

New Jersey Women's History <http://www.njwomenshistory.org/>
Created and maintained by the Alice Paul Institute, Inc. at Paulsdale, Mount Laurel, NJ
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The Alice Paul Institute manages the New Jersey Women's History Website. This site was created with grants from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State, and the Discover NJ History License Plate Fund, which benefits the New Jersey Historic Trust. The website educates the public and is thus not meant for a scholarly audience. It acts as a tool or springboard to further study by students, teachers, and the public on women's history. Its information is not lengthy but acts as an impetus to further research on other websites and also print publications about a reader's area of interest. It also assists those who visit, either in person or virtually, the historic sites of significance to women's history in New Jersey.

The website states its purpose as "a resource for students, teachers, and all interested people who want to know more about the history of women in New Jersey. Because New Jersey women's history is a young field, it is constantly growing and changing. This website will do the same, so it can keep up with new information and research and update existing information."

For the purpose of this review, I will explore each of the navigation tabs. The first tab after home is "Discover." This has a drop down menu including: time period, topics, and biography. The "time period" section features periods from colonial to modern day. Under each time period are a few selected items to choose from to learn more. Each item has a short description and its historical context with an image. The "topics" section is similar to the "time period" tab. For example, "abolition," instead of "Revolutionary War," would be the heading. Both of these sections have good citations as to where their information and image came from. Unfortunately, at the time of this review, less than half of the images are loaded and it appears to be a work in

progress. The “biographies” section is complete and has a nice short history of each woman featured.

The following tab is titled “Teach.” This provides fully thought out lesson plans for elementary, middle, and high school. Each lesson explains the NJ core curriculum standards used. The lessons are well organized. Below “teach” there is a drop down for a “K-12” resource page that says it is coming soon.

“Research” is the next tab, with drop downs for “bibliography” and “online resources.” The “bibliography” is arranged alphabetically by subject matter and lists magazine and journal articles. The “online resources” are arranged by national, state, local; and online resources/websites open in a new window for easier access.

The next tab, “New Jersey Women’s Heritage Trail,” is an interactive map showing locations in the state that have a historic site related to women’s history. The user can click on an icon and see the site. If more information is wanted, the user then clicks again to open a page with a photograph and short paragraph or two of text along with the following information: the address, if the site is private or public, its web address, and the GPS coordinates. It would be beneficial to include the telephone number for the public locations. Below the interactive map, each county is listed. By clicking on a county, the sites in the county are listed. While for the most part this is a useful map, I had a number of concerns. First of all, you needed to actually click on the icon for a historic site to view the site’s information, rather than it popping up automatically when the cursor hovered over it. Once you actually clicked on the icon for a historic site, the page redirected, rather than having the information open in a new window. I felt that I spent too much time clicking back and forth. Sites on the map are listed with “WHT,” meaning Women’s Heritage trail, or by number. This was confusing until I realized it meant that

one location had 2, 3 or more sites in the same location. Adding a key below explaining this would be helpful. In a few cases when clicking on the number 2 and zooming down to the street level, the sites never appeared. At other times, the locations on the map were completely wrong. Clicking on Warren County, “Consumers’ Research,” which is in Bowerstown (Washington Township), the map icon is in Ocean County. If you wanted to find Somerset County’s Rockingham, the map location was near Mount Laurel. While there are some undeniable errors, they can be rectified.

The final tab is “About.” This explains the history of the website and the organizations that made it happen. In order to get email, phone, or other contact information you need to click on the “contact” tab in the upper right box on the site. It also allows the reader to contact the organization with comments and suggestions to make the website better.

Overall, despite the noted housekeeping issues, the website has very good information that will be useful to the public and especially students and teachers in the K-12 age group. It gives just enough information on a plethora of topics to encourage further research and reading.

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