

Truth & Repair: The History of Structural Racism in New Jersey

2025-2026 Research Recap

To the memory and legacy of Dr. Alison Ellen Isenberg (1962–2025), the historian, educator, mentor, and leader of Truth & Repair who guided us and many more.

Truth & Repair: The History of Structural Racism in New Jersey is a three-year research study documenting the historical impacts of structural racism on the health and wellbeing of marginalized communities in New Jersey. Led by a team of New Jersey scholars, Truth & Repair partners graduate and undergraduate students from Princeton, Rutgers, St. Peter's Universities, with scholars and cultural institutions in the state that produce, preserve, share, and interpret historical and archival records. Together, they develop community-engaged projects on local histories of inequality and restorative justice using qualitative and quantitative research methods. Their tasks include historical, archival, and sociological research; "triaging" personal and institutional records to identify potential research projects; digitizing existing oral histories and conducting new ones with local narrators; designing databases and maps that represent historical and current data sets to trace the impact of structural policies on health outcomes; helping graduate students and early-career scholars author peer-reviewed publications on topics in New Jersey history; and hosting conversations with local community members to discuss the findings and their implications.

The following report summarizes our methods, structure, and second year of research from September 2025 to August 2026.

Methods & Structure

The primary objectives of Truth & Repair are to

- Establish a model of interdisciplinary, community-engaged research that explores the impacts of structural racism on the health of marginalized communities in New Jersey and the development of health inequities between different communities in the state.

- Explore the role of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Johnson & Johnson in the history of structural racism and health inequities in New Jersey.
- Empower students and community members to strengthen cultural institutions and organizations through community-engaged historical research.
- Engage community leaders, cultural workers, policymakers, educators, philanthropic foundations, and non-profits in the state on how to address structural racism and promote equitable health outcomes for all New Jerseyans.

We ultimately strive to support the production of historically-informed research and scholarship that promote equitable health outcomes for all New Jerseyans.

To accomplish this goal, we partner with cultural institutions and organizations across the state that produce, preserve, interpret, and share historical records that inform their efforts redressing the effects of structural racism in their scholarship and communities. These institutions provide the historical knowledge and materials necessary to define the unique characteristics and impacts of structural racism in New Jersey. In return, we:

Co-design research projects. We ask cultural institutions and organizations what projects they need help developing that align with our mission and one or more of our three themes:

- *Social Infrastructure* studies the effects of urban renewal, highway construction, park construction, and other metropolitan and regional redevelopment projects on communal health.
- *Health Care Systems* documents the role of medical education and access in marginalized communities, including the impacts of hospital and clinic closures, grassroots organizing against these closures, the use of home remedies, and the development of mutual aid networks.
- *Historical Equity* develops strategies to support the state's under-resourced cultural institutions and organizations that preserve the histories of marginalized New Jerseyans.

Projects can range from surveying documents in a church's archive or researching an historic neighborhood to digitizing newspaper articles and photos to complement a virtual collection of oral history interviews. For each project, we help define the goals and timelines.

Conduct community-engaged historical research. Once we've defined a project, student researchers from Rutgers, Saint Peter's, and Princeton Universities and postdoctoral senior research specialists collaborate with our partners to achieve the projects' aims, using

qualitative and quantitative research methods rooted in the principles of community-engaged research. With permission from our partners, student researchers are encouraged to produce academic papers, journalistic articles, virtual maps and walking tours, documentaries, podcasts, and other works based on their research. All research and research products are shared with our community partners and their patrons.

Support and connect cultural institutions and organizations. We recognize that many of New Jersey’s cultural institutions and organizations lack needed equipment and staff. So, we use the historical research to help community partners identify areas for investments from policymakers, philanthropies, non-profits, and universities. We plan to write reports and blogposts, host community forums and workshops, advise secondary and post-secondary curricular development on topics in New Jersey history, and inform recommendations for how to redress the impacts of structural racism. In doing so, we hope to encourage the state’s many cultural institutions and organizations to connect and collaborate.

Steering Committee

Keith Wailoo, Ph.D., History, Princeton University
John Johnson Jr., Ph.D., History, Saint Peter’s University
Jennifer Ayala, Ph.D., Sociology, Saint Peter’s University
Elaine Buck, Founder, Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum
Tania Boster, Ph.D., Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship, Princeton University
Kendra Boyd, Ph.D., History, Rutgers University–Camden
Christina Jackson, Ph.D., Sociology and Africana Studies, Rutgers University–Camden
Beverly Mills, Founder, Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum
Dawne Mouzon, Ph.D., M.P.H., Sociology, Rutgers University–New Brunswick

Senior Research Specialists

Rachel Gerber, Ph.D., History
Sydney A. Johnson, Ph.D., American Studies
Erin R. Santana, Ph.D., American Studies

Administrators

Jacquelyn Walsh, Princeton Mellon Initiative in Architecture, Urbanism & the Humanities, Princeton University
Skyler Gordon, Ph.D., History

Growing the T&R Team

In November 2025, Keith Wailoo, Ph.D., joined us this fall as our new co-Principal Investigator alongside Dr. John Johnson, Jr. Dr. Wailoo is Henry Putnam University Professor of History and Public Affairs. He is jointly appointed in the Department of History and in the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs. He is former Vice Dean of the School of Public and International Affairs, former Chair of History, and former President of the American Association for the History of Medicine (2020-2022). His research straddles history and health policy, touching on drugs and drug policy, on the politics of race and health, on the interplay of identity, ethnicity, gender, and medicine, and on controversies in genetics and society. His writings have advanced historical and public understanding on a range of topics: racial disparities in health care, the cultural politics of pain and opioids, how pandemic change societies, and the FDA's decision to ban menthol cigarettes.

At the start of this year, Drs. Rachel Gerber, Sydney Johnson, and Erin Santana were selected to serve as our 2026-2028 Senior Research Specialists. In their roles, they've worked with the steering committee to coordinate existing research projects and developed new ones across the four research hubs. In so doing, they've developed research capacity at institutions and organizations that preserve and produce historical records and create historically-informed recommendations for redressing the impacts of structural racism on community health. Rachel Gerber, Ph.D., History, Princeton University, is an historian, applied researcher, program manager, and stakeholder engagement specialist with experience coordinating collaborative, research-driven initiatives designed to inform and advance social change. Sydney Johnson, Ph.D., American Studies, Rutgers University–Newark, studies the intersection of race, place, gender, and public memory foregrounding Black women's unacknowledged labor and erasure within historical interpretations of the suburban New Jersey landscape. Erin Santana, Ph.D., American Studies, Rutgers University–Newark, is a public historian, interdisciplinary humanities scholar, and project administrator with twenty years of experience with community-engaged cultural work in museums, historic sites, public high schools, and universities.

In March 2026, Jennifer Ayala, Ph.D., joined our steering committee to co-develop research at the North Jersey hub, with a specific focus on pan-Latine foodways and healthways in and around North and Central Jersey. As one of the founding members of the CUNY PAR Collective, now the [Public Science Project](#), Dr. Ayala have over 20 years of experience with youth participatory action research. With a group of Latine researchers, Dr. Ayala and her colleagues developed the concept of PAR Entremundos, centering a critical, healing, arts-

based approach to the work, as articulated in the edited text [PAR Entremundos: A Pedagogy of the Americas](#). Within the last 5-10 years, her research and program work has focused on immigrant, largely Latine experiences as director of the Latin American and Latino Studies program, director of the Center for Undocumented students and objective coordinator for the Cultura Cura program. Dr. Ayala's been involved with the Youth and Young Adult Wellbeing project, a YPAR study examining how Latine, Black/African American and Indigenous youth in the US understand the concept of wellbeing. She was also the research navigator for the self-named Latine Bienestar group, and this team conducted qualitative interviews involving painting prompts, producing various applied reports, a journal article, an original wellbeing song now on Spotify produced by one of the hip hop artist/young adult researchers, and an upcoming book chapter. Currently, Dr. Ayala is the co-PI with Dr. Alex Trillo, working with a group of college student researchers on the Latine Foodways of Hudson County project, funded by the Hudson County Historical Partnership. This project documents the foodways of 5 Hudson County Latine enclaves, with a focus on restaurants and the role they play in preserving culture and culinary heritage. It involves conducting oral histories of residents/community members and restaurant owners from these 5 communities, as well as creating recipe videos, and collecting restaurant menus, area photographs, and other archival material.

During spring and early summer 2026, Truth & Repair consulted New Jersey-based scholars Robert McGreevy, Hettie V. Williams, Kristin O'Brassill-Kulfan, and Daniela Valdés to advise and develop several of our short- and longer-term research projects. **Robert McGreevey** is Professor of American History and Chair of the History Department at The College of New Jersey. His books include *Borderline Citizens: The United States, Puerto Rico and the Politics of Colonial Migration* (Cornell Press) and *Global America: The United States in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford Press). He is currently at work on a new book titled *Trenton Makes, The World Takes* (Rutgers Press, forthcoming). **Kristin O'Brassill-Kulfan** is Assistant Professor of History and Director of Public History at Rutgers University. In addition to her social and legal history research, she is also a practicing public historian and recipient of the G. Wesley Johnson Award for the best article published in *The Public Historian* for 2023, and the NJ Historical Commission's Award of Recognition for Outstanding Service to Public Knowledge and Preservation of the History of New Jersey. **Daniela Valdés** is a historian of twentieth- and twenty-first-century U.S. history whose work examines grassroots social movements for racial, gender, and economic justice, mass incarceration and the carceral state, and public health. Her research focuses on the communities most affected by policing, immigration law enforcement, and stigma related to race, gender and sexuality, and disability. A community-engaged scholar, she has served on the advisory board of the Digital Transgender Archive, collaborated with the Rikers

Public Memory Project, and helped establish Radio Cosecha, a migrant-led news program based in Elizabeth, New Jersey. is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Princeton Society of Fellows and a lecturer in the Department of History at Princeton University. **Hettie V. Williams, Ph.D.**, is Professor of History at Monmouth University in the Department of History and Anthropology. Her research and teaching interests include African American intellectual history, women's history, and race/ethnic studies in a global context. Her latest book is titled *The Georgia of the North: Black Women and the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey* (Rutgers Press, 2024).

Highlights from the Field

During Fall 2025 and Winter 2025-26, the Central Jersey Hub continued their collaboration with representatives from the Rescue Mission of Trenton, Mercer County Office of Planning, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Michael Graves Architects, Princeton University, and The Trenton Project on an application to fund the [Harlan Joseph Peace Park](#). The park-to-be will be located in the Carroll-Ewing Street neighborhood of Trenton, honoring the life and legacy of Harlan B. Joseph, a community activist and Carroll Street resident shot and killed by police during the April 1968 Trenton uprising. Truth & Repair partnered with the Rescue Mission and Purcell Carson of The Trenton Project to learn from neighborhood residents what amenities they wanted and how they thought best to honor Joseph. Truth & Repair tabled events at Pathway 2 Wellness, Mercer County's Community Wellness Center, and the Ulysses S. Grant Intermediate School, both located near the proposed site. The information gathered was used to design a concept plan and develop a grant proposal submitted on February 27, 2026, for funding from the New Jersey Green Acres Program. In June, Green Acres approved the application. Truth & Repair plans to continue engaging the community through the coming fall and spring.

On March 3, 2026, Tania Boster and Skyler Gordon presented on the future of open research in humanities and social sciences at the 2026 Oxford Forum for Open Scholarship. They focused their presentation on a stewardship model for historical research and scholarship developed by Beverly Mills, Elaine Buck, the Stoutsburg Cemetery Association, and the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum that informs the work of Truth & Repair.

From March to May 2026, Truth & Repair participated in the Community-Engaged Scholarship Learning Cohort, organized by GradFUTURES. The Learning Cohort prepares Princeton graduate students to work effectively with nonprofit organizations through an interdisciplinary, experiential program that bridges academic expertise with community

impact. Over eight sessions, participants developed frameworks for ethical partnership, learned practical skills in nonprofit collaboration, and completed capstone projects with organizations that have a social impact mission. Under the direction of Skyler Gordon, Laura Nelson, History, reviewed models for digitally archiving publicly accessible oral history recordings, and Johanna Rozakis-Siu, History, developed ideas for engaging different publics on the history of New Jersey's Great Migration using the [New Jersey Southern Black Oral History Project](#), a collection of oral histories stewarded by archivists at the New Jersey State Archives and narrated by African Americans who migrated from the southern United States to New Jersey for work, joy, and reprieve from racialized terror.

In June 2026, researchers from the South Jersey Hub were interviewed on Cape May Radio (WCFA 101.5) to speak about the goals of the Truth and Repair project and the digitization work they are doing in collaboration with the John T. and Janet D. Nash Archives of African American History at the Center for the Community Arts in Cape May.

Kaitlyn Rich, a doctoral student of Library and information Science in Rutgers–New Brunswick's School of Communication and Information and three-time research assistant with T&R's Central Jersey Hub co-authored "[Archival Discourse: Notes from the Field on Collaborative Critical Archival Research of New Jersey's Eugenics History and Carceral Systems](#)," with Rutgers–Newark doctoral candidate, Moira P. Armstong (*DisLIS: Disability in Libraries and Information Studies* 3 (2026)). In "Archival Discourse," Rich and Armstong on their collaboration with Beverly Mills and Elaine Buck to document the eugenic and racialized history of New Jersey's carceral network in the late 19th and early to mid-20th centuries through archival research of the New Jersey Home for the Education and Care of Feeble-minded Children at Vineland and the State Village for Epileptics at Skillman.

Dr. Jennifer Ayala and her team at the North Jersey Hub recently received IRB approval to expand their research on pan-Latine foodways to include home remedies and other alternative and complementary healthcare practices.

Summer 2026

From June 11 to August 22, Truth & Repair organized our second summer research cycle. A twenty-three-member cohort of new and returning students worked at our four research hubs located at five scholarly and cultural institutions in North, Central and South Jersey. This network provides the organizational structure to monitor student-community research across these varied institutions, maintain close connections with community partners in the area, host meetings with current and potential partners, and outreach to local cultural institutions and organizations. Each hub is led by one or more steering committee

members and assigned four-to-five students, all responsible for creating and conducting historical research on regional and statewide topics developed with local community partners.

North Jersey	Central Jersey	South Jersey	Statewide
Department of History, St. Peter's	Department of History, Princeton—SSAAM	Department of History, Rutgers–Camden	Department of Sociology, Rutgers–New Brunswick
John Johnson, Jr., Jennifer Ayala	Keith Wailoo, Elaine Buck, Beverly Mills, Skyler Gordon, Sydney Johnson, Erin Santana, Rachel Gerber	Kendra Boyd, Christina Jackson	Dawne Mouzon
Newark, Plainfield, Jersey City	Trenton, Greater Mercer County	Camden, Atlantic City, Cape May	New Jersey

The North Jersey Hub focused on surveying oral history collections, newspaper, and subject archives, and assisting archives with related projects. Research areas included hospital closures, and the effects of urban renewal and highways construction in Essex, Hudson, and Union counties. Dr Johnson, Assistant Professor of History at Saint Peter's, and Dr. Ayala, Director of Latin American and Latino Studies at Saint Peter's, served as hub leaders.

The Central Jersey Hub focused on making a major oral history collection available to the public, assisting archives with related projects, database and archival research into historical sites and individuals, building a new oral history collective among community partners, and documenting the imprint of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in New Brunswick. Keith Wailoo, Henry Putnam University Professor of History and Public Affairs at Princeton University, and Beverly Mills and Elaine Buck, founders of the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum and Friday Truehart Consultants, served as hub leaders.

The South Jersey Hub focused on processing oral history collections related to Camden City and Southern New Jersey; assisting Lawnside Historical Society (LHS) with the digitization/processing of historical materials in their possession (located at the Historical Society of Haddonfield); conducting Black Oral Histories of Health, Care, and Urban Change in Atlantic City; and assisting the Center for Community Arts with the

digitization/processing of historical materials in their possession related to the historic Black community, urban renewal, and mutual aid, etc. Kendra Boyd, Assistant Professor of History at Rutgers–Camden, and Christina Jackson, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Program Chair of Africana Studies at Rutgers–Camden, served as hub leaders.

The Statewide Hub focused on health data sets to trace and capture the impact of structural policies on health outcomes in African American and Latine communities. This team will conduct library archival research, extracting qualitative and quantitative data from historical library databases, which includes the New Jersey Health Statistics from 1877 to 2000; New Jersey State Health Assessment Database; and U.S. Small Area Life Expectancy Estimates & Project. Dawne Mouzon, Associate Professor of Sociology at Rutgers–New Brunswick, served as hub leader.

Summer Themes

For the 2026 summer research cycle, Truth & Repair organized their research projects around three major themes: mapping and movement, closures and openings, and survivance and resistance. These themes, more akin to lenses, allow us to see and represent different aspects of our shared and hub-specific projects. They link our projects together, focusing and narrowing our research agendas as well as the theories and methodologies for crafting them.

Mapping and Movement: The theme of mapping and movement looks at how different peoples have used, manipulated, and (re)conceptualized the lands and bodies of water that make up modern New Jersey. This lens will allow us to understand 1) how individuals and communities have related to land and water over time as sources for communal health and wellbeing; 2) how certain manipulations of land/ water such as highway construction/expansion and racial segregation/apartheid reconfigured existing relationships to and conceptions of land/water; 3) how these manipulations created structural inequalities, racialized marginalization, and health disparities; and 4) how communities conceptualized these manipulations and adapted and/or reconceptualized and restructured land/water as forms of repair.

Closures and Openings: The theme of closures and openings uses the closing of health care facilities and other institutions vital to communal health as a starting point to understand how physical and administrative structures have negatively impacted the health and wellbeing of marginalized communities across the state.

This lens helps us answer the following: How did the complete or partial closures of hospitals, nursing homes, mental health institutions, etc. impact those that relied on the medical services provided? Did those communities support or oppose the closings, and how did they handle the absence of services or the remaining presence of the physical structures and their byproducts? What institutions opened on the physical site or in the physical building and what were their effects on the health and wellness of the surrounding communities? What institutions and services did these communities create or recreate to meet their needs?

With this theme, we can also probe a paradox: that institutions vital to communal health and wellness closed or moved to accommodate the building of new healthcare systems and infrastructures. What emerges are competing notions of “health” held among different communities.

Survivance and Resistance¹: Given our desire for a research approach that is “desire-based” rather than “damage-centered,”² the theme of survivance and resistance would help us understand 1) how communities sustained their health and wellbeing apart from and in relation to structures of inequality, including the people and ideas that sustain these structures, and 2) the theories and methods of resistance developed by networks of resisters to structures, individuals, and ideas that perpetuated racialized health disparities.

End-of Summer Convening

On Saturday, August 22, Truth & Repair hosted its 2026 End-of-Summer Convening at [120 East State](#) Historic Site, in Trenton New Jersey. Our hub leaders, research specialists, student researchers, and community partners, associates, and advisors to share our summer research projects and discuss how to make our work useable and shareable for different communities concerned with documenting and redressing historical health disparities and other structural inequalities across modern New Jersey. Health Is Wealth Restaurant and Juice Bar (242 E State St, Trenton, NJ) catered the convening.

Drs. Erin Santana, Rachel Gerber, and Sydney Johnson each presented on a selection of research projects, teasing out the interconnections and shared takeaways as they related to the three summer themes. *See the attached abstracts for the summer projects.*

¹ For more on “survivance” as a term, see Gerald Vizenor’s *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

² Eve Tuck, “Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities,” *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 3 (2009), 409-428.

Following the presentations, Dr. Johnson facilitated a group discussion about dissemination—how, where, and with whom can we share our research findings to ensure that are useful in efforts to redress structural health inequities. 120 East State Board President, Cherry Oakley, visually recorded our discussion.



Next Steps

Over the next several months, we will continue our respective and collective research agendas in partnership with our community partners. We will also:

- Collaborate with scholars, students, and cultural practitioners to determine how best to make T&R research publicly accessible and useful for communities concerned with redressing structural health inequities.
- Assemble research findings and materials for inclusion in a public report on the historical impacts of structural racism on the health and wellbeing of marginalized communities across modern New Jersey.

Attachments

- 1) Summer 2026 Project Abstracts

- 2) 2026 End-of-Summer Convening Presentation Slides
- 3) 2026 T&R Research Assistant and Staff Bios

CENTRAL JERSEY HUB

Central Jersey Cosecha NJ Oral History Project

Team Leader(s): Sydney Johnson and Daniela Valdés

Researcher(s): Keilly Ponce-Mérida

Project Summary

- Began further developing Dr. Valdés' previously established relationship with Cosecha NJ, expanding the team from both sides and gathering insight regarding their desires, vision, and hopes for a developing archive about the organization and its causes, with a primary focus on their contributions to the "Licenses for All" movement for status-neutral driver's licenses.
- Initiated the process of shaping the oral history project and community archive, including fleshing out the details concerning content type, extent, and parameters, the logistical characteristics of gathering and sharing the data, and formulating how the project could best be presented in order to benefit first and foremost the target Latine communities.
- Built a media database aimed to create a foundation of contextual knowledge on the topics surrounding Latine immigrant communities in New Jersey, the fight for status-neutral driver's licenses, Cosecha NJ, and the circumstances and events that directly or indirectly shape the Latine community's experiences.

Key Findings & Insights

Mapping & Movement

- The high levels of walking inaccessibility across all types of communities due to transportation infrastructure contributes to the need for people to drive in order to receive work and educational opportunities. The Latine community responded by working to minimize the risk involved with driving undocumented, via status-neutral driver's licenses.

Survivance & Resistance

- The ability in New Jersey to obtain a status-neutral driver's license, made possible by the "Licenses for All" movement and activism efforts, helps to remove a source of fear and anxiety for many in the community who are/were required to drive but did so by unavoidably taking on increased risk of detainment and deportation via routine and/or minor traffic stops.
- Cosecha NJ is the New Jersey chapter of a national organization that empowers the Latine community to come together and both acknowledge and fight for their rights in the face of discriminatory policies and circumstances.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- How did other marginalized communities in the same geographical areas interact and affect the Latine community and their engagement with the 'Licenses for All' movement; what sort of role did this solidarity play within this cause between different racial and ethnic groups?
- How does this hub of research intertwine with that of highway, infrastructure, and environment research, such as the possible correlation between the walkability score of an area / reliance on personal vehicle infrastructure and the rate of traffic stops, with specific focus on the correlation between amount or frequency of traffic stops and the amount or frequency of immigration and deportation proceedings?
- An idea was brought up by Cosecha NJ members, wherein they requested separation from narratives that conflate the success with status-neutral driver's licenses with 'development' or 'progress' for everyone on a large, generalizable scale. It was specified that advancements do not impact or benefit all people equally, and that narratives putting forward the idea that everyone is taking steps forward with no one left behind do not capture the full picture. What communities, peoples, or intersections of identity were left behind in regard to this movement? Why did this occur, and how might it be mitigated or rectified?

Eugenics & the Skillman Institute

Team Leader(s): Beverly Mills and Elaine Buck

Researcher(s): Tania Boster and Kaitlyn Rich

Project Summary

- Critically examined how healthcare administrators categorize community populations into racialized and disabled identities, exposing vulnerable groups to structural harms under the pretense of care.
- Highlighted the early 20th-century New Jersey as an ideological testing ground for eugenics.
- Investigated collaborations between NJ facility superintendents at the Skillman Institute and national eugenics leaders, such as Harry Laughlin and Charles Davenport.

Key Findings & Insights

Mapping & Movement

- Research mapped regional eugenics networks, revealing how institutional infrastructure and legal precedents, such as state sterilization legislation, established lasting health disparities.

Openings & Closures

- Examining institutional openings, closures, and the shifting of administrative names/titles highlights the historical evolution of medical experimentation, including unneeded surgeries and pharmaceutical trials documented across state and university archives.

Survivance & Resistance

- The project documents patient resistance and whistleblowing that prompted historical state investigations. By linking institutional power to systemic violence and survivance, this work underscores how historical classifications continue to inform modern health inequities, institutionally-sanctioned violence, and community care practices.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- How did spatial proximity and information-sharing networks facilitate the physical movement and ideological collaboration of eugenics leaders across New Jersey institutions? What are the afterlives of eugenic ideological influence on healthcare systems in New Jersey today?
- What archival and community-informed methodologies can best recover marginalized narratives of patient escape and subversion that are obscured or erased by official institutional records? How can we substantiate and make sense of discrepancies between public memory, internal institutional records, and survivor accounts?
- How did late 19th-century white supremacist “purity” ideologies (such as Webster Edgerly’s Ralstonism) intersect with early 20th-century eugenics and institutional “care” facilities like Vineland and Skillman, and late 20th-century patient pharmaceutical and surgical experimentation? In what ways do these historical frameworks continue to appear in contemporary health and social care inequities in New Jersey?

Home Remedies in African American New Jersey

Team Leader(s): Skyler D. Gordon

Researcher(s): Susan Iseyen, Alice Morandy, Laura Nelson, and Serita Sargent

Project Summary

- Crafted research on home remedies and alternative and complementary healing practices developed by African Americans who reached adulthood in or migrated to New Jersey during the Great Migration of the early to mid-twentieth century. Used as sources the recordings and transcripts from the [New Jersey Southern Black Oral History Project](#), a collection of oral histories stewarded by archivists at the New Jersey State Archives and narrated by African Americans who migrated from the southern United States to New Jersey for work, joy, and reprieve from racialized terror.
- Conducted oral histories with narrators raised in the Sourland Mountains Region of Central New Jersey, specifically on their knowledge and uses of home remedies.

- Designed sample compendia of home remedies and K-12 curricula that use the oral histories to teach the history of New Jersey’s Great Migration through the lens of health and wellness.

Key Findings and Insights

Mapping & Movement

- “Healthways” can serve as a useful framework for understanding “what forms of family knowledge, care, cultural practice, and community support moved with migrants to New Jersey” (Nelson).

Survivance & Resistance

- The preparation and uses of home remedies by Afro-Americans can be traced from enslavement through the Great Migration using sources such as the WPA Slave Narratives.
- African Americans used commercially available pharmaceuticals and professional medical care in combination with household remedies and herbal preparations, a finding which “complicates any strict separation between domestic and institutional medicine” (Iseyen).
- The practices of caregiving and knowledge of caregivers were integral to the successful application of home remedies.
- Home remedies served not only to treat illnesses and ailments, but prevent and protect against them.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- Shared healing and medicinal practices between and among African American, Latine, and Indigenous communities in modern New Jersey.
- The transmission of medical knowledge from generation to generation in a “genealogy of care” (Morandy) often through the gendered care work of African American women, girls, and femmes.

Team Leader(s): Rachel Gerber and Erin Santana

Researcher(s): Sade Awodesu and Zoonmall Hanif

Project Summary

This summer's work advanced T & R's research on the impact of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)'s grantmaking in New Brunswick by developing and completing two projects:

- (1) A close study of local media coverage of the urban renewal plans developed, publicized, and implemented from 1972 to 1985 by New Brunswick Tomorrow (NBT) and the New Brunswick Development Corporation (DEVCO), which relied in part on grants made by RWJF. The purpose of the study was to assess the nature of media coverage and public discourse surrounding NBT and DEVCO's work in New Brunswick. It sought to evaluate levels of public awareness about those plans and RWJF's role in supporting them. Specifically, it sought to determine the degree to which communities in New Brunswick were *in conversation with* NBT, DEVCO, and RWJF regarding the city's urban renewal program and what local media coverage communicates about the nature of community engagement and response. Ultimately, we closely analyzed coverage in New Brunswick's local daily publication *The Home News* from **1975-1984**.
- (2) Pilot the use of network analysis software to engage in a preliminary analysis of the primary decision-makers that developed and executed NBT and DEVCO's urban renewal agenda in New Brunswick based on archival RWJF grant files covering the period **1977-1991**.

Key Findings & Insights

Mapping & Movement

- We assessed the available network analysis software, comparing Palladio, Gephi, Cytoscape, NodeXL and Kumu on capability, cost and licensing. We recommended Gephi because of its balance of usability with more robust and flexible analytical ability. Palladio is a more historically-oriented software which is easier to use and has more of an emphasis on change over time, but is not well suited for data that

encompasses a number of types of archival documents and historical relationships.

- We found that reformatting our data to be usable in Gephi was very time consuming, albeit a worthwhile exercise to consider what types of relationships are meaningful for our network analysis (e.g. financial ties, employment, cc'ed on letters, presence at meetings...). It remains an open question whether the quantitative analysis Gephi provides is worth the additional labor to format the data in this way.
- Gephi identified certain individuals in the network as more central (calculated as “betweenness”) than the raw number of relationships between them and other individuals/institutions might suggest. As the data used is partial, it remains to be seen if these findings will hold, but these types of calculations may demonstrate the usefulness of software such as Gephi.

Openings & Closures

- The purpose of this summer’s media analysis work was to determine the degree, tone, and substance of public discourse and response to the openings and closures entailed in the first decade of NBT/DEVCO’s urban renewal planning and execution in New Brunswick. In that context, the sheer volume of coverage was a key – and surprising – takeaway. Urban renewal was a consistent topic featured explicitly in New Brunswick’s local paper, *The Home News*, which became a medium not only for journalist-driven reporting, but also for advertisements and editorials that created “open letter”-style platforms for both promotion and critique of urban renewal plans. This summer’s work has aggregated a rich source base for deeper qualitative analysis of community awareness and response.
- RWJF itself was usually spared from direct criticism in newspaper coverage, with NBT and DEVCO taking most of the heat. RWJF was most often mentioned briefly as a source of funding.
- Conflicts of interest and overlapping networks between city government and private developers was a part of public consciousness.

Survivance & Resistance

- This summer’s media analysis reveals a vibrant public conversation published in *The Home News* that included organized community critique and resistance. Further analysis of the aggregated material will seek to assess whether and how

those critiques factored into the continued planning and execution of New Brunswick's urban renewal program and/or RWJF's grantmaking decisions.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- For the media analysis project, future research could expand to other newspapers and alternative media platforms and extend the chronology of the project. Questions for further development might include: How did *Home News* coverage of urban renewal differ from coverage in other newspapers? How was urban renewal discussed in other forms of media, i.e. radio and television?
- For the network analysis, further experimentation with both Gephi and Palladio will be needed to determine the utility of such software to both answer and disseminate information regarding our research questions. To what degree are network analysis programs useful to understanding the decision-making processes of historical and contemporary actors over time?
 - Gephi pointed to several specific individuals and institutions that require further research to better understand their nature and role in the network. More broadly, the addition of data post-1991 is necessary to more fully understand the network.

NORTH JERSEY HUB

Latine Foodways, Home Remedies, and Cultural Preservation along Bergenline Avenue

Team Leader(s): Dr. Jennifer Ayala

Researcher(s): Desiree Armas and Julio Santos

Project Summary

- Conducted research to gather academic journal articles on home remedies, particularly in the Latino community. Many of these articles provide important information and definitions regarding the uses and value of home remedies (Santos).
- Researched newspaper databases to locate primary sources on various restaurants and supermarkets in the North Hudson County area. Some of these restaurants included Mi Bandera in Union City, NJ, and Las Palmas in West New York, NJ (Santos).
- Developed a [Latine Home Remedies Interview Guide](#) aimed at documenting home remedies used by Latine communities in the northern NJ area. This 17-question interview protocol will collect information on the following areas: family background, use of home remedies, origins of remedies and transmission of knowledge, sourcing materials abroad, and food and beverages as healing. Most importantly, the questionnaire delves deeper into unconventional aspects of home remedies such as their spiritual and emotional effects as well as the role that religion may play. Research aims to preserve Latine culture through the use of food and beverages as healing and wellness. The guide will be translated to Spanish as well (Armas and Santos).
- Collected archival material about the history of foodways in Bergenline, in terms of ethnic succession; the impacts of different immigration laws that led to the changing demographics of Bergenline's immigrant population, which therefore led to the different kinds of "ethnic" restaurants and food places (Armas).
- Tracked the different kinds of cuisine and cultural representation through phases (German/Irish/Italian to Cuban to South American immigrant presence) (Armas).

- Tracking which restaurants are still open and which ones are still closed, and their significance to the community (and what that suggests for local politics and influences) (Armas).
- Conducted initial research about the presence of botanical or medicine shops/botanicas that have appeared in the area and beyond, as physical manifestations of food or beverage as healing (Armas).

Key Findings and Insights

Openings and Closures

- The tracking of Latine restaurant openings and closures in the Bergenline Ave area as a testament to the emergence of a new wave of Latine immigrants following changes in U.S. immigration law.

Survivance and Resistance

- The creation of the questionnaire is a clear example of how home remedies (and the "academic" preservation of them) are a form of survivance. These home remedies have not only allowed Latine communities to survive and thrive, but their preservation will allow Latine history to be preserved too. In other words, preservation of these home remedies can be seen as both a form of survivance and resistance.

Underdeveloped Research Areas and Questions

- Further research on Latine newspapers in New Jersey that may provide a better understanding of how the community navigated life in the United States. Were some of these newspapers in Spanish (e.g., El Especialito and Bergenline En Tus Manos)?
- What was the first Latine restaurant in the North Jersey area?
- What is the history of botanical shops in Latine countries? What is their history in Bergenline? What is the connection, if any, between these botanical shops and the ones abroad?
- What role do botanicas serve in Latine communities' health and wellness?

- How do public policies and food gentrification impact Latine community access to traditional herbs/ ingredients?
 - Are women usually the knowledge bearers of home remedies? What are the reasons behind this phenomenon? How does this impact/shape/influence their community and a woman's role at large?
-

Hospital Closures in Essex, Hudson, and Passaic Counties

Team Leader(s): John Johnson, Jr.

Researcher(s): Mansi Shah

Project Summary

- Researched the causes of hospital closures in Essex, Hudson, and Passaic counties in Northern New Jersey.
- Reviewed secondary literature on health care reform in New Jersey.
- Tracked New Jersey Healthcare reform in newspaper archives.

Key Findings & Insights

Closures & Openings

- In the 1970s, the state of New Jersey implemented a hospital pricing system to tamp down the cost of medical care in NJ hospitals. It established fixed rates for care at all New Jersey hospitals. Called Diagnosis Related Groups or DRGs, this regulatory method was developed at the Yale School of Management in the 1960s. New Jersey was the first state to implement this method of price controls.
- New Jersey's DRG system aimed to control rising hospital costs and keep urban hospitals in the black through surcharges that were added to hospital bills. This revenue subsidized care for the indigent, uninsured, and underinsured. It also subsidized costs for medical residencies.
- All boats, urban and suburban hospitals, were lifted.

- Arguments against the system claimed price fixing led to hospitals overcharging for some services, but this criticism was a misreading of a regulatory system that was effective.
- The DRG system was undermined by a court decision to eliminate surcharges on medical insurance plans. Labor unions, using a federal statute that protected Social Security from state taxes, sued New Jersey and won. This eliminated revenues that subsidized support for the un/underinsured and medical education. (Similar tactics used by the current Congress to weaken the ACA).
- In 1992 a Republican-majority state senate passed legislation and secured the governor's signature to repeal DRGs. This allowed insurers and hospitals to set pricing, eliminated surcharges that funded subsidies for uninsured and residencies, and restructured subsidies for the uninsured.
- "...What some opponents feared most, however, was that the new law would push the state toward a two-tiered health-care system. One level would consist of publicly subsidized but underfinanced urban hospitals struggling to serve the poor and elderly. The other would be sleek, profit-minded suburban institutions adding the latest medical technology and attracting privately insured patients." (NYT, 12/6/1992)
- Following the deregulation of pricing, there was a spate of hospital closings across New Jersey, with a particularly high percentage located in North Jersey. Deregulation led to dysregulation and dysfunction.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- Examine specific hospital closures and track the factors that led to closing or reduction in services.
- Conduct a census tract level analysis of neighborhoods where hospitals closed in order to track health and wellness before and after 1992 health care reform, as well as the percentages of residents who are insured, underinsured, or uninsured.
- Determine which unions filed suit to block that state from collecting revenues through surcharges.
- How did the 1992 reforms affect hospitals in Central and South Jersey?

Hospital Closures, Highway Construction, and Community Health in Hudson, Essex, and Passaic Counties

Team Leader: John Johnson, Jr.

Researcher: Mansi Shah

Project Summary

- Investigated the relationship between postwar highway construction, hospital closures, and community health in Hudson, Essex, and Passaic Counties. Used as sources the 1939 [WPA Guide to New Jersey](#), federal HOLC redlining records, the New Jersey Hospital Association's hospital closure dataset and NJDOT roadway network data. Produced GIS [maps](#) overlaying redlining boundaries, highway corridors, and geocoded hospital locations to make the spatial relationship between these three layers of structural racism visually legible across the study area.
- Built a master [spreadsheet](#) documenting 19 closed or bankrupt hospital facilities tracking each hospital across the archival source types including the WPA Guide, HOLC area descriptions, census tract demographics and highway proximity.
- Drafted a [narrative history](#) of [Hudson County's](#) hospital infrastructure tracing the arc from the Jersey City Medical Center at its 1930s peak (1,800 beds, state's largest hospital) through highway construction, DRG deregulation, and the closure of seven facilities between 2002 and 2026, including Christ Hospital's permanent closure in March 2026 after 154 years of continuous operation.

Key Findings & Insights

Mapping & Movement

- Highway construction along lines of race and class fragmented established neighborhood fabric in all three counties. D-graded HOLC neighborhoods from the 1930s align with the corridors where highways were built in the 1950s through 1980s, including the NJ Turnpike Extension through Bergen-Lafayette, I-280 through the Oranges, and I-78 through Clinton Hill.

Closures & Openings

- 50% of statewide hospital closures and 75% of bankruptcies between 1992 and 2015 occurred in these three counties. New Jersey's DRG regulated pricing system (1972–1992) had kept urban hospitals viable by funding charity care; its deregulation removed that protection from communities already weakened by highway construction. What closed were anchor institutions serving communities of color. What opened in some of those sites were luxury residential apartments.

Survivance & Resistance

- Communities responded with self-determined health infrastructure. Monumental Baptist Church established a clinic in Jersey City. Residents organized sustained campaigns around Christ Hospital's closure. Botanicas and community-based healing networks provided alternative care rooted in cultural practice. The Greenville neighborhood saw a partial reopening of outpatient services after community advocacy.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- The relationship between hospital closure and life expectancy changes at the census tract level, potentially mappable using USALEEP data.
- The rate of insured residents in communities where hospitals closed, and how the shift from insured to uninsured populations interacted with DRG deregulation.
- Comparative analysis with South Jersey cities facing similar dynamics of highway construction and hospital loss.
- Narratives for Essex County (Newark) and Passaic County (Paterson) paralleling the completed Hudson County narrative.
- Shared healing practices between Afro-American, Latine, and immigrant communities in the study area, connecting to the North Hub's botanica and alternative healing documentation.

Hospital Closures and Community Responses in Newark

Team Leader: John Johnson, Jr.

Researcher: Dominique Rocker

Project Summary

- Conducted research on the closure and/or transfer of ownership of 3 Catholic hospitals in Newark in 2008, two “Certificates of Need” from Cathedral Health System to the New Jersey State Health Planning Board requesting closure for financial reasons, and one approval letter from the Board regarding Columbus hospital. Research included community opposition to the closures.
- Used archived newsletters to document the history of Newark’s New Community Corporation (NCC), which expanded health care and social services to Newark residents from the late 1960s through to the 2000s.

Key Findings and Insights

Closures & Openings

- When read alongside official state or city documents, newspaper articles can provide a point of comparison between what the State finds useful in measuring the success of a health care facility and what the community does. Based on the language used in both, it becomes clear that for those in the community, access to health care is impacted not just by proximity or cost (although these are major concerns not to be discounted), but also by a greater sense of care and cultural familiarity.
- Newsletters such as the NCC’s *New Community Clarion* can provide specific information about when facility openings occur and why, as well as coverage about the extensive social services provided by a specific organization and larger community concerns. They are an invaluable resource for tracking outreach and organizing efforts in the community.

Survivance & Resistance

- The NCC itself is a key finding as the organization provided survival and resistance efforts across multiple social service arenas in health care access, family planning, and community well-being, particularly with regard to early and late-in-life care.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- Further research on specific organizations across the state like NCC.
- More narrowed focus on researching health care impacts specific to vulnerable populations such as mothers and infants as well as seniors, especially as they're cross-referenced with other factors like race, class, gender, and/or sexuality.
- Based on other reports provided, it may also be useful to track other measures of access and inequity such as redlining or municipal spending.

SOUTH JERSEY HUB

Preserving Cape May's African American History

Team Leader(s): Kendra Boyd

Researcher(s): Thomas DiGiovanni, Jacob Kaplan, Koda Drake, Stephanie Lang, and Megan Heeb

Project Summary

- Worked with the Community History Program of the Center For Community Arts (CCA) in Cape May to preserve, digitize, and interpret sources related to Cape Island's long-established African American community. The CCA previously established the John and Janet Nash African American History Archive and an oral history project. To learn more about this community partner visit: centerforcommunityarts.com.
- Digitized and restored photographic slides that contain images of the historic Black community
- Digitized other archival holdings such as newspaper clippings and documents
- Processed CCA's oral history collection. A website and database will be built to feature these materials and create digital exhibits related to key themes of the Truth and Repair initiative.

Key Findings & Insights

Movement & Mapping

- Connections to land/water access: Cape May's beaches were segregated through the mid-20th century. The area African Americans could go to was called Grant Street Beach. The situation in Cape May was similar to Atlantic City's Chicken Bone Beach (covered in Christina Jackson's project).
- Urban Renewal: The process of urban renewal in Cape May appears to have been less contested than in larger urban areas. In an oral history with Reverend Robert O. Davis, longtime pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church, he recalled that there was not

much resistance to the urban redevelopment project as much of the housing stock in the area was outdated. However, once the condemnation offers were made to acquire people's property that's when the community came together to demand fairer compensation. After this community pushback, most displaced folks received market value condemnation payments that allowed them to move into other places without any expense placed on them. Additionally, unlike the experiences of many communities, part of the condemned land was actually used to build affordable housing and a senior living complex, which was one of the stated goals of the urban renewal program.

- The City of Cape May's current claim to fame is that the entire municipality is designated as a National Historic Landmark. This is due to the Cape May Historic District's concentration of Victorian architecture. The city's decision in the mid-twentieth century to highlight its Victorian architecture was key to Cape May's comeback story (this resort town thrived in the 19th and early 20th centuries, but by the mid-20th century it was sort of run down and Atlantic City had overtaken it as the most popular South Jersey resort town). One of the reports we digitized called "Victorian Structures within Project I Urban Renewal Area" (June 1964) provides insight into how the decisions that devalued the Black community were made. In this survey of Cape May City, structures were rated as "excellent," "good," "fair," or "poor" examples of Victorian architecture. This survey was used to decide if structures should be restored or torn down. African American-owned buildings were less likely to have the desired Victorian architecture and thus were more likely to be ranked poor.
- Redevelopment connected to archival erasure: An interesting thing about the Cape May case is that while redevelopment efforts might not have been met with radical pushback, redevelopment did prompt the community to counter what we might call archival erasure. As the area was being demolished, Black residents feared that their history would be erased along with the physical structures. The leading community historian, John Nash documented pre-urban renewal buildings in the area and also captured some of the destruction with his photographic slides (see examples "Lafayette Street School Going Down" and "Elementary School Being Wrecked"). Nash also spent subsequent decades visiting folks in the community and making copies of items/photos in their possession that related to Black history in Cape May. He was also one the main organizers to preserve the Franklin Street School in the 1990s. According to the CCA "The Community History Program was the outgrowth of the group's efforts to save the Franklin Street School, a formerly segregated African American elementary school and one of the few buildings in

Cape May that still stands as testament to the contributions African Americans made to Cape May's development. At the time of CCA's founding, the building stood vacant and deteriorating, while the city turned down numerous requests from leaders in the African American community to put it to use.” Community organizers were eventually successful in saving the school, which has been restored and now serves as a public library (the CCA’s offices are also located in the building where they hold the John and Janet Nash African American History Archive). After working to save the Franklin Street School, organizers were prompted to create their oral history project interviewing African Americans from Cape May in order to prevent their history from being erased. Our digitization projects are part of their ongoing effort to recover and preserve the history of Cape May’s Black community.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- In terms of future outputs, one question that remains is what would be the best digital exhibits to create related to key themes of the Truth and Repair initiative.
- There is a lot in the Cape May sources related to sports and athletics. This relates to health, but not really sure what to do with this or if it should be brought out in some way.
- CCA also has sources related to education, training, and economic stability (social determinants of health areas). This includes information on the possibility for Black entrepreneurship. Many of Cape May’s Black residents owned businesses to cater to the tourist trade, but because of the seasonal nature of this resort town, they also had to be creative in order to survive in the low season. This required hustling and having multiple jobs. For example, husband and wife team John and Janet Nash owned the Planter’s Hotel; but during the off-season Janet taught home economics and John ran an upholstering business and also taught upholstering. John began learning this trade at the Bordentown School in Burlington County after high school (he went on to master it at Hampton Institute). He spent decades passing this trade on to his trainees in South Jersey (in Cape May and Glassboro).

Lawnside Digital Archive Processing

Team Leader(s): Kendra Boyd (South Jersey Hub)

Researcher(s): Koda Drake and Eva Graham

Project Summary:

- Assisted Lawnside Historical Society with the digital processing of historical materials in their possession. We are continuing to work with this community partner from last summer. Last year a Truth & Repair researcher worked to rehouse and prepare LHS's archival materials for public use. LHS possesses over 4,000 scanned images from the collection, which are managed through the CatalogIt web application. This year the researcher assistants helped with entering metadata, labelling, tagging, and organizing unprocessed items in the digital collection so that these resources can be made available to the public online. To learn more about this community partner visit: www.petermotthouse.org.

Key Findings & Insights:

Movement & Mapping

- Highway construction: Lawnside was threatened by the construction/expansion of NJ Turnpike. This is what prompted the Lawnside residents to preserve the Peter Mott House (which had served as a stop on the underground railroad in the nineteenth century). The LHS collection contains many documents and photographs related to the efforts to save PMS and also how that initiative became a launchpad for other initiatives to preserve and spread information about Lawnside's history.

Closures & Openings

- Closure of healthcare institutions: The story in Lawnside is not so much about the forced closings, but more related to the shifting trend of larger healthcare systems putting small physicians' offices out of business as segregation decreased. But in other South Jersey communities such as Camden, there was really a lack of access to medical care in the era of segregation because there simply were not enough Black healthcare workers.
- Misc.: At various times in its history, Lawnside struggled to maintain its independence, at one point having to ask the state government to take of the city's finances. It no longer operates its own high school, etc.

Survivance & Resistance

- Community health initiatives: Because Lawnside was founded as a self-governing Black municipality, all of the city's services were provided by its Black residents. The city had its own ambulance and firetruck and the first responders were African American. There were several Black doctors and nurses to attend to the community. One local physician, Dr. Roscoe Moore, was a key leader and organizer of Black doctors in the state of New Jersey. There were specialized institutions such as a Baby Clinic and a Home For the Aged and Infirm. This was and is a tight knit community and people looked out for each other.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- Lawnside is one of the oldest Black settlements in New Jersey, so its history interests with so many aspects of the history of structural racism in the state. It's hard to know what to concentrate on for the overall T&R project's narrative/outputs. On the one hand, segregation allowed the town to thrive and it was a safe haven for African Americans in so many ways. On the other hand, in the twentieth century it was constantly being threatened; in fact, Lawnside is still contending with threats of redevelopment to this day. I guess maybe a key insight from their story could be why Lawnside was able to ward off its destruction when so many other communities were decimated by highway construction and urban renewal?

South Jersey Oral Histories Processing and Reviewing

Team Leader(s): Kendra Boyd

Researcher(s): Kristian Whitehead

Project Summary

- Surveyed various oral history collections for information related to the themes of Truth and Repair. An emphasis was placed on finding information about community care and wellbeing initiatives.
- Compiled [insightful quotations](#) related to topics such as: healthcare access and Black medical providers; how the built environment impacted food access and

access to green space; the impact of urban renewal and highway construction; racial segregation and housing; racial discrimination and access to educational opportunities; community, mutual aid and social networks. This research will be used to develop the narrative of how structural racism has impacted social determinants of health in South Jersey.

Key Findings & Insights

Closures & Openings

- The oral histories help to indicate what were the important institutional spaces, which will allow us to trace what became of these locations. For example, the South Camden Branch of the YMCA (originally called the Hunton Branch) appears frequently in the oral histories and the archival materials of the Camden County Historical Society. This was a segregated branch that served that Black community in various ways that relate to health/wellbeing. For example, here is a quotation from one oral history:

“At one time we lived in Camden, lived in Camden for a long time. Camden, New Jersey, and my mother and father were both members of the YMCA but it was the South Camden YMCA [South Camden Branch YMCA, Camden, New Jersey] not the, you know, the main branch was primarily white and the South Camden Branch was primarily black and that was the one we belonged to. It was only later in life that I realized that they didn't really have a choice but we looked at it as that was our Y. Those things were very important to my parents, to both of them and from the Y we learned a lot about community, about family, about the village that raises a child and my mother and father both were very strong when it came to that.” (Ricardo Khan, The HistoryMakers A2007.238).

Fast forward to the present, and the YMCA has long been closed. The physical site where the African American YMCA branch was located is currently an overgrown, empty strewn with trash, including discarded tires. The image of what the location currently looks like can be found [here](#). This image brings to mind a current issue Camden faces, which is illegal dumping from outside of the city. This is just one example of a site that promoted Black health and wellbeing, which now become a site of harm.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- Need to decide format for writing up/presenting the findings from this research project.
- In terms of there being a lack of access to medical care in South Jersey communities such as Camden, several oral histories speak to this point. For example, Kimberly Camp's oral history from the Black Camden Oral History Project discusses how her father was one of only two Black dentists in the city in the 1960s and 1970s and he refused to leave the city because he couldn't abandon his patients. He often would not charge his clients because they could not afford his services. Kimberly characterized him as a terrible businessman. Similarly, in a HistoryMakers interview, Ricardo Khan discusses his father who was a physician in Camden. He recalled: "my father, the love that he has for medicine is a love that is, it's very hard to describe how big that is. He chose not to go to surgery or anything that would make him a lot of money instead he always believed in working for the people. So he continues to practice in Camden [New Jersey], he should be retired by now but it's what he loves to do. He is a general practitioner and as a family doctor he sometimes charges and sometimes he doesn't..." I think these anecdotes could provide insight into how sometimes in the Black community becoming a medical professional did not necessarily serve as a route to upward mobility/economic stability when clientele/patients were low-income.

Segregation and Ties to Slavery

Team Leader(s): Kendra Boyd

Researcher(s): Stephanie Lang

Project Summary

- Investigated how the history of racial segregation in New Jersey connects to the history of slavery in the state.
- Digitized documents related to slavery and abolition held at the Burlington County Historical Society. Burlington County holds great significance for the history of slavery and de facto segregation. The New Jersey Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery was founded and headquartered in Burlington, and the county contains Mount Laurel, the town for which the Mount Laurel Doctrine is named.

- Going forward, the project will utilize historic censuses (available starting from 1790) to display demographic data related to racial segregation patterns. Overall, this project will offer a historical framing for the foundation of structural racism in New Jersey and longstanding inequities related to health and wellbeing.

Rooted In Place: Black Oral Histories of Health, Care, and Urban Change in Atlantic City

Hub Leader(s): Christina Jackson

Researcher(s): Kathy Lopez and Taliyah Castro

Project Summary

- Documented the experiences of Black Atlantic City residents across generations.
- Used guided questions and field notes, as well as collecting photos of artifacts, to explore how residents of the redlined Northside experienced changes in the city's physical, social, economic, and healthcare environments over the years.
- Paid particular attention to the ways in which communities created and sustained systems of care and well-being both within and beyond constraints.

Key Findings & Insights

Mapping & Movement

- Projects of highway and casino development created neighborhood displacement that altered where people lived and how they accessed businesses including healthcare, and it changed their access to recreation and other community relationships.

Closures and Openings

- Segregation brought a wide system of Black doctors, dentists and lawyers, alongside home remedies for healthcare needs. However, losing neighborhood institutions (or seeing them transformed) did not always represent straightforward decline for residents as many worked in Atlantic City hospital (today's AtlantiCare).

Participants described the disappearance of small, private medical practices and Black-owned businesses alongside expanded access to specialized healthcare, health information, and new employment opportunities.

Survivance & Resistance

- Despite years of segregation and discrimination, residents described a thriving network of Black businesses, churches, doctors, relationships, and mutual care. Chicken Bone Beach and the Boardwalk were safe places in the city to find peace and host family gatherings. Additionally, surviving various storms and flooding as a community included essential household supplies, items for power outages, and even phone checks on neighbors.
- *Community as infrastructure*: The relationships that residents described could be seen as functioning as social infrastructure: neighbors watched one another's children, grandparents remained nearby. Doctors and other businesses made house calls or deliveries, and businesses extended informal credit to families. Churches operated as a hub of public health and other information, and families shared knowledge across generations.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- How did experiences of community care and wellbeing differ across generations as AC moved from segregation through integration, redevelopment, and casino expansion?
- How did the controversial construction of the [Brigantine Connector](#) tunnel impact Black families on the Westside of the Northside neighborhood closer to the Bay?
- How did Atlantic City as a resort impact its natural and built environment, and in turn, existing relationships to the city's system of power (city government, Casino Control Act, CRDA)?

STATEWIDE HUB

Towards Building Research and Technical Capacity of Future Work on Hospital Closures in New Jersey

Team Leader(s): Dawne Mouzon

Researcher(s): Ethan Yoo

Project Summary

- Assembled a comprehensive spreadsheet of publicly available data sources that builds research and technical capacity toward the final RWJF deliverables, multi-layered maps to test the research hypotheses not only in the Statewide hub but across all hubs as needed. These data sources can be used with a researcher's preferred tools to identify spatial relationships and statistical associations across domains and units of analysis.
- Compiled state data resources to cover the potential future loss of federal data sources. Developed a second database that highlights the dynamics of a second theme, "Closures and Openings," by identifying 29 New Jersey acute care facility closures (e.g., hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, and dialysis centers) between 1992 and 2026. This database also includes links to media coverage of various coverages, which highlights community protests and activism around community health closures.
- Developing a longitudinal database of historical spatial and health data that will soon be used to construct time-series maps of community and health changes to key communities over time.

Key Findings and Insights

Mapping & Movement

- Our prioritization of state data and mapping resources identified potential substitutions for at-risk federal data, leaving future work less vulnerable to governmental actions.

Survivance & Resistance

- Alternative state-level data sources will help research navigate the unknown terrain of federal data availability. Recently found media coverage can also highlight how communities both resisted and survived threats to key health care assets in their neighborhoods.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- Future work could identify the years in which hospitals and other major facilities first opened or expanded, providing additional context for how hospital systems are embedded into communities.
- Archival research on the media coverage of 1-2 most impactful hospital closures could serve as key case studies that would provide valuable context on community responses to the threat of closures.
- As the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events continues to increase with human-caused climate change, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities, there is also a growing need to understand the potential impacts of temporary openings and closures on existing community resources. The environment-related data sources identified by the comprehensive spreadsheet of data sources could be useful for such work.

Mapping the Food Environments of Racially Minoritized Communities in New Jersey

Team Leader(s): Dawne Mouzon

Researcher(s): Sharanya Sahu

Project Summary

- Leveraged multiple state, federal, and local data sources to map food deserts, food services, and neighborhood racial composition in New Jersey, with a particular focus on 7 municipalities: New Brunswick, Trenton, Newark, Plainfield, Jersey City, Camden, and Atlantic City. Food services studied includes farmers markets, food pantries, grocery stores and bodegas, and senior meal sites.

- Evidenced a visible correlation between predominantly Black/Hispanic/Latinx communities and higher prevalence of food deserts; similar patterns were found for multiple other measures of vulnerability.
- Identified a diagonal line of census tracts with predominantly racially minoritized neighborhoods spanning from Paterson to Camden.
- Built the research and technical capacity to construct historic longitudinal maps, including demographics and health, on underdeveloped topics outlined below.

Data sources assembled and used includes:

- Classification of food deserts by block group: NJ Department of Community Affairs
- Neighborhood racial classification: American Community Survey/Plan4Health NJ tool
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/SNAP retailer data: current neighborhood food retailers
- Home Owners' Loan Corporation redlining classifications and urban renewal boundaries

Key Findings & Insights

Mapping & Movement:

- The results evidence a visible correlation between predominantly Black/Hispanic/Latinx communities and higher prevalence of food deserts; similar patterns were found for multiple other measures of vulnerability.
- Identified a diagonal line of census tracts with predominantly racially minoritized neighborhoods spanning from Paterson to Camden.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

More research is needed to:

- Investigate the relationship between food services and health outcomes of vulnerable populations in the target municipalities.

- Assemble a comprehensive data source including and classifying all food retail outlets, not just SNAP retailers
- To map food resources by census tracts historically, using the National Neighborhood Data Archive (1990-2022). This resource can be used to track the availability of food resources both before and after the implementation of various urban renewal projects.
- Incorporate highway data/boundaries to explore health outcomes of communities adjacent to the major highways and roads connecting Paterson to Camden
- Investigate the food services in food desert areas and identify whether they provide adequate and affordable food resources
- Study the food purchasing power of people in target municipalities, to see whether they are actually shopping at existing grocery and food store
- Determine whether there are factors outside of the quantity and quality of the store's stock that might direct use, such as perceived lack of safety or lack of accessibility

“To Know One Another”: Interracial Organizing and Public Health in New Jersey, 1925-1945

Team Leader(s): Dawne Mouzon

Researcher(s): Anh Adams

Project Summary

- Conducted archival research to trace the efforts of the Interracial Committee of the Council for Human Services in New Jersey to implement a statewide survey entitled The Negro in New Jersey (1932), aimed at documenting Black people's experiences with housing, health care, employment, among others.
- Documented how the Interracial Committee of the Council for Human Services in New Jersey leveraged these survey findings to motivate the New Jersey Department of Health to more closely document Black health outcomes, and eventually led to the creation of the Negro Health Program.

- Recounted the story of how a dedicated group of community organizers, doctors, nurses, and social workers worked to raise awareness about the realities of Black life in New Jersey, and how they fought to gain recognition and resources to improve public health in their communities. Used the archives of the New Jersey Department of Health and the Council of Human Services in New Jersey.

Key Findings & Insights

Closures & Openings

- Home remedies could supplement and complement professionalized medicines for communities with unequal access to health care institutions and professionals

Survivance & Resistance

- The early efforts of the Interracial Committee of the Council for Human Services in New Jersey demonstrated how a dedicated group of community organizers, doctors, nurses, and social workers worked to raise awareness about the realities of Black life in New Jersey, and how they fought to gain recognition and resources to improve public health in their communities.
- This era of public health activism in New Jersey constitutes a crucial part of what historians have called the “Long Civil Rights Movement”. Taking a view of civil rights activism that includes the organizing efforts of activists outside of the 1960s and earlier in the century illuminates more diverse forms of activism, in this case activism around the fight for equal healthcare access.
- This history reveals that the activists of the early twentieth century understood the nuance of the relationship between race and public health, and addressing disparities requires a holistic viewpoint that acknowledges the impact of housing, education, environment, and working conditions.

Underdeveloped Research Areas & Questions

- More research is needed to identify and document other diverse forms of public health activism that preceded, and arguably contributed to, the civil rights activism efforts of the 1960s.

Truth & Repair Summer 2026 Research Assistants

Ánh Adams (she/her) is a PhD student in American History and Women's and Gender History at Rutgers University. Her research explores the history of gendered youth incarceration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century American Midwest. She is thematically interested in the history of childhood and the state, and the intersections between incarceration, gender, and the family. anh.adams@rutgers.edu.

Desiree "Des" Armas (she/her) is an aspiring ESL educator who currently serves as a Newcomer Teacher for Irvington Public Schools. She is a researcher by training, specializing in areas related to youth mental health/wellbeing and child welfare. She has a cat and is based in New Jersey. desiree.armas1@gmail.com.

Sade Awodesu (she/her) is a first-year PhD student in Princeton's history department. Her research focuses on race and labor radicalism in the early twentieth century, often focusing on Philadelphia. She is most drawn to histories of the black freedom struggle and of the struggle of workers and all of the oppressed against capitalism. sade@princeton.edu.

Taliyah Castro (she/her) is an undergraduate student at Rutgers University-Camden majoring in Psychology with a minor in Childhood Studies. She works as an educational paraprofessional and is passionate about youth development, creative writing, and community wellness initiatives. tc620@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Tom DiGiovanni (he/him) is a graduate student at Rutgers University–Camden. His research is focused on surfing history. tomlaist848484@gmail.com.

Koda Drake (they/them) is a PhD student in history at Rutgers University. They study prison newspapers, material culture, and sites of confinement in the US. ded127@history.rutgers.edu.

Gaëlle Germain (she/her) is a recent graduate from the Edward J. Bloustein School of Public Health and Policy. She is currently attaining her master's in public health with a concentration in Health Systems and Policy. Her interests focus on health equity and improving health education for underserved communities. glg68@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Eva Graham (she/her) and a student at Rutgers University-Camden heading into her senior year. She is majoring in history and philosophy and previously worked under Dr. Kendra Boyd on the Black Camden Oral History Project. evagraham055@gmail.com

Zoonmall Hanif (she/her) is a master's student at Rutgers University pursuing a dual degree in Public Policy and Public Informatics. She is interested in public policy, public informatics, research, and community engagement. hzoommall@gmail.com

Megan Heeb (she/her) is a rising second-year History Master's student at Rutgers's University-Camden. Her research interests are Asian American history, immigration, diasporic nationalism, race, and transnationalism. She is currently studying racial discourse during the Korean independence movement in the Greater Philadelphia Area from 1919-1922. megmch15@gmail.com.

Susan Iseyen (she/her) is a historian of Africa and doctoral candidate at Princeton University. Her research examines the history of disease, medicine, colonialism, conflict, and memory in British West Africa, with particular attention to Nigeria and Ghana. Through oral history, she documents personal experiences and community memories that deepen our understanding of health, loss, war, and social change across generations. siseyen@princeton.edu.

Stephanie Lang (she/her) is a graduate student at Rutgers, specializing in public history. They're from the New Jersey Pinelands, where they like to explore and build miniature ecosystems in terrariums. sml411@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Kathleen Fitzsimmons López, MS, MPA, NBC-HWC (she/her) is a PhD candidate in Public Affairs and Community Development at Rutgers University–Camden. Her research sits at the intersection of workforce policy, community well-being, and health equity, with a focus on how economic precarity shapes individual and community outcomes. lopez.kathy@rutgers.edu.

Alice Morandy (she/her) is currently finishing her dissertation, which examines the lives of 504 individuals who appear in two thirteenth-century Norman miracle collections. Before coming to Princeton, Alice graduated cum laude from UCLA, earning a B.A. in English and History. She then pursued an M.A. in medieval history at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. Her master's thesis focused on gender relations in the high medieval monastery of the Paraclete in Champagne, France. amorandy@princeton.edu.

Laura Nelson (she/her) is a PhD candidate in history at Princeton University whose research focuses on nineteenth-century African American and legal history. She is also interested in history pedagogy, digital humanities, and using technology in public history and learning about the past. ln5312@princeton.edu.

Keilly Ponce-Mérida (she/her) is a senior in the Sociology department at Princeton University, minoring in Statistics & Machine Learning and Dance. kponce.merida@gmail.com.

Kaitlyn Rich (she/her) is a PhD student in Library and Information Science at Rutgers University - New Brunswick. Her research interests include critical informatics, archival science, environmental studies, and science and technology studies. In addition to Truth

and Repair, she has held roles as a research assistant at the Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice at Rutgers University, a project archivist at the Lawnside Historical Society, and a part-time lecturer in English and Media Studies at Rutgers-Camden.

ker136@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Dominique Ashley Rocker (she/her) is a PhD candidate in American Studies at Rutgers University-Newark working on a dissertation that engages the intersections of Blackness, gender, sexuality, beauty, and technology by focusing on the cultural history and construction of the sexualized Black femme body within digital popular cultures. Taking up the cultural phenomena of plastic surgery, hip hop, and sexually explicit modifications to video games such as *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* and *The Sims 4*, the project argues that technology and Black femme sex worker aesthetics are central to the construction of a sexualized Black femme body from the 1990s to the present. Dominique also holds an MA in African American Studies from UCLA and an MA in History from Rutgers-Newark.

dar301@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Sharanya Sahu (she/her) has a background in environmental planning and is a 2nd-year student in the Master of City and Regional Planning program at Rutgers University.

Sharanya aspires to advance equity in the built environment, be it through affordable housing, climate resilience, or GIS. In her free time, she enjoys walking around her neighborhood, trying new recipes, and cyanotyping. sahu.sharanya@gmail.com.

Julio Santos (he/him) is a recent graduate of the History department at Saint Peter's University. He will be continuing his education this summer at the Lynch School of Education and Human Development at Boston College for his Master's in Education. Julio's research focuses on African American history, U.S. immigration, American healthcare system shifts, and immigrant rights advocacy. jsantos1@saintpeters.edu.

Serita Sargent (they/them) is a PhD student in Library and Information Science at Rutgers University. Their research work is around carceral and surveillance technologies, how they tie into the prison industrial complex and its relationship to chattel slavery as its impacts Black and Brown individuals. Serita works with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals forming advocacy groups, community plans and policy change. Their focus is centering the voices and stories of Black communities and using Black radical tradition to enact social change. sds327@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Mansi Shah (she/her) is an architect, urbanist, and PhD candidate in the Urban Systems program at NJIT and Rutgers. With over fifteen years of experience across practice, research, and teaching in India, the US, and Europe, her work bridges urban history, digital ethnography, and spatial studies. She has studied Architecture at CEPT University,

India and Urban Design at Cornell University, USA. She previously worked with Pritzker Prize Laureate B.V. Doshi and contributed to the revitalization of Ahmedabad's historic Bhadra Precinct. Her doctoral research, *Making Place and Meaning in New Jersey*, explores the relationship between urban morphology, infrastructure, and identity.

ms3866@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Kristian Whitehead (she/her) is a History Masters student studying at Rutgers-Camden. Her research interests include Black radical movements in the United States and Black internationalism. klw207@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Ethan Yoo (he/him) is a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. His work focuses on disability, poverty and inequality, and disaster vulnerability. A first-generation college graduate and AmeriCorps VISTA alumnus, Ethan earned his bachelor's degree in political science and educational studies from Swarthmore College, a second bachelor's degree in computer science from Thomas Edison State University, and a master's degree from Rutgers School of Communication and Information. ethan.yoo@rutgers.edu.

Truth & Repair Summer 2026 Staff

Keith Wailoo (he/him), Ph.D., Princeton University (Co-PI), is Henry Putnam University Professor of History and Public Affairs. He is jointly appointed in the Department of History and in the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs. His research straddles history and health policy, touching on drugs and drug policy, on the politics of race and health, on the interplay of identity, ethnicity, gender, and medicine, and on controversies in genetics and society. kwailoo@princeton.edu.

John Johnson, Jr. (he/him), Ph.D., Saint Peter's University (Co-PI), is a historian of race, class, culture, and urban geography in the 20th century United States. In particular, he focuses on the impact of federally funded urban renewal programs on the lives of residents of Newark, NJ. He is currently completing a book on the Weequahic Section of Newark, NJ. Dr. Johnson leads research at the North Jersey Hub. jjohnson5@saintpeters.edu.

Dawne Mouzon (she/her), Ph.D., M.P.H., Rutgers University-New Brunswick, is a medical sociologist with expertise in health and healthcare inequities among racially minoritized populations. Dr. Mouzon leads research for the Statewide Jersey Hub. She is currently

writing a book on the social and historical origins of ethnoracial health inequities in the United States. dawne.mouzon@rutgers.edu.

Beverly Mills (she/her) and **Elaine Buck (she/her)** are founders of the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum (SSAAM) and Friday Truehart Consultants. Mills and Buck lead research at the Central Jersey Hub. bmills72@verizon.net and Sharon.buck@verizon.net.

Tania Boster (she/her), Ph.D., Princeton University, Director of Princeton's Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship (ProCES) brings expertise in academic and community history with experience organizing collaborative history projects and convenings on topics including oral history with displaced communities and hyperlocal historical research to advance racial equity. Dr. Boster works most closely with Mills and Buck at the Central Jersey Hub. tania.boster@princeton.edu.

Kendra Boyd (she/her), Ph.D., Rutgers University-Camden, is a scholar of African American history whose research focuses on Black business and economic history, urban history, and migration. She is also co-founder of the Black Camden Oral History Project, which aims to preserve the history of African American life and activism in Camden, New Jersey through recorded oral interviews. Dr. Boyd leads research at the South Jersey Hub. kendra.boyd@rutgers.edu.

Christina Jackson (she/her), Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice at Rutgers-Camden, and chair of the Africana Studies program. She researches urban space, spatial politics, cultural storytelling, public health, and inequality. As part of the project, Dr. Jackson works with Dr. Boyd at the South Jersey Hub studying the social determinants of Black material health and the socio-economic and environmental struggles of black coastal communities in and around Atlantic City. cj580@camden.rutgers.edu.

Jennifer Ayala (she/her), Ph.D., is a Professor in the Sociology, Urban Studies, and Anthropology Department, Director of TCUS, and Director of the Latin American and Latino Studies program at Saint Peter's University in Jersey City, New Jersey. Her scholarship focuses on education and immigrant justice issues using a PAR Entremundos approach with youth. She leads research alongside John Johnson for the North Jersey Hub. jayala@saintpeters.edu.

Skyler D. Gordon (he/they), Ph.D., is an historian, educator, and public humanities scholar who serves as Truth & Repair's Project Manager and helps Mills and Buck lead research for the Central Jersey Hub. sdgordon@princeton.edu.

Erin Santana (she/her), Ph.D., is a public historian, interdisciplinary humanities scholar, and project administrator with twenty years of experience with community-engaged cultural work in museums, historic sites, public high schools, and universities. She serves as a Senior Research Specialist focusing on the impacts of RWJF-funded medical infrastructure in New Brunswick. erin.r.santana@rutgers.edu.

Sydney Johnson (she/her), Ph.D., is a public historian and historical consultant whose work sits at the intersection of race, place, gender, and public memory foregrounding Black women's unacknowledged labor and erasure within historical interpretations of the suburban New Jersey landscape. She serves as a Senior Research Specialist collaborating on community engaged historical research projects throughout the Central Jersey hub. sj6105@princeton.edu.

Rachel Gerber (she/her), Ph.D., is an historian, applied researcher, program manager, and stakeholder engagement specialist with experience coordinating collaborative, research-driven initiatives designed to inform and advance social change. She serves as a Senior Research Specialist focusing on the impacts of RWJF-funded medical infrastructure in New Brunswick. ragerber@princeton.edu.

Truth + Repair

The History of Structural Racism in New Jersey

2026 End-of-Summer Convening

120 East State
Saturday, August 22, 2026
12:00–3:30 PM EDT

OUR WORK: Truth + Repair Study

Research study documenting the historical effects of structural racism on the health and wellbeing of marginalized communities in New Jersey

Develop local research projects on histories of structural inequality and struggles for justice

Organized across research hubs located at educational and cultural institutions in North, Central, and South Jersey

Partner with students, scholars, and cultural practitioners across New Jersey

Attempting to steward unable and enabling research in pursuit of equitable health outcomes for all New Jerseyans

Summer 2026 Themes

Mapping & Movement	Closures & Openings	Survivance & Resistance
→ How different peoples have used, manipulated, and (re)conceptualized the natural and built environments of modern New Jersey. → How individuals and communities related to these environments over time as sources for communal health and wellbeing → How certain manipulations of these environments such as highway construction/expansion and racial segregation/apartheid reconfigured existing relationships to and conceptions of space → How these manipulations created structural inequalities, racialized marginalization, and health disparities → How communities adapted to and restructured their relationships to space	→ How the complete or partial closures of hospitals, nursing homes, mental health institutions, etc. impacted those that relied on the medical services provided → How did those communities support or oppose the closings → How communities handled the absence of services or the remaining presence of the structures → Institutions that opened on the physical site or in the physical building and their effects on the health and wellness of the surrounding communities → Institutions and services that communities created or recreated to meet their needs	→ Desire-based rather than damage-centered → How communities sustained their health and wellbeing apart from and in relation to structures of inequality → Theories and methods of resistance developed by networks of resisters

Convening Schedule

Lunch (12:00–12:45, 45 min.)

Introduction, Skyler Gordon (12:45–1:00, 15 min.)

Presentations (1:00–2:00, 60 min.)

Mapping & Movement, Erin Santana (1:00–1:20, 20 min.)

Closures & Openings, Rachel Gerber (1:20–1:40, 20 min.)

Survivance & Resistance, Sydney Johnson (1:40–2:00, 20 min.)

Break (2:00–2:30, 30 min.)

Discussion (2:30–3:30, 60 min.)

Small Groups (2:30–2:50, 20 min.)

Large Group, w/ John Johnson, Jr. & Cherry Oakley (2:50–3:30, 40 min.)

Mapping & Movement

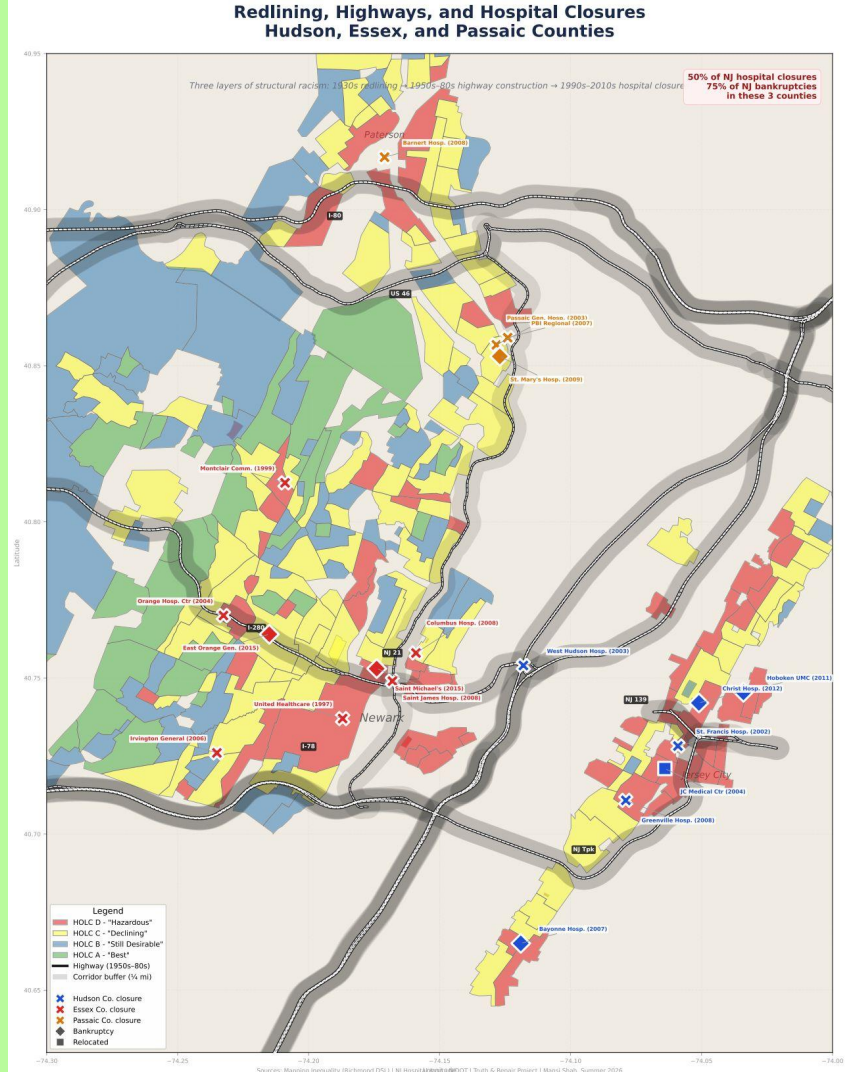
Hospital Closures, Highway Construction, and Community Health in Hudson, Essex, and Passaic Counties

Team Lead: Dr. John Johnson

Researcher: Mansi Shah

Investigated the relationship between postwar highway construction, hospital closures, and community health in Hudson, Essex, and Passaic Counties.

- D-graded HOLC neighborhoods from the 1930s align with the corridors where highways were built in the 1950s through 1980s.
- New Jersey's Diagnosis Related Group (DRG) regulated pricing system (1972–1992) had kept urban hospitals viable by funding charity care; its deregulation removed that protection from communities already weakened by highway construction.
 - 50% of resulting statewide hospital closures and 75% of bankruptcies between 1992 and 2015 occurred in Hudson, Essex, and Passaic counties.



Preserving Cape May's African American History

Team Leader(s): Kendra Boyd

Researcher(s): Thomas DiGiovanni, Jacob Kaplan, Koda Drake, Stephanie Lang, and Megan Heeb

Worked with the Community History Program of the Center For Community Arts (CCA) in Cape May to preserve, digitize, and interpret sources related to Cape Island's long-established African American community.

- The City of Cape May's current claim to fame is that the entire municipality is designated as a National Historic Landmark, due to the city's concentration of Victorian architecture.
- The report, "Victorian Structures within Project I Urban Renewal Area" (June 1964), documents how structures were rated as "excellent," "good," "fair," or "poor" examples of Victorian architecture. African American-owned buildings were less likely to have the desired Victorian architecture and thus were more likely to be ranked poor and slated for demolition.

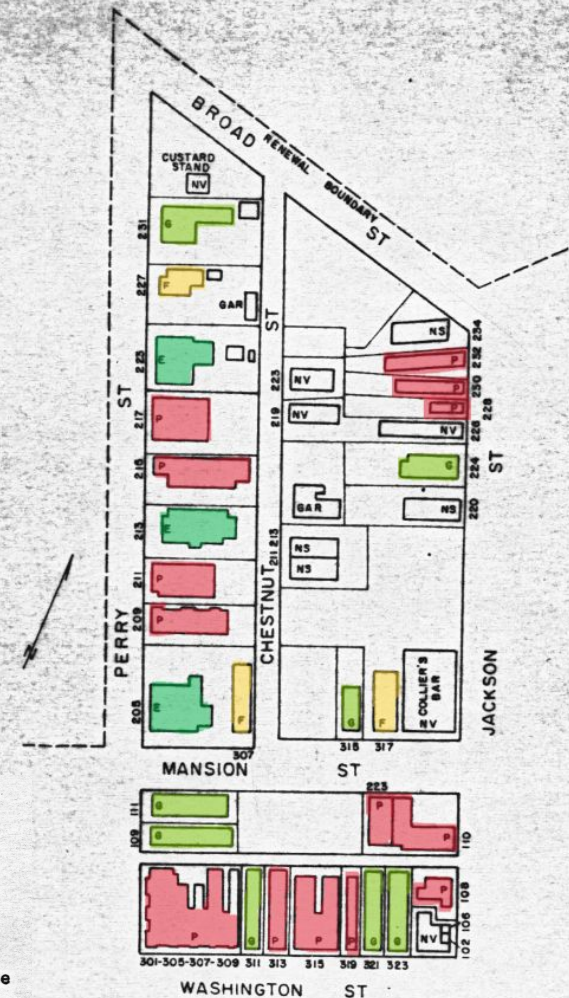
*Coloring not
original to
source

KEY :

E	Excellent
G	Good
F	Fair
P	Poor

NS No Significance

NV Not Victorian



Mapping the Food Environments of Racially Minoritized Communities in New Jersey

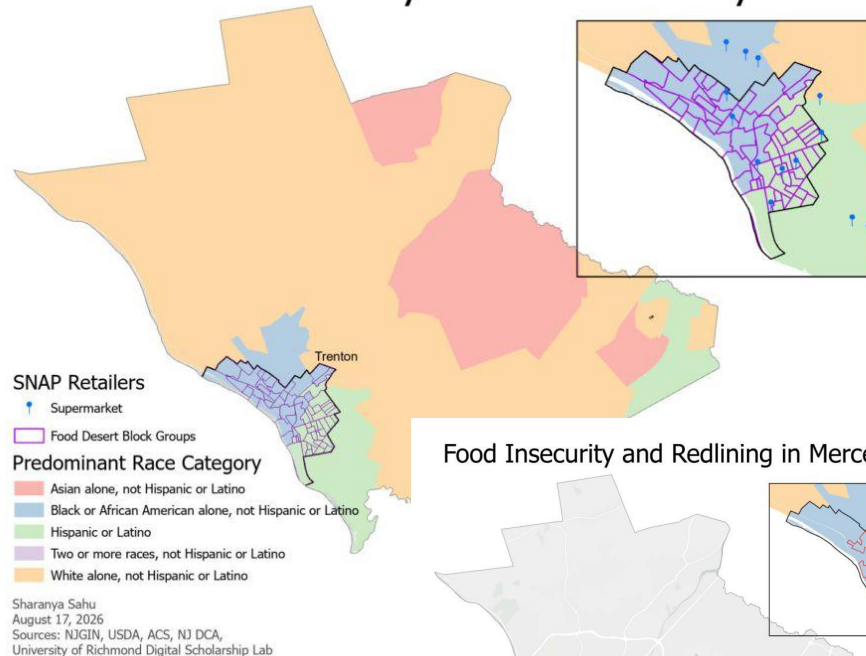
Team Leader(s): Dawne Mouzon

Researcher(s): Sharanya Sahu

Leveraged multiple state, federal, and local data sources to map food deserts, food services, and neighborhood racial composition in New Jersey.

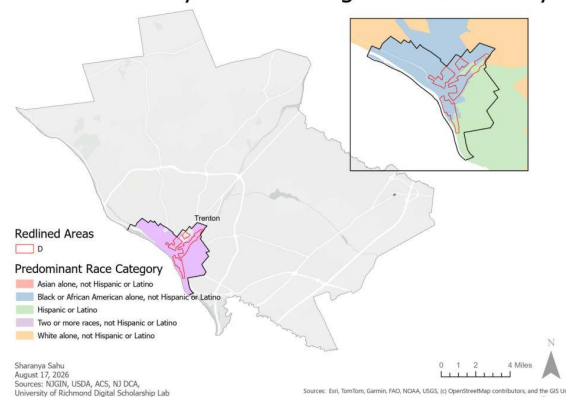
- Evidenced a visible correlation between predominantly Black/Hispanic/Latinx communities, histories of redlining and urban renewal, and a higher prevalence of food insecurity.
- Identified a diagonal line of census tracts with predominantly racially minoritized neighborhoods spanning from Paterson to Camden.

Food Insecurity in Mercer County



County maps also produced for Union, Middlesex, Hudson, Essex, Camden, and Atlantic Counties

Food Insecurity and Redlining in Mercer County



Urban Renewal's Persistent Legacy

Prevalent Race (ACS 2024)

- Asian alone, not Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American alone, not Hispanic or Latino
- Hispanic or Latino
- Two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino
- Urban Renewal Projects (1950-66)

Sharanya Sahu
August 17, 2026
Sources: NJGIN, Renewing Inequality, ACS

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Food Deserts in New Jersey

Legend

- SNAP Retailers
- New Jersey Boundary
- Selected Municipalities

Food Desert Block Groups

FD_SCORE

- 0.001885 - 20.000000
- 20.000001 - 40.000000
- 40.000001 - 60.000000
- 60.000001 - 80.000000
- 80.000001 - 100.000000

Sharanya Sahu
June 28, 2026
Sources: NJGIN, USDA

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

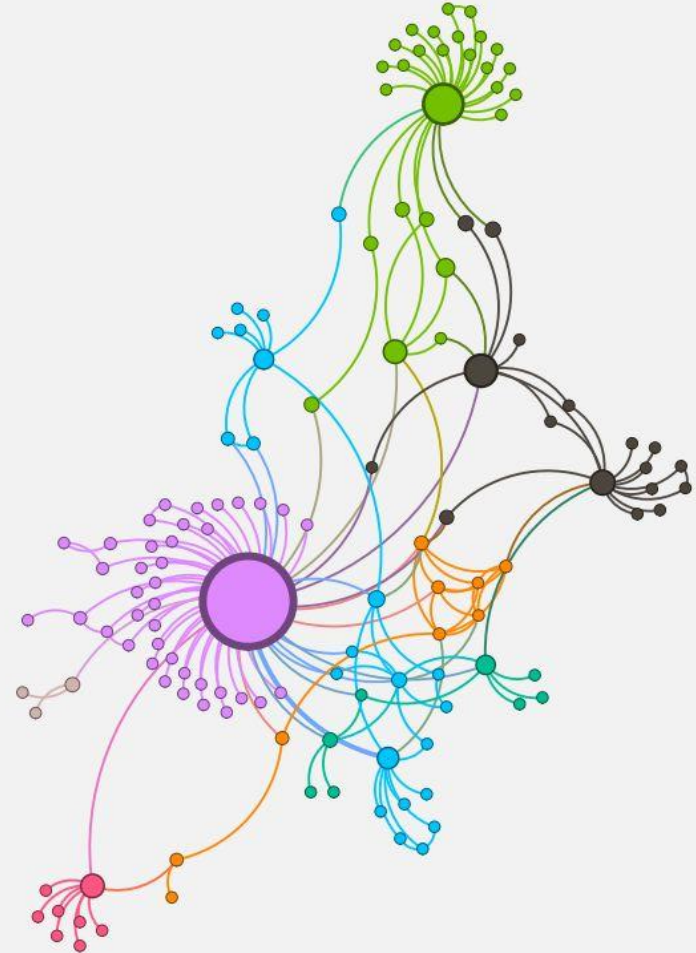
RWJF in New Brunswick Urban Renewal

Project Leader(s): Rachel Gerber and Erin Santana

Researcher(s): Sade Awodesu and Zoonmall Hanif

Piloted the use of network analysis software, Gephi, to engage in a preliminary analysis of the primary decision-makers that developed and executed NBT and DEVCO's RWJF-funded urban renewal agenda in New Brunswick.

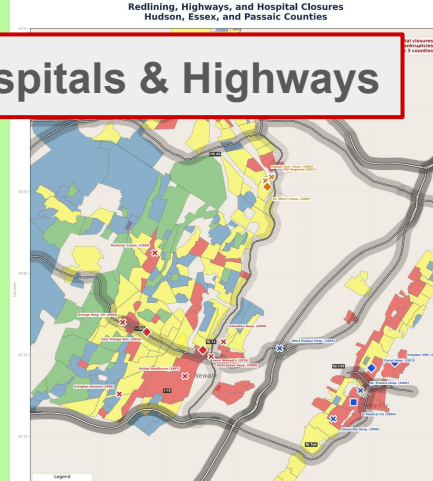
- Reformatting our qualitative data to be usable in Gephi was very time consuming, albeit a worthwhile exercise to consider what types of relationships are meaningful for our network analysis (e.g. financial ties, employment, cc'ed on letters, presence at meetings, etc.)
- Gephi identified certain individuals in the network as more central (calculated as “betweenness”) than the raw number of relationships between them and other individuals/institutions might suggest. These types of calculations may demonstrate the usefulness of software such as Gephi.



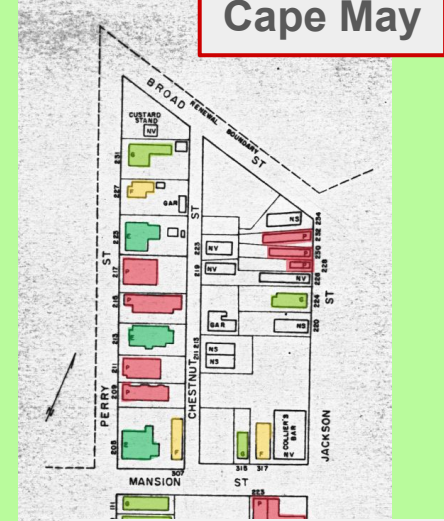
Q&A/Discussion

1. Any questions for our researchers?
2. What similarities and distinctions do you notice across these mapping & movement-related projects?

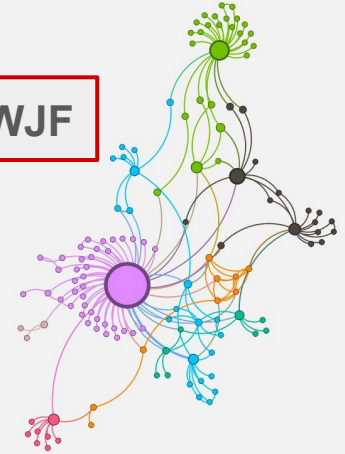
Hospitals & Highways



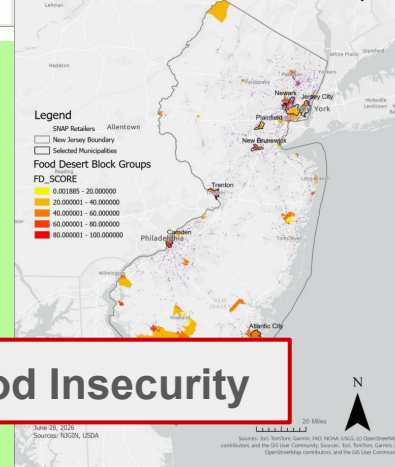
Cape May



RWJF



Food Deserts in New Jersey



Food Insecurity

Closures & Openings

The Common Thread

Transformations in the healthcare landscape that led to significant structural shifts in healthcare access for communities of color.

Levels of analysis:

- Openings and closures of hospitals and other large scale institutions focused primarily on **acute care**
- Pressures on local primary care providers and access to **preventive care** and routine treatments

Towards Building Research and Technical Capacity of Future Work on Hospital Closures in New Jersey

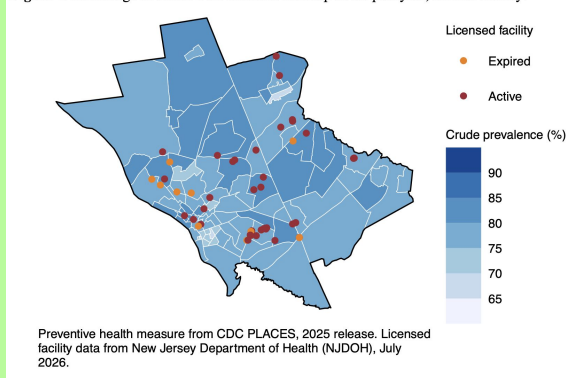
Team Lead: Dawne Mouzon

Researcher: Ethan Yoo

Developed a database that identifies 29 New Jersey acute care facility closures (e.g., hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, and dialysis centers) between 1992 and 2026. This database also includes links to media coverage, which highlights community protests and activism around community health closures.

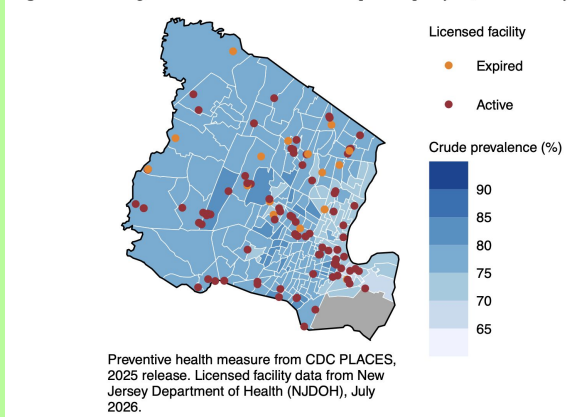
- Drew on that database to create visualizations that open up connections between various aspects of this project and with other T & R studies.

Figure 7. Percentage of adults with a routine checkup in the past year, Mercer County.



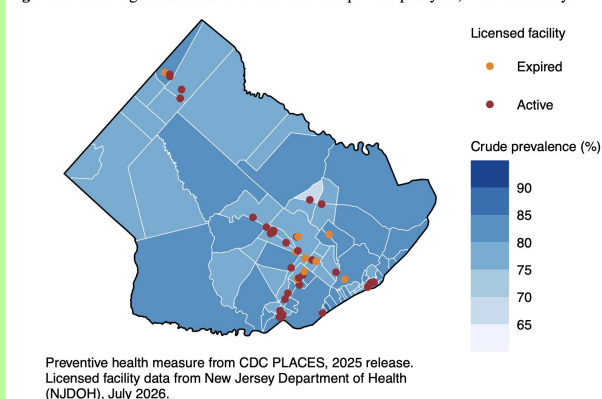
Mercer County

Figure 5. Percentage of adults with a routine checkup in the past year, Essex County.



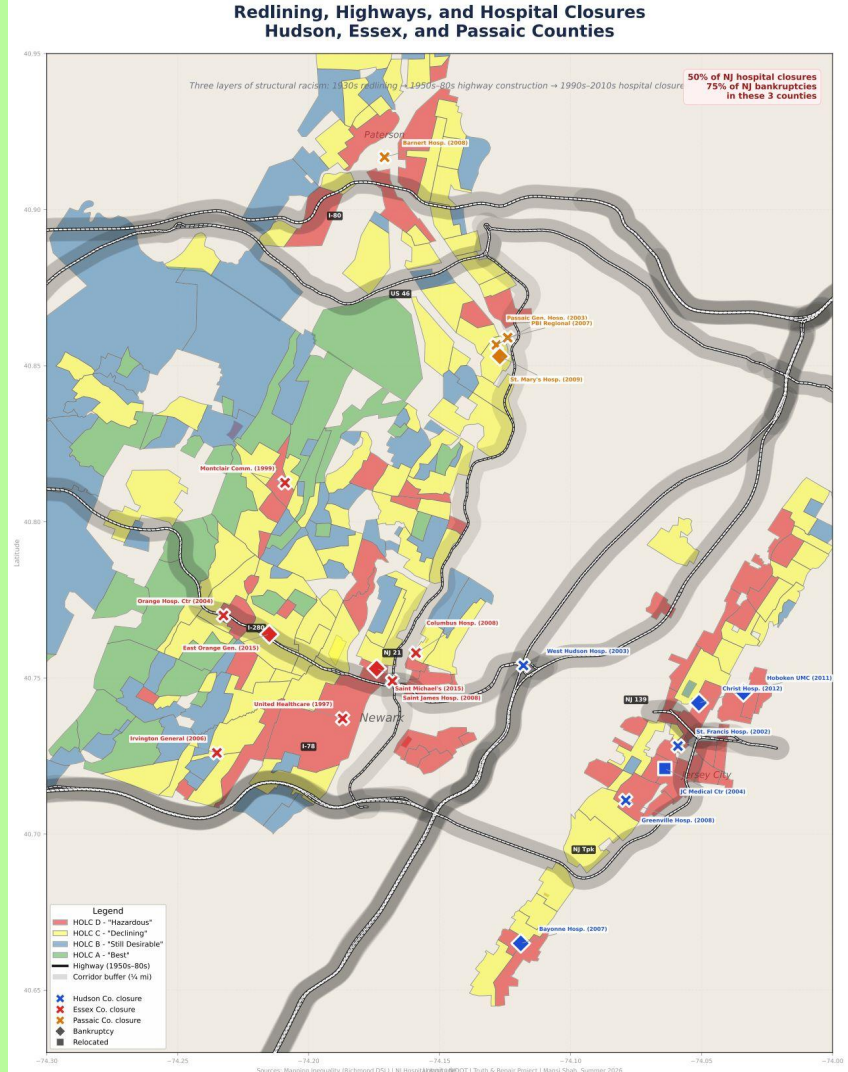
Essex County

Figure 3. Percentage of adults with a routine checkup in the past year, Atlantic County.



Atlantic County

- In the 1970s, the state of New Jersey implemented an innovative hospital pricing system: Diagnosis Related Groups or DRGs. The DRG system allowed NJ hospitals to levy surcharges on hospital bills that subsidized care for the indigent, uninsured, and underinsured. It also subsidized costs for medical residencies.
- The DRG system was later undermined by a court decision to eliminate surcharges on medical insurance plans. It was then fully repealed by the NJ state legislature in 1992.
- Following the deregulation of pricing, there was a spate of hospital closings across New Jersey, with a *particularly high percentage located in North Jersey*.



Lawnside Digital Archive Processing

Team Lead: Kendra Boyd

Researcher(s): Koda Drake and Eva Graham

Assisted Lawnside Historical Society with the digital processing of historical materials in their possession.

- Lawnside is one of the oldest Black settlements in New Jersey. Because it was founded as a self-governing Black municipality, all of the city's services were provided by its Black residents.
- The city had its own ambulance and firetruck and the first responders were African American. There were several Black doctors and nurses to attend to the community.
- In other South Jersey communities such as Camden, the segregation era actively limited access to medical care because there simply were not enough Black healthcare workers. The story in Lawnside was different. It was not rooted in early limitations or driven by forced closures. Instead, decreased segregation created openings for larger healthcare systems that put small physicians' offices out of business.



Image courtesy of the Lawnside Historical Society

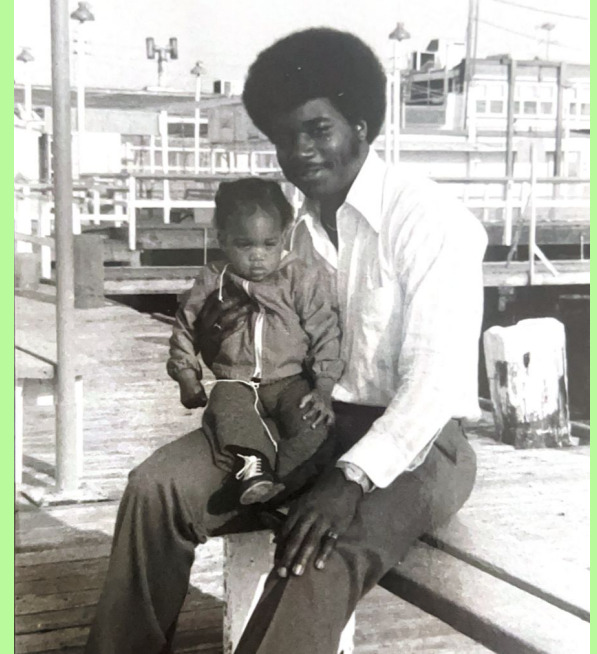
Rooted In Place: Black Oral Histories of Health, Care, and Urban Change in Atlantic City

Team Lead: Christina Jackson

Researcher(s): Kathy Lopez and Taliyah Castro

Conducted oral histories and processed archival sources that document the experiences of Black Atlantic City residents in redlined Northside.

- Despite years of segregation and discrimination, Northside residents described a thriving network of Black businesses, churches, doctors, relationships, and mutual care. As in the Lawnside case, segregation brought a wide system of Black doctors, dentists and lawyers, alongside home remedies for healthcare needs.
- Desegregation brought new opportunities and pressures for community healthcare: participants described the disappearance of small, private medical practices and Black-owned businesses alongside expanded access to specialized healthcare, health information, and new employment opportunities.



Photos courtesy of Christina Jackson

Collective Takeaways

- The importance of thinking about the multiple levels, scales, and types of structural change that open and close healthcare pathways for specific individuals and communities:

Hospitals & primary care providers

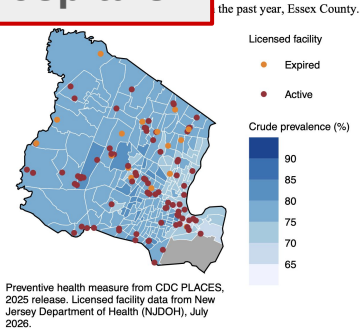
Acute, preventive & routine care

- Compelling opportunities for comparative analysis

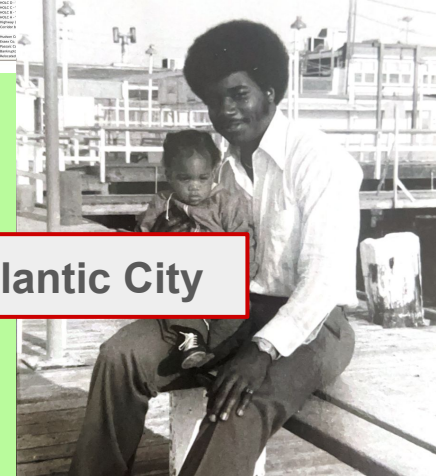
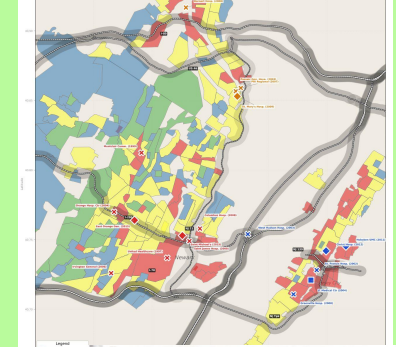
Q&A/Discussion

1. Any questions for our researchers?
2. What similarities and distinctions do you notice across these projects?

Statewide Hospitals



Healthcare Reform & Closures



Atlantic City

Lawnside

Survivance & Resistance

Eugenics & the Skillman Institute

Team Leader(s): Beverly Mills and Elaine Buck

Researcher(s): Tania Boster and Kaitlyn Rich

Investigated NJ's role in the early 20th century eugenics movement by examining movement ideology, systems of classification and marginalization, and collaborations amongst state and national eugenics leaders using the Skillman Institute and New Jersey State Hospital as historical case studies.

- The research uncovered documented instances of patient resistance in the form of escapes and whistleblowing which historically served as the catalyst for state investigations into these institutions that never materialized.
- Budding network analysis allows for connections to be made between local organizations, state institutions, and politicians to show medical infrastructure as a tool for social engineering

NYT article from December 7, 1902

NEW JERSEY EPILEPTICS.

Annual Report of the Managers of the State Village at Skillman.

Special to The New York Times.

TRENTON, N. J., Dec. 6.—According to the annual report of the Board of Managers of the State Village for Epileptics, submitted to Gov. Murphy, there are upward of 2,500 epileptics in New Jersey. The report deprecates the fact that the State has not been more liberal in caring for this class of dependents. It shows that 85 patients have been received at the village at Skillman since it was opened, in 1898, and that of this number 9 have been discharged as cured, 4 have been transferred to other institutions, 4 have been removed by parents, 2 have died, and 3 have eloped. During the past year there have been 25 male and 20 female patients admitted, making the total population at the present time 75 cases.

The report of Dr. Weeks, the Medical Superintendent, says in part:

"As the village progresses the patients are realizing more and more the advantages of colony life, and are becoming better colonists. More interest has been manifested during the Summer and more willingness shown to assist with the work indoors and out, by both men and women, than ever before. The men have been employed at farm work for 9,191 hours, and in grading and caring for the lawns 3,740 hours. The female patients have been employed at housework, in the laundry, in the sewing room, and during the season many of them were engaged in gathering vegetables from the garden for use in various households and pickling, canning, and preserving berries and fruit.

Home Remedies in African American New Jersey

Team Leader(s): Skyler D. Gordon

Researcher(s): Susan Iseyen, Alice Morandy, Laura Nelson, and Serita Sargent

Crafted research on home remedies and alternative and complementary healing practices developed by African Americans who reached adulthood in or migrated to New Jersey during the Great Migration of the early to mid-twentieth century. Used as sources the recordings and transcripts from the New Jersey Southern Black Oral History Project.

- “Healthways” as a useful framework for understanding “what forms of family knowledge, care, cultural practice, and community support” were transmitted across both space and time—from generation to generation, from slavery through the Great Migration, and from the South to the North.
- African Americans used commercially available pharmaceuticals and professional medical care in combination with household remedies and herbal preparations, a finding which “complicates any strict separation between domestic and institutional medicine.”

Int: Well, tell me, you are from the South, do you have any home cures or home remedies to treat your illnesses? Do you ever use anything like that?

Anthony: Yes. I used to try when my grandmother was living and help me and my aunt. But now they're gone so I have to go by the doctors--the white man, his medicine.

Excerpted from the Doris Anthony Interview transcript, New Jersey Historical Commission. New Jersey Southern Black Migration Oral History Project Transcripts, 1970 - 1990.

Latine Foodways, Home Remedies, and Cultural Preservation along Bergenline Avenue

Team Leader: Jennifer Ayala

Researcher(s): Desiree Armas and Julio Santos

Developed a Latine Home Remedies Interview Guide aimed at documenting home remedies used by Latine communities in the northern NJ area. The questionnaire delves deeper into unconventional aspects of home remedies such as their spiritual and emotional effects as well as the role that religion may play. Research aims to preserve Latine culture through food and beverages as healing and wellness.

- The generational transmission or passing down of home remedies and the collection/institutional preservation of them are a form of survivance. These home remedies have not only allowed Latine communities to survive and thrive, but their preservation will allow Latine history to be preserved too. In other words, preservation of these home remedies can be seen as both a form of survivance and resistance.

Interviewer's Script: In this next section, we're going to discuss the origins of your home remedies.

1. Who are the main individuals in your life that you think of when you think of home remedies? Who held the knowledge for these home remedies?
 - a. Rephrase (if needed): Who taught you about home remedies?
2. Have you taught anyone else? If so, why did you decide to pass this knowledge to someone else?
3. Considering the cultural diversity of your area¹, have you seen something used in another culture that reminds you of your own home remedies? Have these inspired you to explore other forms of healing (or home remedies)?

¹ Depending on the area where the interview is conducted, adjust appropriately. The interviewer has the freedom to adjust to different levels as well (from street or neighbourhood to country or state level).

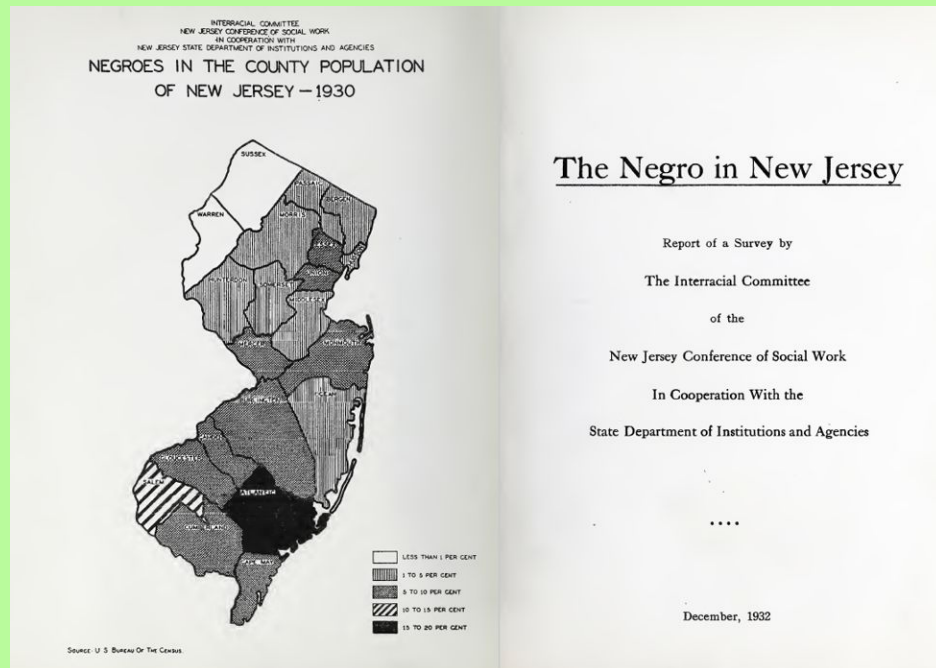
“To Know One Another”: Interracial Organizing and Public Health in New Jersey, 1925-1945

Team Leader: Dawne Mouzon

Researcher: Ánh Adams

Conducted archival research to trace the efforts of the Interracial Committee of the Council for Human Services in New Jersey, a dedicated group of community organizers, doctors, nurses, and social workers, to implement a statewide survey entitled *The Negro in New Jersey* (1932), aimed at documenting Black people's experiences with housing, health care, employment, among others.

- The early efforts of the Interracial Committee demonstrate the historical fight to raise awareness about the realities of Black life in New Jersey and to gain recognition and resources to improve public health in their communities.
- This era of public health activism in New Jersey constitutes a crucial part of the “Long Civil Rights Movement”



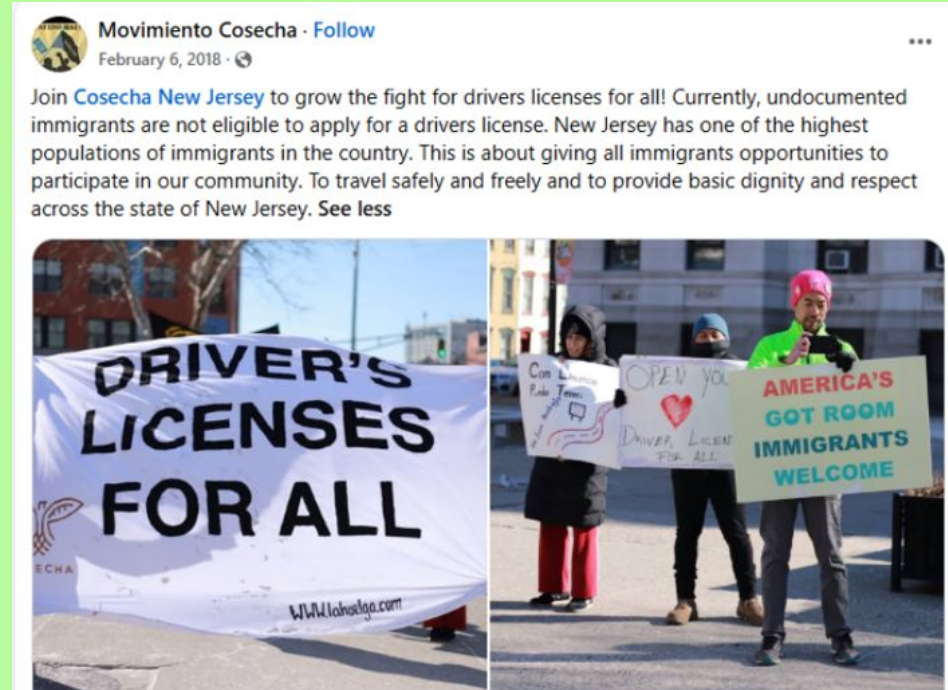
Cosecha NJ Oral History Project

Team Leader(s): Sydney Johnson and Daniela Valdés

Researcher: Keilly Ponce-Mérida

A collaboration with Cosecha NJ to capture the stories and experiences of immigrant rights activists and people who participated in the successful movement to pass New Jersey's 2019 Bill A4743, which allows undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. Through oral histories this project aims to examine strategies of resistance among Latine immigrant communities and their perspectives on the impact of immigration law enforcement on health on their own terms and in their own words.

- The ability in New Jersey to obtain a status-neutral driver's license, made possible by the "Licenses for All" movement and activism efforts, helped to remove a source of fear and anxiety for many in the community who were required to drive but did so by unavoidably taking on increased risk of detainment and deportation via routine and/or minor traffic stops.



2018 Facebook post from the Movimiento Cosecha page

Q&A

1. Any questions for our researchers?
2. What similarities and distinctions do you notice across these projects?

INTER-RACIAL COMMITTEE
NEW JERSEY CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK
IN COOPERATION WITH
NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES
NEGROES IN THE COUNTY POPULATION
OF NEW JERSEY—1930



Organizing



Int: Well, tell me, you are from the South, do you have any home cures or home remedies to treat your illnesses? Do you ever use anything like that?

Anthony: Yes. I used to try when my grandmother was living and help me and my aunt. But now they're gone so I have to go by the doctors--the white man, his medicine.

Healthways & Foodways

1. Who are the main individuals in your life that you think of when you think of home remedies? Who held the knowledge for these home remedies?
 - a. Rephrase (if needed): Who taught you about home remedies?
2. Have you taught anyone else? If so, why did you decide to pass this knowledge to someone else?
3. Considering the cultural diversity of your area¹, have you seen something used in another culture that reminds you of your own home remedies? Have these inspired you to explore other forms of healing (or home remedies)?

Eugenics

NEW JERSEY EPILEPTICS.

Annual Report of the Managers of the
State Village at Skillman.

Special to The New York Times.

TRENTON, N. J., Dec. 6.—According to the annual report of the Board of Managers of the State Village for Epileptics, submit-

Break

Discussion Session

Focusing on dissemination--how to make the research useful and shareable

Small group discussions by table or on Zoom (20 min.)

Large group discussion guided by Dr. John Johnson, Jr. (40 min.)

Visually recorded by Cherry Oakley, 120ES Board President

Discussion Questions

1. How can this research be made useful for you and your communities?
2. What of the research presented, if any, can and should be shared?
3. In what ways can and should this research be shared (ex: blogs, research articles, newsletters, digital exhibits, visual and performance art pieces, community conversations)?
4. Where would you like to see this research shared, displayed, and discussed? (ex: memory-keeping institutions like libraries, archives, and museums; community centers; barbershop and beauty parlors; religious institutions; schools and learning centers; public health and wellness centers)? How could this research be tailored for the communities that these institutions serve?
5. Several of our hubs have recorded and transcribed oral histories with local narrators. How can and should we make these available to different publics and ensure that the narrators maintain ownership and control over the sharing and use of their stories?
6. How do we ensure the confidentiality of vulnerable communities and community members who are identified in the research?

Truth & Repair Summer 2026 Research Assistants

Ánh Adams (she/her) is a PhD student in American History and Women's and Gender History at Rutgers University. Her research explores the history of gendered youth incarceration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century American Midwest. She is thematically interested in the history of childhood and the state, and the intersections between incarceration, gender, and the family. anh.adams@rutgers.edu.

Desiree "Des" Armas (she/her) is an aspiring ESL educator who currently serves as a Newcomer Teacher for Irvington Public Schools. She is a researcher by training, specializing in areas related to youth mental health/wellbeing and child welfare. She has a cat and is based in New Jersey. desiree.armas1@gmail.com.

Sade Awodesu (she/her) is a first-year PhD student in Princeton's history department. Her research focuses on race and labor radicalism in the early twentieth century, often focusing on Philadelphia. She is most drawn to histories of the black freedom struggle and of the struggle of workers and all of the oppressed against capitalism. sade@princeton.edu.

Taliyah Castro (she/her) is an undergraduate student at Rutgers University-Camden majoring in Psychology with a minor in Childhood Studies. She works as an educational paraprofessional and is passionate about youth development, creative writing, and community wellness initiatives. tc620@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Tom DiGiovanni (he/him) is a graduate student at Rutgers University–Camden. His research is focused on surfing history. tomlaist848484@gmail.com.

Koda Drake (they/them) is a PhD student in history at Rutgers University. They study prison newspapers, material culture, and sites of confinement in the US. ded127@history.rutgers.edu.

Gaëlle Germain (she/her) is a recent graduate from the Edward J. Bloustein School of Public Health and Policy. She is currently attaining her master's in public health with a concentration in Health Systems and Policy. Her interests focus on health equity and improving health education for underserved communities. glg68@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Eva Graham (she/her) is a student at Rutgers University-Camden heading into her senior year. She is majoring in history and philosophy and previously worked under Dr. Kendra Boyd on the Black Camden Oral History Project. evagraham055@gmail.com

Zoonmall Hanif (she/her) is a master's student at Rutgers University pursuing a dual degree in Public Policy and Public Informatics. She is interested in public policy, public informatics, research, and community engagement. hzoommall@gmail.com

Megan Heeb (she/her) is a rising second-year History Master's student at Rutgers's University-Camden. Her research interests are Asian American history, immigration, diasporic nationalism, race, and transnationalism. She is currently studying racial discourse during the Korean independence movement in the Greater Philadelphia Area from 1919-1922. megmch15@gmail.com.

Susan Iseyen (she/her) is a historian of Africa and doctoral candidate at Princeton University. Her research examines the history of disease, medicine, colonialism, conflict, and memory in British West Africa, with particular attention to Nigeria and Ghana. Through oral history, she documents personal experiences and community memories that deepen our understanding of health, loss, war, and social change across generations. siseyen@princeton.edu.

Stephanie Lang (she/her) is a graduate student at Rutgers, specializing in public history. They're from the New Jersey Pinelands, where they like to explore and build miniature ecosystems in terrariums. sml411@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Kathleen Fitzsimmons López, MS, MPA, NBC-HWC (she/her) is a PhD candidate in Public Affairs and Community Development at Rutgers University–Camden. Her research sits at the intersection of workforce policy, community well-being, and health equity, with a focus on how economic precarity shapes individual and community outcomes. lopez.kathy@rutgers.edu.

Alice Morandy (she/her) is currently finishing her dissertation, which examines the lives of 504 individuals who appear in two thirteenth-century Norman miracle collections. Before coming to Princeton, Alice graduated cum laude from UCLA, earning a B.A. in English and History. She then pursued an M.A. in medieval history at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. Her master's thesis focused on gender relations in the high medieval monastery of the Paraclete in Champagne, France. amorandy@princeton.edu.

Laura Nelson (she/her) is a PhD candidate in history at Princeton University whose research focuses on nineteenth-century African American and legal history. She is also interested in history pedagogy, digital humanities, and using technology in public history and learning about the past. ln5312@princeton.edu.

Keilly Ponce-Mérida (she/her) is a senior in the Sociology department at Princeton University, minoring in Statistics & Machine Learning and Dance. kponce.merida@gmail.com.

Kaitlyn Rich (she/her) is a PhD student in Library and Information Science at Rutgers University - New Brunswick. Her research interests include critical informatics, archival science, environmental studies, and science and technology studies. In addition to Truth

and Repair, she has held roles as a research assistant at the Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice at Rutgers University, a project archivist at the Lawnside Historical Society, and a part-time lecturer in English and Media Studies at Rutgers-Camden.

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Dominique Ashley Rocker (she/her) is a PhD candidate in American Studies at Rutgers University-Newark working on a dissertation that engages the intersections of Blackness, gender, sexuality, beauty, and technology by focusing on the cultural history and construction of the sexualized Black femme body within digital popular cultures. Taking up the cultural phenomena of plastic surgery, hip hop, and sexually explicit modifications to video games such as *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* and *The Sims 4*, the project argues that technology and Black femme sex worker aesthetics are central to the construction of a sexualized Black femme body from the 1990s to the present. Dominique also holds an MA in African American Studies from UCLA and an MA in History from Rutgers-Newark.

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Sharanya Sahu (she/her) has a background in environmental planning and is a 2nd-year student in the Master of City and Regional Planning program at Rutgers University.

Sharanya aspires to advance equity in the built environment, be it through affordable housing, climate resilience, or GIS. In her free time, she enjoys walking around her neighborhood, trying new recipes, and cyanotyping. sahu.sharanya@gmail.com.

Julio Santos (he/him) is a recent graduate of the History department at Saint Peter's University. He will be continuing his education this summer at the Lynch School of Education and Human Development at Boston College for his Master's in Education. Julio's research focuses on African American history, U.S. immigration, American healthcare system shifts, and immigrant rights advocacy. jsantos1@saintpeters.edu.

Serita Sargent (they/them) is a PhD student in Library and Information Science at Rutgers University. Their research work is around carceral and surveillance technologies, how they tie into the prison industrial complex and its relationship to chattel slavery as it impacts Black and Brown individuals. Serita works with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals forming advocacy groups, community plans and policy change. Their focus is centering the voices and stories of Black communities and using Black radical tradition to enact social change. sds327@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Mansi Shah (she/her) is an architect, urbanist, and PhD candidate in the Urban Systems program at NJIT and Rutgers. With over fifteen years of experience across practice, research, and teaching in India, the US, and Europe, her work bridges urban history, digital ethnography, and spatial studies. She has studied Architecture at CEPT University,

India and Urban Design at Cornell University, USA. She previously worked with Pritzker Prize Laureate B.V. Doshi and contributed to the revitalization of Ahmedabad's historic Bhadra Precinct. Her doctoral research, *Making Place and Meaning in New Jersey*, explores the relationship between urban morphology, infrastructure, and identity.

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Kristian Whitehead (she/her) is a History Masters student studying at Rutgers-Camden. Her research interests include Black radical movements in the United States and Black internationalism. klw207@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Ethan Yoo (he/him) is a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. His work focuses on disability, poverty and inequality, and disaster vulnerability. A first-generation college graduate and AmeriCorps VISTA alumnus, Ethan earned his bachelor's degree in political science and educational studies from Swarthmore College, a second bachelor's degree in computer science from Thomas Edison State University, and a master's degree from Rutgers School of Communication and Information. ethan.yoo@rutgers.edu.

Truth & Repair Summer 2026 Staff

Keith Wailoo (he/him), Ph.D., Princeton University (Co-PI), is Henry Putnam University Professor of History and Public Affairs. He is jointly appointed in the Department of History and in the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs. His research straddles history and health policy, touching on drugs and drug policy, on the politics of race and health, on the interplay of identity, ethnicity, gender, and medicine, and on controversies in genetics and society. kwailoo@princeton.edu.

John Johnson, Jr. (he/him), Ph.D., Saint Peter's University (Co-PI), is a historian of race, class, culture, and urban geography in the 20th century United States. In particular, he focuses on the impact of federally funded urban renewal programs on the lives of residents of Newark, NJ. He is currently completing a book on the Weequahic Section of Newark, NJ. Dr. Johnson leads research at the North Jersey Hub. jjohnson5@saintpeters.edu.

Dawne Mouzon (she/her), Ph.D., M.P.H., Rutgers University-New Brunswick, is a medical sociologist with expertise in health and healthcare inequities among racially minoritized populations. Dr. Mouzon leads research for the Statewide Jersey Hub. She is currently

writing a book on the social and historical origins of ethnoracial health inequities in the United States. dawne.mouzon@rutgers.edu.

Beverly Mills (she/her) and **Elaine Buck (she/her)** are founders of the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum (SSAAM) and Friday Truehart Consultants. Mills and Buck lead research at the Central Jersey Hub. bmills72@verizon.net and Sharon.buck@verizon.net.

Tania Boster (she/her), Ph.D., Princeton University, Director of Princeton's Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship (ProCES) brings expertise in academic and community history with experience organizing collaborative history projects and convenings on topics including oral history with displaced communities and hyperlocal historical research to advance racial equity. Dr. Boster works most closely with Mills and Buck at the Central Jersey Hub. tania.boster@princeton.edu.

Kendra Boyd (she/her), Ph.D., Rutgers University-Camden, is a scholar of African American history whose research focuses on Black business and economic history, urban history, and migration. She is also co-founder of the Black Camden Oral History Project, which aims to preserve the history of African American life and activism in Camden, New Jersey through recorded oral interviews. Dr. Boyd leads research at the South Jersey Hub. kendra.boyd@rutgers.edu.

Christina Jackson (she/her), Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice at Rutgers-Camden, and chair of the Africana Studies program. She researches urban space, spatial politics, cultural storytelling, public health, and inequality. As part of the project, Dr. Jackson works with Dr. Boyd at the South Jersey Hub studying the social determinants of Black material health and the socio-economic and environmental struggles of black coastal communities in and around Atlantic City. cj580@camden.rutgers.edu.

Jennifer Ayala (she/her), Ph.D., is a Professor in the Sociology, Urban Studies, and Anthropology Department, Director of TCUS, and Director of the Latin American and Latino Studies program at Saint Peter's University in Jersey City, New Jersey. Her scholarship focuses on education and immigrant justice issues using a PAR Entremundos approach with youth. She leads research alongside John Johnson for the North Jersey Hub. jayala@saintpeters.edu.

Skyler D. Gordon (he/they), Ph.D., is an historian, educator, and public humanities scholar who serves as Truth & Repair's Project Manager and helps Mills and Buck lead research for the Central Jersey Hub. sdgordon@princeton.edu.

Erin Santana (she/her), Ph.D., is a public historian, interdisciplinary humanities scholar, and project administrator with twenty years of experience with community-engaged cultural work in museums, historic sites, public high schools, and universities. She serves as a Senior Research Specialist focusing on the impacts of RWJF-funded medical infrastructure in New Brunswick. erin.r.santana@rutgers.edu.

Sydney Johnson (she/her), Ph.D., is a public historian and historical consultant whose work sits at the intersection of race, place, gender, and public memory foregrounding Black women's unacknowledged labor and erasure within historical interpretations of the suburban New Jersey landscape. She serves as a Senior Research Specialist collaborating on community engaged historical research projects throughout the Central Jersey hub. sj6105@princeton.edu.

Rachel Gerber (she/her), Ph.D., is an historian, applied researcher, program manager, and stakeholder engagement specialist with experience coordinating collaborative, research-driven initiatives designed to inform and advance social change. She serves as a Senior Research Specialist focusing on the impacts of RWJF-funded medical infrastructure in New Brunswick. ragerber@princeton.edu.