

Call for Papers: "The Promise and Pitfalls of Citizen Science," April 5-9, 2021, American Philosophical Society

Discussion published by Adrianna Link on Friday, December 4, 2020

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Call for Papers

Date:

December 18, 2020

Location:

Pennsylvania, United States

Subject Fields:

History of Science, Medicine, and Technology, Humanities, Public History

Inspired by its 2021 exhibition [Dr. Franklin, Citizen Scientist](#), the American Philosophical Society's Library & Museum is organizing a symposium that explores citizen science as a phenomenon. The symposium's theme reflects the work of Benjamin Franklin and others who lacked formal training and whose work sometimes went unacknowledged but whose contributions significantly added to the advancement of knowledge. It hopes to expand upon the theme of the exhibition by exploring understandings of citizen science over time, placing historical initiatives in conversation with present day projects as well as reflecting on the future needs and opportunities of the movement.

The Library & Museum invites innovative proposals from scholars from all disciplines whose research may contribute to a conversation about the past, present, and future of citizen- or community-led science. The chronological scope of the conference is open-ended and proposals from those whose work can provide a long historical perspective on these issues are encouraged to apply.

Potential topics include (but are not limited to):

- Historical perspectives on the concept and definition of citizen science and the myriad of ways people have performed what we now often call "citizen science."
- The diverse range of people who have contributed to the advancement of knowledge over time, including the work of lesser-known figures and historically marginalized communities.
- The role of citizen science in promoting environmental and social justice, and for climate science.
- Outcomes of citizen science projects, such as new scientific knowledge, policy change, conservation action, or educational resources and their impact on the broader social, cultural, and political sphere.
- Recent developments in the citizen science movement, including best practices and innovative approaches. Of particular interest is the role of technology in developing projects and pedagogical techniques used to incorporate projects into the classroom.
- Issues of inequality in limiting access to scientific knowledge and participation, both historically and in the present.
- Challenges to collecting data and building trust through projects (including issues of scale), as well as possible solutions to those problems.
- Failed citizen science projects and the lessons they offer.

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- The relationship between professional science and citizen science, over time and in the present, including the ways in which professionalization has changed the way scientific work is done and who can conduct it.
- International perspectives on citizen science.

Applicants should submit a title and a 250-word proposal along with a C.V. by December 18, 2020 via Interfolio: <https://apply.interfolio.com/79883>

Decisions will be announced in February 2021.

The symposium will be held the week of April 5, 2021 in Philadelphia. At this point, we have not determined if the conference will be online or in person. If in person, all presenters will receive travel subsidies and hotel accommodations. Accepted papers will be due a month before the conference and pre-circulated to registered attendees. Papers should be no longer than 15 double-spaced pages. Presenters may also have the opportunity to publish revised papers in the APS's *Transactions*, one of the longest running scholarly series in America.

For more information, visit <https://www.amphilsoc.org/>, or contact Kyle Roberts, Associate Director for Library and Museum Programming at kroberts@amphilsoc.org or Adrianna Link, Head of Scholarly Programs, at alink@amphilsoc.org.

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