in Elizabeth, NJ. The 313 Project works to uncover the untold stories of 313 freed and enslaved Africans buried in the church cemetery in unmarked graves.

DIGITAL

- ***The Art of Relevance*** (<http://www.artofrelevance.org/read-online/>)
This book, available online for free, “explores how mission-driven organizations can matter more to more people. It is packed with dozens of inspiring examples, rags-to-relevance case studies, research-based frameworks, and practical advice on how your work can be more vital to your community. . . . *The Art of Relevance* was written by best-selling author Nina Simon, rooted in her experience as a museum director and activist for more open, inclusive, effective cultural institutions.”
- **“Displaying, Not Hiding, the Reality of Slave Labor in Art,” *The New York Times***
(<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/23/arts/design/museums-slave-labor-displays.html>)
An article detailing the steps museums are taking “to acknowledge the role of slavery in the lives of some of the nation’s most revered figures.”
- ***Engaging Descendant Communities in the Interpretation of Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites***
(<https://montpelier-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/Interpreting%20Slavery%2011-12-19.pdf>)
This online resource “builds a scalable methodology that sites can utilize to rate themselves as they engage descendant communities in their work. It contains concrete steps to ensure high-quality research, make connections and maintain relationships with descendants, and create inclusive, and accurate and empathetic exhibits and programs. It gives museums a place from which to start addressing difficult themes and traumatic legacies of slavery. Most importantly, [it] insists sites work with descendants of the enslaved at every step to ensure that they are interpreting slavery in a manner that is effective, informative, and respectful of the experiences of the millions of men, women, and children who were enslaved.”
- ***The Inluseum*** (<https://inluseum.com/>)
This project “advances new ways of being a museum through critical dialogue, community building and collaborative practice related to inclusion in museums.” It features online tools, publications, and resources.

- ***The Inclusive Historian’s Handbook*** (<https://inclusivehistorian.com/>)
 “This dynamic reference source supports inclusive and equity-focused historical work in public settings by: sharing a knowledge base that invites more people to engage in history projects; providing concrete examples of how to make history work more relevant; centering equity, inclusivity, diversity, and public service; and offering accessible windows into the many ways public historians work.”
- **“Inclusive Interpretation Tips #museums,” Brilliant Idea Studio** (<https://brilliantideastudio.com/art-museums/inclusive-interpretation-tips-museums/>)
 A useful blog post detailing approaches to improving museum interpretation. Includes diagrams and worksheets.
- **Museum as Site for Social Action** (<https://www.museumaction.org/>)
 “A platform for public dialogues on a variety of topics and issues affecting our communities locally and globally, leading to actionable practices for greater equity and inclusion in our institutions.”
 - [Readiness Assessment](#)
 “This tool can help gauge your institution’s readiness for equity work, as well as identify and articulate areas of growth and opportunity.”
 - [Toolkit](#)
 “This comprehensive guide outlines the theory and tools for practice towards creating greater equity within the museum field.”
- **OF/BY/FOR ALL** (<https://www.ofbyforall.org/>)
 This organization offers “tools, community, accountability, and coaching on radical inclusion. You bring your own urgent desire for change. They support you with practical tools and a process to make your inclusive vision real.”
 - [Self-Assessment](#)
 “This 7-minute self-assessment will help you identify your organization's strengths and weaknesses in being OF, BY, and FOR your community. After you complete it, you will receive a brief, confidential report with your OF/BY/FOR ALL score. They will not share it with anyone but you.”
 - [Community Issue Exhibition Toolkit](#)
 “This toolkit will guide you in facilitating a project in which community building and involvement is necessary from start to finish.”
 - [Respectful Audience Surveying Toolkit](#)
 “This kit gives you a free, simple, step-by-step guide to collecting high-quality participant data. You can use it to create a plan, build a survey, and start collecting data right away.”
- **Princeton & Slavery Project** (<https://slavery.princeton.edu/>)
 Princeton University, founded as the College of New Jersey in 1746, exemplifies the central paradox of American history. From the start, liberty and slavery were intertwined. The Princeton & Slavery Project website includes more than 100 stories on slavery and race in 18th- and 19th-century New Jersey, particularly the University and Princeton community's historical involvement with slavery. An online archive also provides open access to 400+ primary sources.
- **Sankofa Collaborative** (<https://sankofacollaborative.org/>)
 This New Jersey organization helps “individual schools, museums and libraries present, interpret, and discuss African American history.” Check out their Program Archive and Resources pages for further information.

PRINT

- ***If These Stones Could Talk: African American Presence in the Hopewell Valley, Sourland Mountain and Surrounding Regions of New Jersey***
 This book explores “stories, including dozens of oral histories, that consecrate the collected lives of a minority Black community in a predominantly White region, a pattern of community that reflects a larger, deeply

important but typically overlooked national story in small towns all over the United States.”

- ***Interpreting Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites*** (<http://interpretingslavery.com/index.php/interpreting-slavery-at-museums-and-historic-sites/>)

This book, “edited by Kristin Gallas and James DeWolf Perry, is the most visible product to date of a three-year [Tracing Center](#) project to develop and disseminate best practices in slavery interpretation. This project has also included surveys of the field, workshops at historic sites and museums, conference presentations and instructional sessions, as well as additional publications.”

- ***Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites*** (<http://interpretingdifficulthistory.com/>)

This book by Julia Rose “is framed by educational psychoanalytic theory and positions museum workers, public historians, and museum visitors as learners. Through this lens, museum workers and public historians can develop compelling and ethical representations of historical individuals, communities, and populations who have suffered.”

- ***Scarlet and Black, Volume 1: Slavery and Dispossession in Rutgers History*** and ***Scarlet and Black Volume II: Constructing Race and Gender at Rutgers, 1865-1945*** (<https://scarletandblack.rutgers.edu/>)

These two volumes, organized by the Committee on Enslaved and Disenfranchised Populations in Rutgers History, explore the experiences of Native American and African American populations at Rutgers University. Volume 1 examines the university’s relationship to slavery and the land it currently inhabits. Volume 2 provides context for the lives of African American students at the university and addresses the evolution of concepts related to race and gender on campus during the twentieth century.

- ***Voices from the Back Stairs: Interpreting Servants’ Lives at Historic House Museums***

Historian Jennifer Pustz’s book “offers advice for museum professionals on programming accurate and compelling depictions of those who lived their lives in the back stairs and kitchen rather than in the parlor.”



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