

Call for Papers

Atlantic Jewish Worlds, 1500–1900

**An invitation to contribute to a conference at the University of Pennsylvania,
7–8 April 2021**

The McNeil Center for Early American Studies, in partnership with the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, invites your participation in a two-day conference focused on Jewish life in the Atlantic world in the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. The conference has been timed to coincide with the 2020–2021 Katz Center fellowship year devoted to “America’s Jewish Questions” and will also explore what the study of Jewish history can contribute to our understanding of early American history beyond national frames of reference, and in turn what Early American Studies can contribute to Judaic Studies. The event will feature a keynote address by Aviva Ben-Ur, author of *Jewish Autonomy in a Slave Society: Suriname in the Atlantic World, 1651–1825* (2020).

The Atlantic World is often defined as a system of interaction and exchange where people, commodities, diseases, ideas, and technology were regularly exchanged among the four continents of North and South America, Europe, and Africa. The field of American Jewish History, though often conceived as a national history of Jews of the United States, has been increasingly reframed by the Atlantic perspectives of related fields such as Early American Studies. The broadening of focus is uncovering new data which is in turn changing how scholars understand early modern Jewish history as well as the connected histories of the Atlantic basin in this period, and there is much yet to discover. Documentary and material sources still to be mined include Penn’s own recently digitized Arnold and Deanne Kaplan Collection of Early American Judaica.

This two-day conference seeks to advance such research by bringing together scholars pursuing research on Jewish life and interactions among Jewish and other peoples in the Atlantic world broadly defined. We hope to explore connections between Jewish Studies and other disciplinary approaches, including the economic, social, cultural, literary, environmental, archaeological, and material. Scholars specializing in Africana, Hispanic, or Indigenous studies, museum studies or historic preservation, musicology or folklore, gender or queer studies or other fields are particularly encouraged to contribute work that enriches the conference theme directly or comparatively.

Proposals for individual presentations are welcome from both established scholars and advanced graduate students. The conference organizers will consider proposals for complete panels as well as for non-traditional presentations such as tours, workshops, or demonstrations. If you wish to propose a paper, please submit an abstract (250 words) and a short curriculum vitae to mceas@sas.upenn.edu no later than **1 May 2020**. Proposals for panels should include abstracts for each participant, as well as a title and brief description of the panel as a whole. Most papers will be pre-circulated in order to encourage constructive dialogue during a working conference. Texts of approximately 5,000 words exclusive of notes will be due no later than **1 February 2021** for pre-circulation. Some support for travel and lodging will be provided to participants.