



Dear NHD Students, Parents and Teachers:

Welcome to the National History Day season for 2014. This year's theme, "Rights and Responsibilities in History," will likely result in some remarkable work by student-historians. There are plenty of local, national and international topics that students can pursue. I would like to encourage students and the parents and teachers that support them to remember that the key to historic research is locating sources, both primary and secondary. Those sources should bring together the particular events, ideas and people that student-historians want to better understand.

Follow the Footnotes!

The first step in historic research is for the student to review the secondary literature to understand the event or person in historical context. They should read journal articles and books written by other historians. Historians are avid readers of each other's work. Both because they want to understand a topic, and to snoop in each other's footnotes! When a student-historian reads the secondary literature, they can see where the author found their sources. Then they can go there too!

Use the Archives *and* the Archivist!

Once a student-historian has read the secondary material, they are ready to "get their hands dirty" in the raw material of history – primary sources. Primary sources are documents, letters, diaries, images and institutional records that provide a first-hand or contemporary account of an historical subject. Historians use these sources to support their thesis. They use them to provide evidence in their historical case.

The archives and the archivist serve as gatekeepers to these materials. And we are waiting for historians and student-historians to discover new stories in the records, and to tell and retell the timeworn tales of history using their own fresh perspectives.

The National Archives at Riverside Supports Student-Historians

Please use this form, *Preparing to Work with an Archivist for National History Day Researchers*, to start your conversation with an archivist. Complete the form, and return it via email to riverside.archives@nara.gov, place "National History Day Research" in the subject line of your message.

Remember to give the archivist 7-10 days to compile information and set up a time to contact you (remember to plan for vacations). Planning ahead pays!

Good Luck, researchers!

GWEN E. GRANADOS, Director
National Archives at Riverside

NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and*
RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

23123 CAJALCO ROAD
PERRIS, CA 92570-7298

www.archives.gov



Preparing to Work with an Archivist for National History Day Researchers

Providing this information to archivists will assist them in locating primary sources or repositories to help you with your project. Provide as much information as possible.

List your name and the names of your project partners if you are in a group.

Describe your topic. Be sure to summarize your thesis statement.

FROM:

TO:

Project. Tell us about the type of project you will be completing.

Select one

- 2-D Display
- Paper
- Performance

- Documentary
- Exhibit
- Website

Select one

- Senior Category
- Junior Category

Select one

- Individual Project
- Group Project

Have you participated in the NHD competition before?

YES

NO

What types of primary source materials are you interested in finding?

Select multiple, if necessary

- Motion Pictures (Films)
- Still Pictures (photographs)
- Documents (letters, reports, manuscripts)
- Newspapers
- Oral Histories
- Other (explain) _____

When is your project due?

What is the best way to contact you? Please provide your phone number or e-mail address.

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

Other information that you would like to share with the archivist: