

Deeds Not Words:  
Discovering Our Berks Suffragists

**Mary Ellen Heckman**

*Associate Dean of Library Services, RACC*

This program presents the stories of the Berks County women who worked for the woman suffrage movement locally. Learn how old newspapers and local records were used to reveal their hard work and personal lives. Learn how to use these same techniques to uncover your own ancestors' lives.

*Mary Ellen Heckman is Associate Dean of Library Services at Reading Area Community College. Mrs. Heckman is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Penn State in American Studies and has a master's in Library Service from Rutgers University. She was a founding member of the Berks County Genealogical Society and has been helping people research their family histories for over thirty years.*

## Gala Dinner

August 26, 2020

Doors at 5:30pm • Dinner at 7:00pm

Celebrate the passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the VOTE on the 100th Anniversary day of final certification!

Keynote Speaker:

**The Honorable Kathy Boockvar**  
Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Make a Reservation • Become a Sponsor  
[berkssuffrage2020centennial.org](http://berkssuffrage2020centennial.org)

More Than Just Mrs.: The Importance  
of Women in Family History

**Dr. Karen Guenther**

*Mansfield University*

Often people researching their family history focus on male relatives or see female ancestors as appendages to their husbands. This presentation will discuss how researching the women in your family tree - mothers, aunts, grandmothers, etc. - can help you better understand your family's heritage.

*Dr. Karen Guenther is a native of Berks County and currently is Professor of History at Mansfield University. She earned a B.A. in History and Spanish at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, M.A. in History at Penn State, and Ph.D. in History at the University of Houston. She focuses on Reading's and Berks County's religious history in her research and publications. Her dissertation on Exeter Monthly Meeting during the 18th century was published by Susquehanna University Press in 2005. She is currently researching the immigration and naturalization policy of the British Empire and its effect on the settlement of Berks County in the 18th century.*



The Berks History Center has partnered with the Berks Women's History Alliance to celebrate the Berks Suffrage 2020 Centennial, a county-wide initiative to commemorate 100 years of women having the vote.

# BERKS HISTORY CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, APRIL 04, 2020



Brian Engelhardt, Esq.  
L.T. James  
Mary Ellen Heckman  
Dr. Karen Guenther

Berks History Center  
940 Centre Ave.  
Reading, PA 19601  
610-375-4375  
[www.berkshistory.org](http://www.berkshistory.org)

# SCHEDULE

## Problems That Confronted the First Women Jurors in Berks County

## Ahead of Her Time: Story of a Berks Code Girl Discovered 75 Years Later



BERKS HISTORY CONFERENCE

8:30

**Registration** (tea and coffee will be served)

9:00

**Women Jurors in Berks**  
Brian Engelhardt

10:00

**Break**

10:15

**Ahead of Her Time**  
L.T. James

11:15

**Break & Refreshments**

11:30

**Berks Suffragists**  
Mary Ellen Heckman

12:30

**Lunch**

1:15

**More Than Just Mrs.**  
Karen Guenther

2:15

**Closing**

**Brian Engelhardt, Esq.**  
*Author & Retired Attorney*

Although passage of the 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote, the “suffrage” granted was not universally viewed as including the right of women to serve on juries. This presentation will discuss the legislation in Pennsylvania that guaranteed jury service as a right held by both women and men. It will also explore the problems that arose in the implementation of this right, beginning with getting women’s names on the jury roll, plus addressing the monumental problem of the total absence of rest rooms for women in the Berks County Courthouse as it existed at the time. The presentation will generally revisit the difficult path that confronted the women jurors- pioneers in that important facet of Berks County’s judicial system.

*Brian Engelhardt is a native of Reading and is a regular contributor to the Berks County Historical Review on various matters concerning local history, including local baseball history. A graduate of Dickinson College and the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, he is a retired attorney who also regularly contributes to the Berks Barrister, published by the Bar Association. He has written about the problems confronting women jurors in the wake of the 19th Amendment both in the Historical Review as well as the Barrister. He also is the author of the book, “Reading’s Big League Exhibition Games,” a great work of western literature.*

**Linda Thompson Thomas aka L.T. James**  
*Writer & Consultant*

Mary Jane Painter Thompson was a WWII veteran of the US Office of Strategic Services, which is now known as the CIA. Uncover her experiences serving for three years as a top secret cryptographer in North Africa and Italy from 1943-45 with a visual journey featuring artifacts that her daughter discovered almost 75 years later in the attic of the family home. After serving her country, Thompson became involved with the League of Women Voters in her hometown, Reading, PA.

*Linda Thompson Thomas aka L.T. James is a Berks County native who has lived, worked and traveled around the world. Linda graduated as Vice President of her nursing class in California while raising her three children. Linda has been the Coordinator of the Pagoda Writers group since 2010 and continues to serve as a Youth Aid Panel Volunteer with the Juvenile Probation Office for the last ten years. She is also a graduate of RACC and studied Psychology at Albright along with numerous other institutions of learning in the United States and abroad.*

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# BERKS HISTORY CONFERENCE

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CREDIT CARD NUMBER/EXP. DATE

Or Send Check c/o Berks History Center

- \$25.00 Student (Current ID Required)
- \$50.00 BHC Member
- \$60.00 Non-Member
- \$95.00 New Member & Conference Fee

Individual Level Membership \$55 Value - Save \$10

Price is per person. Lunch is included.  
Please select a sandwich option:

- Chicken Salad
- Roast Beef with Swiss Cheese
- Vegetarian
- Gluten Free (Choose a filling above)

Cancellation Policy: Cancellations must be received by March 27, 2020. A \$25.00 administration fee will be charged for refunds.

**Send Registration Form  
with Payment to:**

**The Berks History Center  
940 Centre Avenue  
Reading, PA 19601**



REGISTRATION FORM