



NEW JERSEY  
*Historical*  
COMMISSION

## Current Initiatives

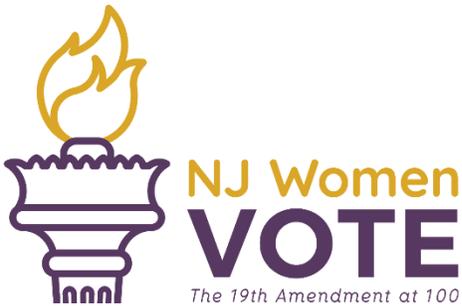
National Association of Secretaries of State—2019 Conference

# What is the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC)?

- Established by law in 1967, the NJHC is a state agency dedicated to the **advancement of public knowledge** and **preservation of New Jersey history**.
- Its work is founded on the fundamental belief that an understanding of **our shared heritage** is essential to sustaining a **cohesive** and **robust democracy**.
- The NJHC fulfills its mission through various initiatives, including **history** and **education programs, awards** and **prizes**, and an active **grants program**.



# The U.S. Women's Suffrage Centennial



# Women's Suffrage in NJ

- **New Jersey women were granted the right to vote in 1776.** Voting, however, was restricted to tax-paying, white male citizens by 1807.
- Suffragist **Alice Paul** was born in New Jersey. Paul founded the National Women's Party and was instrumental in the passage of women's suffrage and creation of the Equal Rights Amendment.
- New Jersey was the 29<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the **Nineteenth Amendment**, granting American women the right to vote, in 1920.
- Women of all backgrounds in New Jersey fought for suffrage.
  - **Reverend Florence Spearing Randolph**, one of the first women ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, served on the executive board of the NJ Woman Suffrage Association.
  - **Mary Dubrow** immigrated to New Jersey from Belarus and joined the National Women's Party at age 20. She was arrested and imprisoned for picketing outside the White House.

# NJ Women Vote: The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment at 100



- A partnership of over 65 individuals and organizations across New Jersey planning programs and projects to mark the centennial of women's suffrage in 2020
- Vision of NJ Women Vote
  - To mark the centennial of women's suffrage while acknowledging its inequities and the challenges New Jersey women of all backgrounds have faced and continue to confront from 1920 to the present day.**
- Goals of NJ Women Vote
  - To tell the true story of suffrage
  - To engage the widest possible audience
  - To encourage civic participation through voting
  - To develop programs that result in change

# NJ Women Vote Programs & Events

## 2019

- **Professional development workshops for teachers** focused on teaching suffrage history
- **Public programs toolkit** full of ideas and resources for organizations to plan
- *NJ Women Make History*, 2019 **NJ History Conference**

## 2020

- **Suffrage Speakers Bureau**
- **Mock election** for K-12 students
- **Voter registration tables** at events throughout the year
- **Bicycle slow roll** to sites along the NJ Women's Heritage Trail
- **Women's Equality Day** at the NJ State House
- **Suffrage march** in New Brunswick, NJ



# The U.S. Semiquincentennial

# The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission

- Formed in 2016, the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission provides for the **observance** and **commemoration** of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **founding of the U.S. and related events**.
- The Commission must incorporate the **full 250-span** of U.S. history into this initiative.
- New Jersey has representation on the Commission through **Rep. Bonnie Watson-Coleman** (NJ-12)
- The Commission is engaged in a strategic planning process and has articulated several **key areas of interest, including:**
  - **Civic engagement**
  - **Unity**
  - **Education**

# Working Goals

The **American Association for State and Local History** (AASLH) assembled a task force dedicated to preparing for the Semiquincentennial. The task force includes history, museum, and cultural sector leaders from across the country. The group has developed a series of goals to guide the work of and foster cooperation among the history community.

- Emphasize history's **relevance** to every American, every day
- Tell a **diverse** and **inclusive** story about the American past
- Increase **funding** for history
- Highlight the importance of history **education**
- Enhance the public's **engagement** with history **collections**

While NJ is developing its own goals for the Semiquincentennial, the NJHC has been using these working goals as a preliminary framework.

# The Semiquincentennial in New Jersey

- In 2018, the state legislature passed a bill requiring the NJHC to establish a program for the Semiquincentennial.
- The legislation requires the NJHC and the non-profit partner selected for this initiative to plan and implement programs, activities, and events.
- Current activities:
  - **Capital needs assessment** underway to determine the needs/costs for approximately 140 Revolutionary War sites in the state and recommend possible location(s) for a Visitor Center
  - Developing the initiative's **long-range plan**, including kicking off listening sessions to learn more about the needs and interests of varied communities around the state
  - Beginning process of designing a **survey of K–12 social studies education** in NJ public schools