

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY® 2023

Frontiers in History:
PEOPLE, PLACES, IDEAS

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What Is National History Day[®] ?

National History Day[®] (NHD) is an educational nonprofit organization that engages teachers and students in historical research. The mission of NHD is to improve the teaching and learning of history in middle and high school through an innovative framework of historical inquiry and research. Students learn history by selecting topics of interest, launching into year-long research projects, and presenting their findings through creative approaches and media. The most visible vehicle of NHD is the National Contest.

When studying history through historical research, students and teachers practice critical inquiry, asking questions of significance, time, and place. History students become immersed in a detective story. Beginning in the fall, students choose a topic related to the annual theme and conduct extensive primary and secondary research. After analyzing and interpreting their sources and drawing conclusions about their topics' significance in history, students present their work in original papers, exhibits, performances, websites, or documentaries. These projects are entered into showcases and competitions in the spring at local, affiliate (U.S. states, territories, and participating countries), and national levels, where historians and educators evaluate them. The program culminates at the National Contest held each June at the University of Maryland at College Park.

Each year, National History Day selects a theme to provide a lens through which students can examine history. The annual theme frames the research for students and teachers alike. It is intentionally broad enough to allow students to select topics from any place (local, national, or global) and any period in history. Once students choose their topics, they investigate historical context and significance and develop the topic's relationship to the theme by researching in libraries, archives, and museums and by visiting historic sites.

NHD benefits students and teachers alike. It enables students to control their learning by selecting topics and modes of expression that match their interests and strengths. NHD provides program expectations and guidelines for students, but the research journey is unique to each project. Throughout the year, students develop essential skills by fostering intellectual curiosity and thinking both critically and creatively. Through this process, they hone their skills to manage and use information now and in the future, including: critical thinking, problem-solving, argumentation, writing and revising, and properly crediting sources.

2023 Theme Narrative: *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*

CATHY GORN, Ph.D., Executive Director, National History Day®

During the 2022–2023 school year, National History Day® (NHD) invites students to research topics related to the theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*. This theme is broad enough in scope to encourage the investigation of topics ranging from local to global history. To understand the historical importance of their topics, students must ask questions of time and place, cause and effect, change over time, and impact and significance. What factors contributed to the development of a frontier? Why did it emerge, and how did it change? When did it cease to be a frontier? What impact did it have on the people who experienced it, and how did they affect it? Regardless of the topic selected, students must present a description of it and draw conclusions about how their topic affected individuals, communities, nations, or the world, changing the course of human society.

But first, what is a frontier?

PLACES AS FRONTIERS

A frontier may be geographical—an area thought to be on the edge of a settlement. Various dictionaries refer to a physical frontier as “a wilderness at the edge of a settled area” or “uncharted territory.” The first might be a remote land, beyond the boundaries of an area or country and considered uninhabited. The idea of uncharted territory could be land that is not plotted on a map and therefore “unknown.” This begs the question, uncharted or uninhabited by whom?

Obvious topics that come to mind are those related to the classic frontier of popular culture, the nineteenth-century American West filled with cowboys, outlaws, sheriffs, Native Americans, pioneers, and farmers. Let’s break down this idea.

As the nineteenth century progressed, Americans pushed the geographical boundaries of what they perceived as the frontier farther and farther west. Journalists, poets, novelists, politicians, and even historians described the

frontier as unsettled land there for the taking, urging white settlers to “Go West, young man.” What about the Native or Tribal Nations who inhabited the land? Did they consider the land they called home an uninhabited wilderness?

Students interested in exploring the American frontier and its impact might research the significance of European settlement. What was the effect of their efforts to push the frontier farther westward? Students might consider the impact westward expansion had on other groups of people. What was the experience of women versus that of men? How did this experience affect the settlers or Indigenous Peoples in Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota or Oregon? A performance might explore women’s experiences during the gold rushes in California or Alaska. What role did fur traders or missionaries play in settling the West?



A lithograph of the entrance to Cadotte’s Pass in present-day Montana, c. 1855. Library of Congress (2004666302).

How did technology change the landscape and the lives of those who lived in the West? How was barbed wire a frontier, and how did it alter the western frontier and encourage settlement?

When did the American frontier officially close? How did Americans deal with this intellectually and culturally? Who was Frederick Jackson Turner, and what was his frontier thesis? What impact did it have on intellectual and historical thought?

As we march toward the 250th anniversary of American Independence in 2026, students might focus on topics related to the fight for independence and the ever-moving western frontier. A performance might analyze the French and Indian War (1754–1763), the Proclamation Line of 1763, or the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. How were ideas of freedom and democracy frontiers in political thought? How did these new ideas spark a revolution? How did Native Nations view these ideas? Students interested in this area might develop a website that analyzes European settlements from the perspective of the Pequots, Mohegans, Dutch fur traders, or the English settlers in the Connecticut River Valley during the 1600s.

Another geographic definition of a frontier is the formal border between two countries or societies, particularly when they are hostile. Students might examine the role that borders have played in specific conflicts between countries or how borders have kept people apart, willingly or not.



“Achtung! Sie Verlassen Jetzt West Berlin (Caution! You Are Leaving Now West Berlin),” October 1961. National Archives and Records Administration (6003286).

People and countries often build walls to protect themselves. Students can create an exhibit to focus on the Great Wall of China, which the Qin Dynasty completed in the early 200s BCE. Was it built as a defense? Why and against whom? Did it protect the dynasty? Why or why not? Defensive walls typically surrounded medieval European

cities. Why did ancient Romans build Hadrian’s Wall in second-century England? What were the consequences? The Soviet Union constructed the Berlin Wall in the 1960s. Was it built to keep people in or to keep them out? What effect did this wall have on the world? On politics? On individuals or families?

With or without walls, borders or frontiers have caused many conflicts and have had unintended consequences. Colonization and conquest created many frontiers that often resulted in cross-cultural exchanges. After the Han conquest of Gojoseon (present-day North Korea and Manchuria) in 108 BCE, Koreans adopted many Chinese ideas about government, writing, and farming. Much of Spain became a frontier of the Islamic world in the early eighth century; a paper could evaluate Moorish contributions to Spanish civilization. Often, victors adopted practices and even gods from the vanquished, as the Aztecs did in Mexico in the 1400s.

Disputes over which nation should control Bosnia-Herzegovina contributed to World War I. A documentary might analyze the struggle over that country’s border and control over the country during the twentieth century. Did the war for Bosnian independence in the 1990s resolve this conflict? Why or why not? Disputes on the frontiers between communist and capitalist countries, including the Korean War and the Vietnam War, marked much of the second half of the twentieth century. Poland’s history is characterized by its ever-changing borders. How did these changes affect the Polish people?

IDEAS AS FRONTIERS

Of course, students are not limited to geographical frontiers. Another definition of frontier is “an undeveloped field of study.” In this case, the term frontier may signify the limits of knowledge or achievement in a particular activity or subject. These frontiers change over time; a frontier for one generation may be commonplace for succeeding generations. Students might explore the work of individuals who have thought of new ways of organizing human life politically, economically, religiously, or socially and assess the impact of these new ideas. Perhaps scientific or technological innovations will capture students’ attention.

Frontiers are crossed by those who challenge conventional thinking. African American entrepreneurs built thriving economic communities in Durham, North Carolina, and Tulsa, Oklahoma. Booker T. Washington organized the National Negro Business League to provide networking and economic opportunities to grow and expand Black-owned businesses. W.E.B. Du Bois argued that economic achievement would not end segregation, and advocated for social change through active forms of protest.

People have striven to push frontier boundaries in science, technology, medicine, transportation, economics, media, law and justice, and art. The realm of human ideas and achievements abounds with potential topics. Scientific and

technological frontiers might be of interest. How did Marie Curie's research on radioactivity in the early 1900s represent a frontier? A student might write a paper that assesses the significance of the mathematician al-Khwarizmi's pioneering work in algebra in the 800s. A group of students might construct an exhibit that examines the development of the steam engine as a frontier in technology. The transformation of industry created by Henry Ford's assembly line could be the subject of a performance. Or, a student could build a website to examine the life and work of physicist Albert Einstein and his pioneering theories and inventions. What were the consequences of these new innovations?

How have frontiers in medical research and discovery affected human society? In the twentieth century, medical teams pioneered the process of transplanting organs. These complex medical procedures helped extend the lives of people suffering from various ailments. How were these frontiers crossed? What innovations were needed to help these patients after their successful transplants? What systems matched patients when donor organs became available? Were these systems fair and equitable to all patients? A student can write a paper to explain this frontier and its impact on science and society.

Space is referred to by many as the final frontier. How has the Space Race influenced politics, culture, or education? Students might produce a website that examines the race to explore this frontier and its impact on the Cold War and vice versa.

While some of humanity's greatest minds have devoted themselves to technological and scientific experimentation, others have devised ways to improve business or national economies. European merchants created banks to make trading easier, while early stock exchanges represented a frontier in capitalism. Students could examine the *zaibatsu*, the huge interrelated corporations that began to dominate Japan's economy in the late 1800s. How might corporations be defined as business frontiers? A student paper could explore the pathbreaking work, *Wealth of Nations* (1776), in which Adam Smith denounced the mercantilism that then prevailed and called for free trade. Or, students might consider how Marxism was a frontier in economic organization and the impact this ideological frontier had on the world.

Politics has also drawn its share of people willing to imagine new ways of doing things. How did the reforms of Cleisthenes in 508 BCE pave the way for Athenian democracy? A documentary might focus on the founding of the Iroquois Confederacy when the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca (and soon after the Tuscarora) renounced their traditional hostility to one another and unified. How was this a frontier in political cooperation? Freedom fighters such as Simón Bolívar, who led nineteenth-century independence movements in South America, might be analyzed in an exhibit, while a documentary could assess how the New Deal of the 1930s represented a frontier in American politics.



Simón Bolívar by José Gil de Castro, c. 1823. Lima Art Museum.

Students may find inspiration in the stories of those who have challenged traditional boundaries of race, class, and gender. In what ways could the nineteenth-century women's suffrage movement and the twentieth-century Civil Rights Movement be considered frontiers in U.S. history? Mohandas Gandhi's efforts to end discrimination in India during the 1930s and 1940s would make a good topic for a performance. How can his efforts be defined as a frontier in political and social thought? What impact did his ideas have on India? On the world?

Many reformers who fought to improve their societies drew strength from religion. The establishment of just about any religion is a frontier, as are many reform movements within religions. A paper might focus on the ancient Persian thinker Zoroaster, whose beliefs in monotheism (belief in one god), judgment day, and the existence of heaven and hell are thought by many to have influenced Christianity and Islam. Methodism's origins as a reform movement in the Church of England in the eighteenth century could be the subject of a website. How were those or other religious movements considered frontiers or departures from established religion or thought?

The Sumerian invention of cuneiform writing around 3000 BCE represented a colossal advance in human culture. How did the ancient Greeks contribute to cultural frontiers in drama and architecture? In the early 1900s, Pablo Picasso and others created a new view of reality with Cubist art, a suitable topic for an exhibit, while a documentary could trace the development of jazz as a frontier in modern music. What were the origins of jazz? What role did New Orleans play in its development?



Cuneiform writing was the most widespread writing system in the Middle East. Merchants used this system to log records, track income, and mark expenses at markets. Metropolitan Museum (66.245.10).

CONCLUSION

The 2023 NHD theme is a broad one. Topics should be carefully selected and developed in ways that best use students' talents and abilities. Whether a topic is a well-known event in world history or focuses on a little-known individual from a small community, students should be careful to place their topics into historical perspective, examine the significance of their topics in history, and show development and change over time. Students should investigate available primary and secondary sources, analyze the evidence, and clearly explain the relationship of their topics to the theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*.

To access more theme resources,
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Planning Communities on Many Frontiers

LINDA ROSENBLUM, Education Program Manager, Office of Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers, National Park Service

In 1935, two hundred midwestern farm families traveled thousands of miles to the Matanuska Valley of Alaska to build new lives. Several Native Alaskan groups, including the Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabaskan peoples, had lived in the area in semi-permanent villages for centuries. Russian traders colonized the region in the late 1800s. By the time the pioneer colony of families from Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota arrived, only about 160 people lived in the nearest village. Native Alaskans had succumbed to diseases introduced by the Russian traders and European Americans who came during the Klondike Gold Rush of the 1890s or set up homesteads in the 1910s. Also, the homesteaders' land clearing likely disrupted the Native Alaskans' traditional hunting practices. As a result, the new settlers had few neighbors or existing infrastructure upon their arrival in 1935.

The immigrant farmers were participants in one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs intended to elevate struggling families from the effects of the Great Depression (1929–1939). The federal government set up over 100 resettlement communities, such as the Matanuska Colony, to improve housing and work opportunities for the most economically distressed citizens. Federal bureaus, including the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), Resettlement Administration (RA), and Farm Security Administration (FSA), worked to provide land, housing, tools, and community infrastructure so families could become economically self-sufficient. The government planned the location of resettlement communities and the design of the buildings, land usage, and selection of families to resettle. Most participants in resettlement communities moved only a short distance from their existing homes or towns.

The planners of the Matanuska Colony identified three main goals: assist Midwestern families in gaining economic independence, increase Alaska's population, and decrease dependence on imported food by increasing Alaska's agricultural production. They wanted to create a new kind of planned community in a largely vacant area of Alaska.

The Matanuska Colony is just one story of community planning on a frontier retold by the National Park Service in a Teaching with Historic Places lesson plan. Teaching with

Historic Places includes lesson plans and teaching tools based on sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a program managed by the National Park Service that helps identify, interpret, and preserve special places that represent America's diverse history. More than 96,000 properties are listed in the National Register, spread out across almost every county in the United States. These properties represent 1.8 million contributing resources—buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects.

The following examples were selected from more than 160 lesson plans found on the Teaching with Historic Places webpages (nps.gov/subjects/teachingwithhistoricplaces/lesson-plans.htm) to reflect a variety of stories that connect to the National History Day® (NHD) theme of *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*. They demonstrate various frontiers where settlements established military, religious, agricultural, or racially diverse communities or outposts where none had previously existed.

PLANNING MILITARY OUTPOSTS ON THE COLONIAL FRONTIER

CHARLESFORT-SANTA ELENA (SOUTH CAROLINA)

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, France and Spain engaged in a series of wars. The conflict between these two powerful kingdoms spread across the globe as the French and Spanish governments fought to increase their power, wealth, and prestige in Europe.

This competition transferred to the New World as European nations became interested in the wealth available in the Caribbean and North America. During this time of conquest and competition, France attacked Spanish ships and posed a threat to Spanish interests in North America, creating an unstable environment.

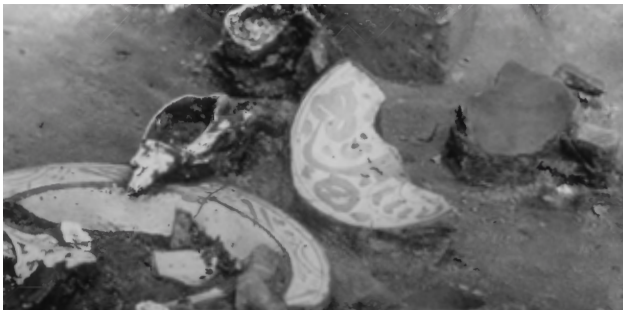
Both France and Spain raced to settle and control the southern coast of North America. On a small island off the coast of present-day South Carolina lie the ruins of Charlesfort, a French outpost that lasted only one year. It later became the Spanish colonial town of Santa Elena

(1566–1587). The site has been abandoned for more than 400 years. Recent archeological finds provide evidence of the lives of the Spanish colonists in sixteenth-century North America.

Digging into the Colonial Past: Archeology and the 16th-Century Spanish Settlements at Charlesfort-Santa Elena

[nps.gov/articles/000/upload/TWHP-Lessons_155santaelena-2.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/upload/TWHP-Lessons_155santaelena-2.pdf)

In the sixteenth century, France and Spain settled in North America, north of the Caribbean, an area Spanish explorer Ponce de León called La Florida (Place of Flowers). Both colonial powers had short, failed attempts at settlements in La Florida. In 1565, Spain appointed Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to plan and develop a Spanish settlement in the area. The Spanish wanted to establish a military presence to maintain colonial control and develop communities for Spanish settlers. Menéndez de Avilés claimed the former French military outpost, Charlesfort, and renamed it Santa Elena. This lesson plan explores how Menéndez de Avilés planned to establish a government, agriculture, housing, and military protection by examining the archeological evidence remaining at Santa Elena. Students will study historical drawings and maps, read informational articles, and analyze lists of artifacts to determine what life was like in a Spanish colonial settlement.



Broken pieces of Spanish pottery (known as sherds) found at the Charlesfort-Santa Elena site in South Carolina, 1981. National Park Service.

FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT (GEORGIA)

[nps.gov/fofr/index.htm](https://www.nps.gov/fofr/index.htm)

In the early eighteenth century, the land lying between British South Carolina and Spanish Florida was known as the debatable land. This land (present-day Georgia) was the epicenter of a centuries-old imperial conflict between Spain and Great Britain. Fort Frederica was established

in 1736 by General James Edward Oglethorpe, a member of the British House of Commons, to protect the southern boundary of his new colony of Georgia from the Spanish in Florida. Colonists from Great Britain, Scotland, and the Germanic states came to Georgia to support this endeavor.

Named for Frederick Louis, the Prince of Wales (1702–1754), Frederica was a military outpost consisting of a fort and town. The entire area was fortified with a wooden palisade wall and earthen rampart defense barriers. The fort's location on the Frederica River allowed it to control ship travel. Today the archeological remains of colonial Frederica are protected by the National Park Service.

Frederica: An 18th-Century Planned Community

[nps.gov/articles/000/frederica-an-18th-century-planned-community-teaching-with-historic-places.htm](https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/frederica-an-18th-century-planned-community-teaching-with-historic-places.htm)

In 1736 a group of British colonists led by General Oglethorpe, a member of the Trustees for Establishing the Colony of Georgia, arrived at St. Simons Island. The colony, organized and administered by the trustees, had two main goals. They hoped to establish British military dominance over Spain in the area between St. Augustine, Florida, and Charleston, South Carolina, and create a community where the unemployed in Great Britain could build new lives. Since Frederica was a planned community, the organizers selected colonists who had the skills needed to build the colony.

Students will analyze maps, photographs, drawings, and informational readings to determine what was required to meet the trustees' military and civilian goals for the colony at Frederica.



Fort Frederica viewed from the Moat Wall with Kings Magazine and Frederica River in the background, looking east. National Park Service.

PLANNING RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES ON THE NORTH AMERICAN FRONTIER

SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK (TEXAS)

nps.gov/saan/index.htm

Beginning in 1718, five mission communities—Alamo, Concepción, San José, San Juan, and Espada—formed along the San Antonio River. These missions were at the northern frontier of New Spain, a territory of the Spanish Empire. They transformed local ways of life by introducing a new religion and unfamiliar farming methods, and settled communities that made a lasting impact on San Antonio culture. The Spanish referred to the Native People as the Coahuiltecan, a name that was derived from the Mexican state of Coahuila where they lived. When Native People entered these missions, they lost elements of their languages and religions as Native and Spanish cultures combined, fusing into South Texas culture. Visitors can find components of Native and Spanish cultures throughout the missions in the frescoes, food, clothing, and customs. This fusion of culture can still be observed today in the surrounding modern community.

Four Spanish colonial missions—Concepción, San José, San Juan, and Espada—and their associated features make up San Antonio Missions National Historical Park today.

San Antonio Missions: Spanish Influence in Texas

nps.gov/articles/san-antonio-missions-spanish-influence-in-texas-teaching-with-historic-places.htm

Missions were a major part of Spain's plan to establish and manage a colonial frontier in what is now the American Southwest. Settlement of this frontier has had significant and far-reaching effects on the development of the United States, both politically and culturally, that continue to be felt today. The missions were directly involved in the military, religious, and cultural development of the Texas frontier, influencing policymaking across the entire Southwest. The contribution of the missions to agriculture and commerce—they strongly influenced the development of the cattle industry—was of critical importance to the growth of the state of Texas and the San Antonio region. These mission buildings constitute a unique record of the Spanish colonial period's architecture, art, and sculpture in Texas.

This lesson plan uses historical and modern maps, images, and readings to investigate the significant role that Spanish missions played in the early history of Texas and the American Southwest.



A panoramic view of Concepción Church, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Texas. National Park Service.

CENTRAL BETHLEHEM HISTORIC DISTRICT (PENNSYLVANIA)

Casting their eyes toward the rich, arable lands of Pennsylvania, members of the Moravian community purchased a 500-acre tract of land north of Philadelphia in 1741. There, along the Lehigh River, they organized and built the communal society of Bethlehem, which became the base location for all Moravian missionary activity in North America. By the 1750s, several hundred Moravians lived in Bethlehem. To Christianize Native Americans in North America, they eventually established 32 mission towns. Bethlehem, however, remained the seat of the Moravian community and its industrial center.

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: A Moravian Settlement in Colonial America

nps.gov/articles/000/upload/TwHP-Lessons_59bethlehem.pdf

The Moravians are a Protestant sect originating in Bohemia and Moravia (both in the present-day Czech Republic). They follow a strict code of behavior based on Biblical principles of simplicity, purity, and brotherly love. After decades of persecution in Europe, groups of Moravians sought to build settlements in North America where they could worship freely and concentrate on evangelizing Native Americans. Bethlehem was organized to be the hub of all Moravian mission towns and was the only one that primarily produced finished goods instead of agricultural products.

Students will analyze historical images, modern photographs, maps, and three readings on the history of the Moravians and their communities to explain why they founded Bethlehem and other colonial frontier missions in North America. Activities include comparing and contrasting structures designed by the Moravians in Bethlehem with those in the students' own communities.

PLANNING COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF THE SETTLERS

NEW PHILADELPHIA TOWN SITE (ILLINOIS)

New Philadelphia looked like a typical west-central Illinois pioneer town to travelers cresting the hill that overlooked it in the mid-1800s. However, New Philadelphia was not a typical pioneer town. It was a town platted and registered by an African American before the American Civil War. A formerly enslaved man named Free Frank McWorter founded New Philadelphia in 1836 as a money-making venture to buy his family out of slavery. Census records and other historical documents indicate that Black and white settlers lived side-by-side in the town even though their dead were segregated by color in the cemetery. By 1885, many villagers began to move away, seeking better economic opportunities, and nothing of the town remained by the 1940s. Archeologists and historians pieced together documents, oral histories, and artifacts to retell the story of New Philadelphia and its attempt to build a multiracial town that offered improved economic and civil rights conditions for both Black and white settlers on the Illinois frontier.

New Philadelphia: A Multiracial Town on the Illinois Frontier

nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/130newphiladelphia.htm

(H)our History Lesson: From Freedom Seeker to Town-Founder, Free Frank McWorter and New Philadelphia

nps.gov/articles/000/-h-our-history-lesson-from-freedom-seeker-to-town-founder-free-frank-mcworter-and-new-philadelphia.htm

This pair of lesson plans, the first a complete learning unit with multiple activities and the second adapted to cover a single class period, explore the history of a town planned and registered on the Illinois frontier by a free African American man before the end of slavery. To understand New Philadelphia's development and eventual demise, students will read about the archeological excavations and examine census records, town plat images, and photographs.

SAVANNAH HISTORIC DISTRICT (GEORGIA)

Few places in America possess the breadth of natural and designed scenic beauty, the magical and eerie charm, and the immediate presence of the past as the historic district of Savannah, Georgia. Strolling through the old city's rigid grid pattern streets, down its linear brick walkways, past over 1,100 residential and public buildings of unparalleled architectural richness and diversity, visitors and residents come to appreciate the original plan that has existed intact since Savannah's founding in 1733. Its 24 tree-shaded, park-like open spaces called "squares" are the essence of the city. One of the few surviving colonial city plans in the United States, Savannah is a testament to the ingenuity of Georgia's founders.

Savannah, Georgia: The Lasting Legacy of Colonial City Planning

nps.gov/articles/savannah-georgia-the-lasting-legacy-of-colonial-city-planning-teaching-with-historic-places.htm

In 1732, most of what we know today as southern Georgia and northern Florida was considered a no man's land. It was claimed by both England and Spain and was home to many Native Nations. When the Trustees of Georgia, headed by General James Oglethorpe, applied in 1732 for a charter from King George II to settle this contested area, the monarch readily granted it. He believed the settlement would provide an important buffer between the Spanish stronghold of St. Augustine and the main English settlement of Charleston in the Carolinas.

The Trustees intended to develop an egalitarian settlement, a town divided so that all residents had equal amounts of land and, consequently, opportunity. They expected the settlers to be industrious, become self-sufficient food producers, and eventually produce surplus goods to send back to England. However, they also realized that developing a town in a land filled with danger required defensive protection from possible attacks from surrounding neighbors.

This lesson plan uses maps, drawings of historic Savannah, a painting of the city, and informational readings to explain how Oglethorpe and the trustees planned the city to meet their goals for an improved life for impoverished British settlers.



Map of Savannah, Georgia, 1779. National Park Service.

PLANNING AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE NEW DEAL ECONOMIC FRONTIER

MATANUSKA COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT (ALASKA)

The federal government's New Deal Recovery programs sought to provide relief for many rural Americans by establishing agricultural resettlement communities. Alaska's Matanuska Valley became home to one such farming community in 1935 when, amidst a flurry of construction, new residents started arriving from the upper Midwest. Several decades later, this Alaskan story that began against a national backdrop of despair and hope includes a legacy of agricultural enthusiasm, pride, and desire to preserve the story of the colony through its surviving buildings and landscape.

Alaska's Matanuska Colony

nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/twhp-matanuska-colony.htm

This lesson explores the challenges and successes of establishing a New Deal resettlement community in the Territory of Alaska in 1935. Historic places such as the Matanuska Colony Community Center provide evidence of the New Deal resettlement program, designed to move farmers off of sub-marginal farmland and onto productive farmland. The materials here introduce students to these topics by examining primary sources and providing skill-building activities.



Photograph of log buildings at Matanuska Colony in Alaska. National Park Service.

ARTHURDALE HISTORIC DISTRICT (WEST VIRGINIA)

Arthurdale, West Virginia, was the first of 100 homestead communities built from the ground up by the federal government during the Great Depression. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt lobbied the U.S. Congress to authorize plans to develop experimental farming communities such as Arthurdale to improve the lives of the chronically impoverished. Settlers to this community would enjoy new homes, indoor plumbing, modern appliances, and furniture. These planned communities were on the economic frontier of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal.

Arthurdale: A New Deal Community Experiment

nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/157arthurdale.htm

Students will explore the role of government in community planning, building, and social welfare. Through exploration of historical maps, images, personal accounts, and informational readings, students will learn about the goals of the New Deal and its alphabet soup of social welfare programs during the Great Depression. Students will use evidence from research of these primary documents to argue whether they believe the goals of the Arthurdale community New Deal social programs were ultimately successes or failures.

Lesson plans and other education resources produced by the National Park Service and some of its partners are available through the NPS Educators' Portal at nps.gov/teachers/index.htm. A simple keyword or subject search provides examples of lesson plans and activities that can serve as starting places for finding great stories on which to base a National History Day project.

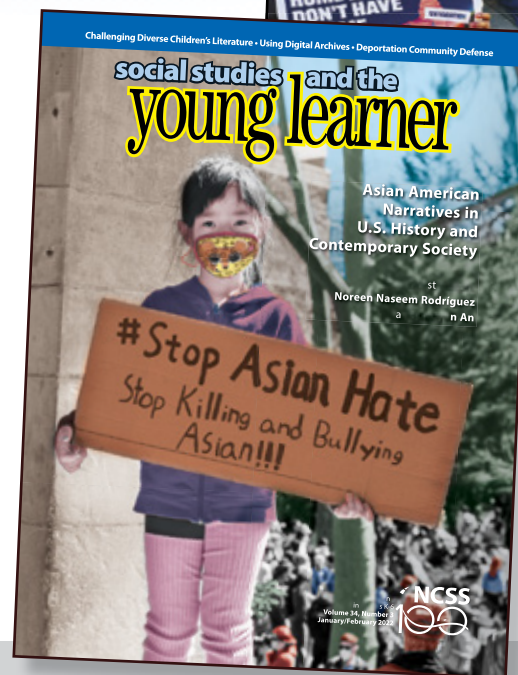
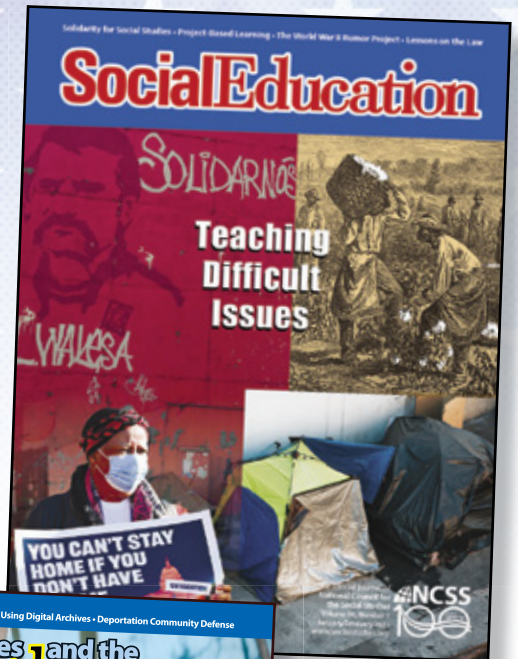
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The American Union as Political Frontier: How the Thirteen Colonies Came Together

ROBERT G. PARKINSON, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Binghamton University

One way to think about frontiers in American history is that a frontier represents the cutting edge. Often we think of new technology or scientific developments representing frontiers of knowledge. The same is true for political science. In the 1770s, the United States was the leading edge for organizing societies into political units. The Revolutionaries decided to throw away being subjects of a monarch and embraced the theory of citizenship on a continental scale. The American union, though imperfect, was a radical, new frontier.

Why did the Revolutionary leaders do it? Why did they take this bold new step in 1776? Why did they not replace King George III with King George (Washington) I? Nearly all familiar societies were monarchies. Why throw that away? Most of the answers came from philosophy, the Enlightenment, and political theorists, such as John Locke, who believed that people could be content only under the protection of a government derived from their consent and in which they participated. Governments must protect their citizens' lives, liberty, and property, and encourage them to pursue happiness. If they did not, the people were obligated to change their government.

2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. National History Day® (NHD) will be running a series of articles in our theme books through 2026 to share recent historical scholarship on the Founding Era with our teachers and students. To learn more about NHD's initiatives, lesson resources, and teaching opportunities, visit nhd.org/250.

Another critical question is: *How* did they do it? How did the leaders of the Revolution convince enough people in the thirteen colonies to create a national union based on citizenship? Those answers lead in more complex directions.

Revolutionary leaders faced an extremely difficult task in the 1770s. English colonists who lived in mainland North American colonies paid the lowest taxes, benefited from the widest distribution of land ownership, and enjoyed the greatest social mobility anywhere in the western world. The British were their cultural cousins. Revolutionary leaders had to convince the public that the British people—whose books, clothes, houses, and gardens they copied, and whose religion, language, and art they shared—were actually their sworn, avowed enemies. To make the cause common, Revolutionary leaders had to destroy feelings of British nationalism to allow the seeds of American patriotism to grow.

What did the colonies have in common? In the 1770s, many issues drove Americans apart rather than together. Border conflicts between Pennsylvania and Virginia, Pennsylvania and Connecticut, and New York and New Hampshire produced violence, bloodshed, and arrests. Slavery threatened to divide Americans. Some thought talk of liberty and natural rights could rid the continent of bondage, while others sought to expand and defend the system of coerced labor. Many Loyalists argued that there was tyranny to be feared in America, in the form of committees of safety and Continental Congresses, not the King or Parliament. The task of convincing enough people to put their bodies, families, and fortunes on the line to defend American definitions of liberty (rather than the British one) was nearly impossible.

NEWSPAPERS AS A FRONTIER IN COMMUNICATION

A close reading of colonial newspapers in 1775 and 1776 provides evidence about the colonists' knowledge of the Revolution after Lexington and Concord. Newspapers were the leading edge—the frontier—of communication in the eighteenth century. Approximately three dozen printers existed in the colonies as the war broke out, each producing a weekly newspaper roughly four pages long.

There were no reporters or journalists. Newspapers relied on people in port cities who might have information: ship captains carrying letters, travelers who had seen something on their way into town, or residents who might share correspondence. It was an irregular way to collect news. A more reliable method involved borrowing from other newspapers. Eighteenth-century newspapers regularly ran articles from other papers. This practice, known as the exchange, was the essence of business (and not plagiarism).

Exchanges were essential to the Revolutionary movement because they meant that a news story in a Boston newspaper would also likely appear word-for-word in New York, Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania, or Virginia. Political leaders understood that they could establish certain stories, images, and themes among wide swaths of the literate population through exchanges.

In 1769, John Adams and his cousin Sam spent a summer Sunday afternoon in the shop of *The Boston Gazette* working with printers Benjamin Edes and John Gill on the next day's issue. Political activist James Otis was there, too. In his diary, John Adams reflected on the day's excitement: "The evening [was] spent in preparing the next day's newspaper. A curious Employment. Cooking up Paragraphs, Articles, Occurrences, Etc. — working the political Engine!"¹

That day, the Adamses, Otis, and the *Gazette* printers concocted an assortment of private letters, closely crafted "news" about Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson's recent importation of tea, and poems attacking Massachusetts Governor Francis Bernard.² They appeared in the *Gazette* as bare-bones factual, reliable accounts. How could readers know that they were not accurate? Fourteen newspapers in New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Georgia exchanged one or more items the Boston patriots concocted in the *Gazette* shop that afternoon. The exchange system was a powerful tool. The Adamses understood the power of the newspaper exchanges. They meant stories could be spread throughout the colonies.



Pastel portrait of John Adams by artist Benjamin Blyth, c. 1766. Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society (01.027).

In April 1775, conspiracy stories about British atrocities and intrigue began circulating. Stories of British officials plotting with enslaved Africans and Indigenous peoples to quash the rebellion filled the pages of colonial newspapers. Colonists across North America worried how the civil war in the empire would affect Indigenous peoples and enslaved African- and American-born men, women, and children. They feared that the war might produce slave insurrections and Native violence. Those collective fears compounded when colonists learned that others thought the same. It was the first semblance of a union.

Colonial Williamsburg digitized all of *The Virginia Gazette* newspapers published in Williamsburg from 1736 to 1780 at research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/. Students can browse issues or search by topic. This site is a fantastic resource for learning about the everyday life of the colonies. Check out the advertisements. Note: Because of how the law was written, each Williamsburg newspaper needed to be named "The Virginia Gazette." Two, sometimes three, different newspapers were published in Williamsburg with this title. They are organized by printers (Rind, Purdie, Pinkney, Dixon & Hunter) and come from different print shops on different dates.

1 Diary entry, September 3, 1769. In L.H. Butterfield, Ed., *The Adams Papers: Diary of and Autobiography of John Adams* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 343.

2 Printed in *The Boston Gazette* on September 4, 1769, and 14 other newspapers.

FEAR OF SLAVE INSURRECTIONS

In 1775, rumors about southern governors freeing and arming enslaved people began in the Carolinas. In November of that year, Virginia governor Lord Dunmore issued his famous proclamation offering freedom to able-bodied men of any Revolutionaries.³ Stories about his colleagues taking similar steps had been circulating for months. Dunmore's proclamation set off a firestorm of stories in American newspapers about enslaved people joining forces with the governor. By the end of 1775, newspapers ran stories about the "Royal Regiment of Black Fusileers [sic]" or the "Queen's Own Black Regiment."⁴ One well-exchanged story described a unit of Black soldiers wearing British uniforms "with this inscription on their breasts: 'Liberty to Slaves.'"⁵

In January 1776, a foraging party from Dunmore's forces landed on a James River plantation owned by a man named Narsworthy. It was a simple livestock raid, yet it caught quite a bit of attention:

Six white men and four negroes, last week, landed near to Mr. Narsworthy's in Isle of Wight County, in order to carry off some sheep which they knew were on the plantation . . . A negro man, who happened to be in the yard, discovering a negro dressed in the uniform of the 14th regiment, immediately went and informed his master that some of the Governor's men were landed; he dispatched the negro to a guard who were stationed at a small distance; they pursued them, took the negro in uniform, and drove the others into their boat without any stock.⁶

That paragraph appeared in Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia, in nearly half of all colonial newspapers. Why? Although this was probably a big deal for Narsworthy, it does not seem to be revolutionary news. Why did printers select this story? It might have been reprinted to show the continued loyalty of enslaved Virginians. After all, Narsworthy's enslaved man saves the day. More likely, it attracted attention because of the references to Black people. After the second word, white men disappear completely and Black men are the ones who battle for Narsworthy's plantation. Worse, the attackers were Black men in uniform, "the Governor's men." This was extraordinarily newsworthy.

WORRIES OF NATIVE VIOLENCE

A few days before the raid on Narsworthy's place, the Second Continental Congress received a letter from General Philip Schuyler, commander of the northern frontier. Schuyler informed Congress he had recently

received information from Six Nations (Iroquois Confederacy) about meetings between the Caughnawaga Nation and British Indian superintendent Guy Johnson.

Johnson, the Natives told Schuyler, "delivered to each of the Canadian tribes a war belt and a hatchet, who accepted it. After which they were invited to FEAST ON A BOSTONIAN AND DRINK HIS BLOOD." Regardless of whether Schuyler capitalized this phrase in his report to Congress, newspaper printers throughout America certainly did, complete with Schuyler's judgment that "we now have a full proof that the ministerial servants have attempted to engage the savages against us." The day after Christmas 1775, on explicit orders from Congress, *The Pennsylvania Evening Post* printer Benjamin Towne inserted this portion of Schuyler's letter in his paper "to perpetuate the *humanity* of the Ministers of George the Third and their Agents."⁷ From there, the exchange system broadcast Schuyler's lurid words to New York, Maryland, Virginia, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts.



Oil painting by artist Benjamin West depicting Colonel Guy Johnson and Karonghyontye (Captain David Hill), 1776. Andrew W. Mellon Collection, National Gallery of Art (1940.110).

Johnson's colleague in South Carolina, John Stuart, understood the power of these stories. At the same time Schuyler implied that Johnson had asked Natives to cannibalize American colonists, Stuart, a loyalist, wrote from Florida how "the news- papers were full of Publications calculated to excite the fears of the People. Massacres and Instigated Insurrections," he wrote, "were

3 Dunmore's Proclamation, November 7, 1775, The National Archives of the United Kingdom. https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/work_community/docs/dunmore_proclamation.htm.
4 Printed in *The Virginia Gazette* (Pinkney) on December 9, 1775, and 14 other newspapers.
5 Printed in *The Virginia Gazette* (Dixon & Hunter) on December 2, 1775, and 19 other newspapers.
6 Printed in *The Virginia Gazette* (Dixon & Hunter) on February 3, 1776, and nine other newspapers.
7 Printed in *The Pennsylvania Evening Post* on December 26, 1775, and 16 other newspapers.

Words in the mouth of every Child.” Stuart knew this all too well.⁸ Rumors of his connections to similar attempts to recruit Cherokee and Creek people to attack the Carolinas had forced him into exile.

Stuart hinted that these newspaper stories were “Calculated to excite the fears of the People” and were designed to hit with greater impact, words that came close to stating that they were cooked up. But they were not untrue statements. Both enslaved people of African descent and Indigenous people saw unprecedented opportunities to improve their lives. Revolutionary leaders called upon millions of people of European descent to support them and take up the common cause of American liberty over British tyranny. Some rallied behind that call, others rejected it, and still more wavered. Enslaved and Indigenous People had their own decisions to make. Their choices also ran the gamut of supporting the Revolution, rejecting and fighting against it, or using the opportunity to try to better their situations.

For their part, British officials made their own calculations about how to manage the conflict. Guy Johnson, John Stuart, Lord Dunmore, and other British agents discussed emancipating enslaved men and arming supportive Native Nations to quell the Revolution. The Founders then played a significant role in spreading those stories about British agents working with enslaved and Indigenous peoples to destroy the Revolution. While the news was not untrue, its presentation was calculated and cooked up.

Teachers and students can access all of the correspondence of the Founders that still exists. The culmination of multiple projects, Founders Online (founders.archives.gov), sponsored by the National Archives and Records Administration, offers the correspondence written by and sent to Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John, Abigail, and John Quincy Adams, among others. Over 185,000 letters written from the early eighteenth century through 1836 have been fully annotated and digitized and are searchable by date, recipient, and author.

HOW NEWSPAPER EXCHANGES MADE THE CAUSE COMMON

Between the Battle of Lexington and the Declaration of Independence, Revolutionary leaders labored to get these stories into as many colonial hands (or children’s mouths) as they could. These stories originated in the colonial past, fueled by nightmares of slave insurrections and massacres by Indigenous peoples. If American colonists in 1776 had anything in common, it was the fear they might be butchered in their beds by rebellious enslaved men and women or hostile Natives. They rarely acknowledged enslaved people or Indigenous peoples, including the Catawba, Delaware, Mahican, Oneida, and Stockbridge, who supported the Revolution. Supportive Indigenous peoples and people of African descent appeared in the Narsworthy and “feast” stories. Still, they were drowned out and overwhelmed by constant and loud references to British attempts to incite chaos and violence. Racial fear provided a golden opportunity to create a common cause. It helped solidify the political frontier of the American union.

This common cause was at the heart of the Declaration of Independence. Modern readers of the Declaration often focus only on the opening or closing paragraphs of the document, missing the list of grievances that established why the colonies needed to separate.

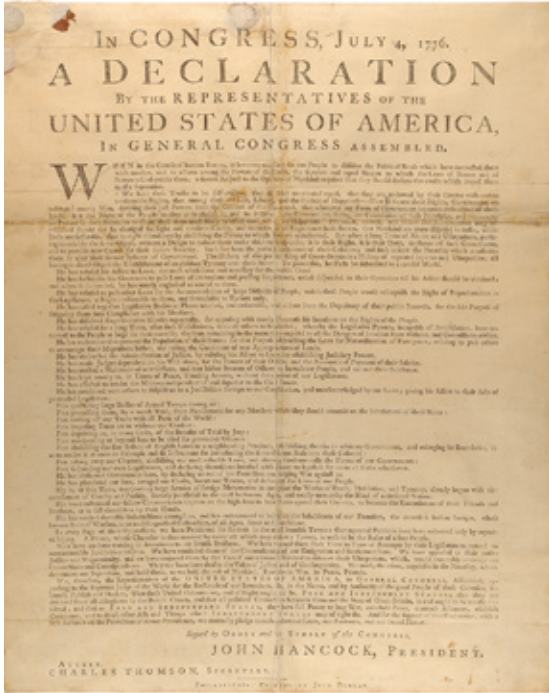
The final grievance—the deal-breaker—claimed that King George III “has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us and has endeavoured to bring onto the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known Rule of Warfare is an undistinguished Destruction of all Ages, Sexes, and Conditions.” Stories such as the Narsworthy raid and the invitation to feast on Bostonians were captured at the climax of the Declaration. Together, the King, rebellious slaves, and hostile Natives were the enemies of the Revolution and the new United States of America.

That message was received loud and clear by one group of people on Long Island. Upon hearing the Declaration read aloud, a crowd in Huntington, New York, showed their approval for independence by constructing a visual representation of America’s multiple enemies. As a New York newspaper recounted, “An effigy of [George III] being hastily fabricated out of base materials, with its face black, like *Dunmore’s* Virginia regiment, its head adorned with a wooden crown, and its head stuck full of feathers, like . . . *Johnson’s* Savages, and its body wrapped in the Union [Jack] . . . and lined with gunpowder, which the original seems to be fond of. The whole,” the article concluded, “was hung on a gallows, exploded, and burnt to ashes.”⁹ The New Yorkers killed the king, but they also consigned his helpers—the domestic insurrectionists and merciless savages—to the flames, too.

8 John Richard Alden, “John Stuart Accuses William Bull,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1945): 320.

9 Printed in the *New York Journal* on August 8, 1776.

THE DECLARATION AS STUDENT ESSAY



Dunlap broadside of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776. National Archives and Records Administration (301682).

On the night of July 4, 1776, John Dunlap printed the first 200 copies of the Declaration of Independence by order of Congress. Use the Dunlap broadside in class rather than the cursive copy of the Declaration to show students how it is constructed. It is much clearer on the broadside than in the big block of looping script and signatures in the iconic copy. The document includes two opening introductory paragraphs, a list of grievances, and a two-paragraph conclusion. Thomas Jefferson wrote a very good student essay: introduction, body, conclusion! Talk to students about how the Declaration is an argumentative essay. What is the thesis? What is the proof? What do the opening paragraphs argue? What does the conclusion say about the next steps for the independent American states?

CONCLUSION

This is where the how and why questions converge. Why did this matter? Revolutionists convinced colonists to support them by identifying and targeting African Americans and Indigenous Peoples. Those “founding stories,” which repeatedly appeared in newspapers, affected the quest for independence by drawing people into the movement to sustain war and form a nation. The system of exchanges was a frontier in communication that created a common cause across the colonies.

These newspaper articles helped create a union that had little place for “domestic insurrectionists” and “merciless Indian savages.” The embrace of racial fear to forge and create a union united the colonies in 1776 and haunts us to this day.

Read more about the themes explored in this essay in Robert G. Parkinson, *Thirteen Clocks: How Race United the Colonies and Made the Declaration of Independence*, 2021.

To read more on this topic, seek out:

RACE AND REVOLUTION

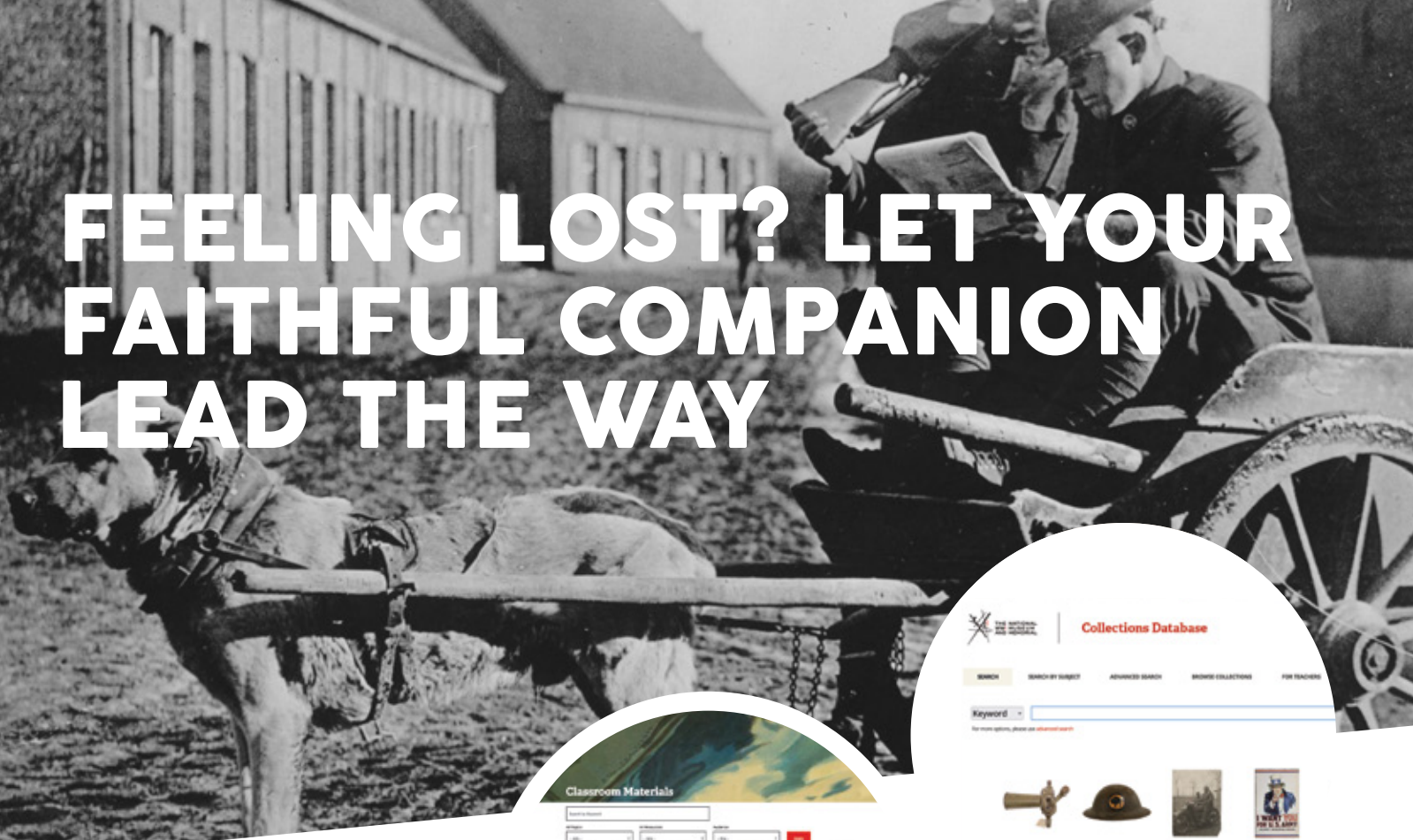
- › Woody Holton, *Liberty is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution*, 2021
- › Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750–1804*, 2016

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

- › William Hogeland, *Declaration: The Nine Tumultuous Weeks When America Became Independent, May 1–July 4, 1776*, 2010
- › Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence*, 1997

To access more theme resources, go to nhd.org/theme.

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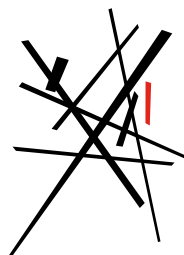
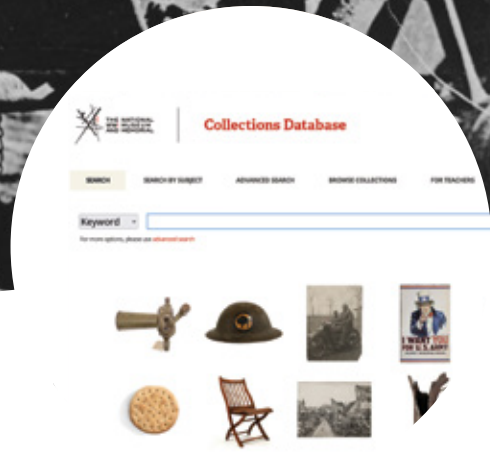
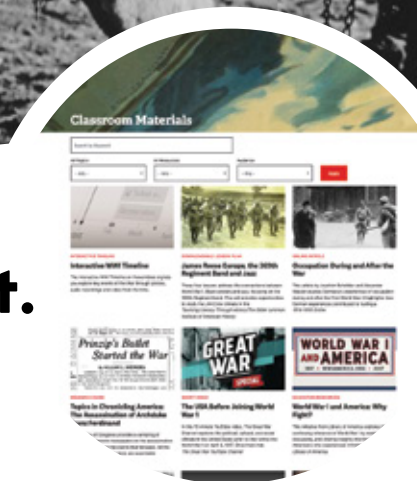
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Citizenship, Race, and Place: Frontiers in Asian American History

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The idea of a “frontier” has existed since before our nation’s founding. Frontiers as physical spaces have long been in continuous motion. Frontiers can be imagined spaces that changed due to war, displacement, migration, settlement, or treaties. The words used to describe this movement vary depending on one’s perspective: progress, tragedy, opportunity, isolation. This year’s National History Day® (NHD) theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*, invites students to investigate how those interactions shaped frontiers as places and ideas.

This article is framed by the compelling question, “How have Asian Americans traversed and transcended frontiers in history?” It considers how Asian Americans experienced frontiers as builders, resisters, and activists. We begin with the role of Chinese immigrants in completing one of the most significant infrastructure projects of the nineteenth century, the transcontinental railroad. Their participation shaped the boundaries of the American West and whom the U.S. government considered American. Questions about citizenship and belonging echoed into the twentieth century with the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Incarcerates experienced the frontier in familiar ways—the colliding of cultures, the need to innovate in the face of unimaginable obstacles—and also in ways that were unique to their wartime imprisonment. These stories allow us to center the experiences of Asian Americans in understanding the history of the frontier. We will consider the power of the frontier as a physical place and, more broadly, why place matters.

The National Endowment for the Humanities’ EDSITEment website (edsitement.neh.gov) offers free, high-quality resources in the subject areas of History & Social Studies, Literature & Language Arts, and Arts & Culture. EDSITEment’s Landmarks of American History and Culture Teacher’s Guide offers a resource for place-based teaching with strategies, activities, and introductions to Clio and other student tools at edsitement.neh.gov/teachers-guides/landmarks-american-history-and-culture.

BUILDERS ON THE FRONTIER: THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

The 1848 California Gold Rush brought the first Chinese migrants to the western United States. Many found opportunities in the mining industry, others on farms or running small businesses. The construction of a rail line across the U.S. in the mid-1860s required a massive workforce, a demand both the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific Railways struggled to meet. Despite racial prejudice, both companies began actively recruiting Chinese workers, who could be paid as little as half to two-thirds the wage offered to native-born U.S. workers for the same backbreaking work.

Records are inexact, so the precise number of Chinese workers is unclear. They built nearly 690 miles of railroad between 1864 and 1869. At any one time, 10,000 to 15,000 Chinese worked on the construction.¹ Responsible for building sections of the track through the mountains of the Sierra Nevada, Chinese laborers conquered rock, granite, and conifer forests. They encountered life-threatening weather, including blizzards and avalanches.

The most challenging conditions were found near the summit of Donner Pass. At an elevation of 7,200 feet, workers struggled to breathe while laying track.² They built several tunnels through solid granite using black powder and dangerous chemicals. As master masons, these Chinese laborers also built a 75-foot retaining wall at Donner Pass between the two tunnels—by hand, without using any mortar—to support the roadbed. It became known as China Wall, a remarkable engineering feat. In 2021, the National Trust for Historic Preservation designated this section of the railway among the most endangered historic places.³

The labor of Chinese immigrants was essential to the Transcontinental Railroad, the critical infrastructure that supported the nineteenth-century expansion of the American frontier. On May 10, 1869, at Promontory Summit, Utah, the golden spike connected the Central Pacific track from Sacramento, California, with the Union Pacific track from Omaha, Nebraska. While many of their efforts have been unrecognized or forgotten, Chinese laborers transformed the landscape and development of the United States.



The snow sheds on the Central Pacific Railroad in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, printed in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, February 6, 1870. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (BANC PIC 1963.002:0808--C).

Students can analyze primary sources that are a part of Chinese immigrant and Chinese American history using the EDSITEment lesson plan, *The Impact of the Transcontinental Railroad*, available at edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/150th-anniversary-impact-transcontinental-railroad.

Students looking for additional primary sources on Chinese railroad workers should check out these collections:

- › Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project at Stanford University
web.stanford.edu/group/chineserailroad/cgi-bin/website/
- › Chinese Railroad Workers Search, Calisphere, University of California Digital Collections
calisphere.org/search/?q=chinese+railroad+workers
- › Early Chinese Immigration to the U.S., Digital Public Library of America
dp.la/primary-source-sets/early-chinese-immigration-to-the-us
- › Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History: Chinese, Library of Congress
loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/chinese/

RESISTERS ON THE FRONTIER: CONFRONTING NATIVISM, RACISM, AND EXCLUSION

As Chinese laborers found employment and established a foothold in this American frontier, they encountered virulent racism and violence from their white neighbors. Rather than viewing Chinese workers as equals, white workers viewed them as “coolies” (unskilled laborers) or “virtual semi-slaves,” who collaborated with corporations to bring down wages and push out the white working class.⁴ White workers and their families boycotted and threatened companies that relied on Chinese workers. In the words of historian Erika Lee, anti-Chinese politicians and white residents sought to “[sustain] the West as a ‘white man’s frontier.’”⁵ Nativists expressed anti-Chinese prejudice through violence. These vigilante actions rarely resulted in prosecution, and in some cases, received the support of local law enforcement.

1 “Key Questions,” Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project, accessed December 9, 2021. <https://web.stanford.edu/group/chineserailroad/cgi-bin/website/faqs/>.

2 Gordon H. Chang, *Ghosts of Gold Mountain: The Epic Story of the Chinese Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019), 75.

3 “Discover America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places for 2021,” National Trust for Historic Preservation, accessed December 9, 2021. <https://savingplaces.org/stories/11-most-endangered-historic-places-2021#.YbJ2INDMLLa>.

4 Richard White, *The Republic for Which It Stands: The United States during Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865-1896* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 520.

5 Erika Lee, *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2019), 78.

TEACHING RESOURCES

Trace the evolution of American citizenship with Virginia Humanities' podcast, *BackStory* (backstoryradio.org/). EDSITEment's resource includes questions to explore with students: edsitement.neh.gov/media-resources/backstory-be-citizen-history-becoming-american.

Students might consider researching these U.S. Supreme Court cases for an NHD project:

- › *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* (1886): The San Francisco City Board of Supervisors routinely denied Chinese laundry businesses access to required permits. The U.S. Supreme Court decided that biased enforcement of the law (denying Chinese businesses permits) violated the Equal Protection Clause. teachingcalifornia.org/inquiry-sets/12-5-government-what-makes-a-law-constitutional-does-that-ever-change-who-decides/source/yick-wo-laundry-in-san-francisco-2121/
- › *Chae Chan Ping v. United States* (1889): Also known as "The Chinese Exclusion Case," the Supreme Court upheld Chinese exclusion and

broadly affirmed the federal government's power over immigration matters.

immigrationhistory.org/item/cha-e-ch-an-ping-v-united-states-1889-aka-the-chinese-exclusion-case/

- › *Fong Yue Ting v. United States* (1892): The Supreme Court upheld the Geary Act, which required Chinese people in the U.S. to carry a Certificate of Residence and affirmed the federal government's power over immigration matters. immigrationhistory.org/item/fong-yue-ting-challenge-case/
- › *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898): This case affirmed that any person born in the United States is a citizen by birth. immigrationhistory.org/item/united-states-v-wong-kim-ark-1898/ teachingcalifornia.org/inquiry-sets/12ad-1-government-power/source/12ad-1-5-departure-statement-of-wong-kim-ark-5678/
- › Research Guide, *Chinese Exclusion Act: Primary Documents in American History*, Library of Congress guides.loc.gov/chinese-exclusion-act/introduction

Nativists successfully pressured legislators to set xenophobic or prejudiced attitudes into law. The Burlingame-Seward Treaty (1868) between the United States and China formally committed the U.S. to protect Chinese immigrants' rights, including the right to move freely and trade. The treaty signaled an opportunity for a more positive relationship, but it clashed with the interests of western nativists.⁶ In reaction, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Foran Act of 1885 to redefine the country's obligations. These laws blocked Chinese immigration and barred immigrants from becoming U.S. citizens.⁷ However, federal legislation did not end the debate nor quell white discontent. Instead, it exacerbated anti-Chinese sentiment and increased violence. The federal government could not enforce immigration restrictions, and budgetary limits meant that any effort at mass deportation was impractical. To nativists on the west coast, the federal government's ineffective enforcement served as proof that Chinese immigrants and corporations were conspiring to mock the will of the people.⁸

Even under consistent threat, many Chinese migrants vocally opposed the passage of xenophobic laws and built support networks. These networks included family

and friends, immigration lawyers, and sympathetic whites.⁹ Chinese Americans challenged state and local legislation in state and federal courts.¹⁰ When federal laws passed, they continued their fights in federal courts. Hoping for a sympathetic response to the mistreatment of Chinese migrants, many wrote letters to Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson.¹¹ While the process of exclusion did not end immediately, it raised the question of who could be an American.

ACTIVISTS ON THE FRONTIER: JAPANESE INCARCERATION CAMPS

After the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, the federal government characterized the Japanese and Japanese American populations as dangerous enemies. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which authorized the evacuation of people with Japanese ancestry from the West Coast to military zones in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming. Imposing watch towers, rows of barracks, and barbed wire fences separated Japanese citizens and Japanese Americans from seemingly desolate

6 Chang, *Ghosts of Gold Mountain*, 218–219.

7 Chang, *Ghosts of Gold Mountain*, 231–232.

8 Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2011), 305.

9 Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 104, 130.

10 Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 20.

11 Lee, *At America's Gates*, 114.

landscapes. More than 127,000 men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry were imprisoned until 1945. By removing Japanese Americans from their homes and relocating this racial group to remote locations, the United States government created new frontiers beyond the boundaries of white American communities in the twentieth century on the settled land of Native Nations.



The view of the barracks at the camp at Heart Mountain, Wyoming, c. 1943. The Wada and Homma Family Collection, Densho Digital Repository.

While interactions on frontiers can bring about the exchange of goods and ideas, boundaries can also separate people, places, or ideas. Incarceration camps insinuated that the Issei and Nisei (first- and second-generation Japanese Americans) were guilty of espionage on behalf of the Japanese Empire. The War Relocation Authority (WRA) devised a questionnaire administered to adults in the camps to determine their allegiance and assess their loyalty to the United States. The final two questions caused the most confusion. Question 27 asked Nisei men, “Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?”

RESEARCH RESOURCES

Students interested in studying this period can access primary sources using these repositories:

- › Densho Digital Repository
ddr.densho.org/
- › Digital Collection, *Japanese-American Internment Camp Newspapers, 1942 to 1946*, Library of Congress
loc.gov/collections/japanese-american-internment-camp-newspapers/about-this-collection/
- › Japanese American Relocation Digital Archive (JARDA)
calisphere.org/exhibitions/t11/jarda/
- › California State University Japanese American History Digitization Project
csujad.com/

As a follow-up, Question 28 asked if they would swear allegiance to the United States and forsake any loyalty to the Emperor of Japan.¹²

As American citizens recently stripped of their civil rights, many responded to these questions: no, no. For some, these were simply honest answers to the questions asked. Others considered the courage to answer honestly a form of activism. Labeled as “disloyal,” these activists, who became known as “no-no boys” for their peaceful act of protest, were moved to Tule Lake, an incarceration camp in California.

Students can research one of these Supreme Court cases to consider the legal frontiers of internment:

- › *Yasui v. United States* (1943): The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of curfews applied to Japanese Americans during World War II.
encyclopedia.densho.org/Yasui_v._United_States/
- › *Korematsu v. United States* (1944): This Supreme Court case ruled the decision to incarcerate Japanese American citizens in government-run camps during wartime was constitutional.
icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/korematsu-v-United-states-1944
- › *Ex parte Endo* (1944): The Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the U.S. government could not continue to detain citizens in American concentration camps who were “concededly loyal” to the United States.
immigrationhistory.org/item/ex-parte-endo/

Another act of resistance can be seen with Kiyoshi Okamoto’s formation of the “Fair Play Committee of One” at Heart Mountain in Wyoming in response to the WRA questionnaire in 1943. In an oral history, Sam Mihara, a former Heart Mountain incarcerated who was imprisoned at age nine, recalled Okamoto organizing others at the camp. He noted:

I remember a gathering after dinner of these people having a meeting and loud voices. And how people like Okamoto and others would describe the conditions and their philosophy that we should not serve until our rights were restored. And that kept building up until there were some eighty-five Japanese Americans in the camp at Heart Mountain, who took the active step that when the draft came in, they decided not to go and

¹² Teachers and students can access Executive Order 9066 at docsteach.org/documents/document/executive-order-9066 and the Loyalty Questionnaire at encyclopedia.densho.org/sources/en-denshopd-p72-00004-1/.

board buses to go to a physical examination, which is the first step in the draft process.¹³

In his oral history on EDSITEment, Mihara described his school in the camp, his childhood friends, and where their imaginations could take them outside of the barracks. While a fence separated them from other communities in Wyoming, the young schoolboys often slipped through the fence, finding rattlesnakes and arrowheads on the other side.

Activism that began decades prior in the camps continued into the post-war years. The American government acknowledged their fault in 1988 with reparations to Japanese Americans after their successful campaign for a formal apology and compensation for all they had lost in the three years behind barbed-wire fences.¹⁴ Today, we continue to confront the legacies of Japanese incarceration and the multiple meanings of “frontiers.”

CLASSROOM RESOURCES ON EDSITEMENT

Consider contemporary events surrounding Japanese American incarceration during World War II. EDSITEment’s resource includes questions to explore with students and tools on how to conduct an oral history.

- › Teacher’s Guide: Oral History as an Educational Experience
edsitement.neh.gov/teachers-guides/oral-history-educational-experience
- › NEH Why Here: Heart Mountain Wyoming and Japanese Incarceration
edsitement.neh.gov/media-resources/why-here-heart-mountain-wyoming-and-japanese-incarceration
- › Lesson Plan: Japanese American Internment Camps during WWII
edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/japanese-american-internment-camps-during-wwii
- › Lesson Plan: Asian American & Pacific Islander Perspectives within Humanities Education
edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/asian-american-pacific-islander-perspectives-within-humanities-education

CONCLUSION

As the United States expanded its borders abroad and at home, the frontier never quite closed. Frontiers continued to morph into tools that justified U.S. power by constructing and reinforcing racial differences. The frontier’s physical and conceptual evolution contributed to debates over land rights, access, and Americanness. Asian Americans contested the consequences of frontiers in multiple places—the courtroom, schools, their homes—in ways that showed the limitations of “the frontier” when held accountable to the U.S. promise of equality. When we look to the experiences of Chinese, American Indian, Japanese Americans, white, Black, and Mexican Americans, across time and space, we see how much the history of the United States challenges and redefines frontiers. Pondering “why here?” pushes us to ask new questions about people, places, and ideas in the interest of telling a fuller, more inclusive history of the United States.

NHD collaborated with the National Endowment for the Humanities to produce a teacher resource book, *Building a More Perfect Union*. The book includes two articles and 15 lessons created by NHD master teachers. The topics range from the French and Indian War to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Access the materials at nhd.org/250.

To access more theme resources,
go to nhd.org/theme.

13 “I Remember: Japanese Incarceration during World War II,” EDSITEment, accessed December 10, 2021. <https://edsitement.neh.gov/media-resources/i-remember-japanese-incarceration-during-wwii>.

14 Access the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 at govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-102/pdf/STATUTE-102-Pg903.pdf.

FREE DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES FROM DOUGHBOY.ORG/TEACHING

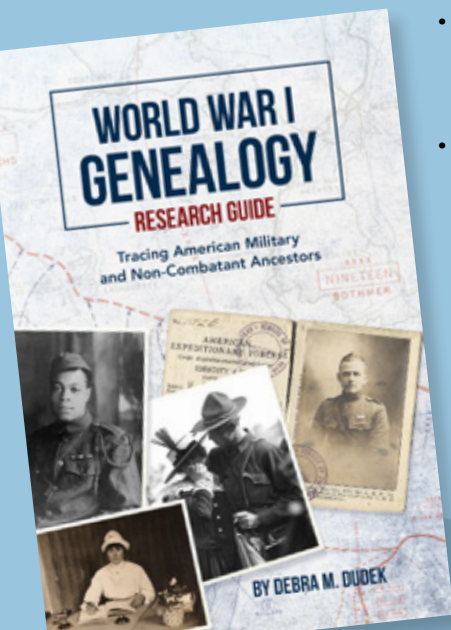
VIDEOS PODCASTS LESSON PLANS PRIMARY SOURCES

How WWI Changed America Teaching and Learning Resources



WWI GENEALOGY RESEARCH GUIDE

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Frontiers in Medicine: Women Physicians and the People For Whom They Cared

MATT HERBISON, Archivist, Legacy Center Archives and Special Collections, Drexel University College of Medicine

In the nineteenth century, the idea of a woman physician was new. Some people thought it was inappropriate for women to engage in such a public and traditionally masculine practice. Many male physicians opposed the idea of women physicians and feared competition from them. In the late 1840s, women began to earn medical degrees. For the next 120 years, fewer than 10 percent of physicians were women, even though individual women crossed frontiers in all areas of medicine and society. Today, approximately one-third of physicians in the U.S. are women.

Crossing medical frontiers in the fight for equal rights meant that many women had to push beyond the restrictions that limited their opportunities. It began with education and included the struggle for acceptance in communities lacking health care. It can also be seen in the medical advances that these women achieved and their contributions to the field. Consider these topics that support the National History Day® (NHD) theme of *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*.

FRONTIERS IN MEDICAL EDUCATION

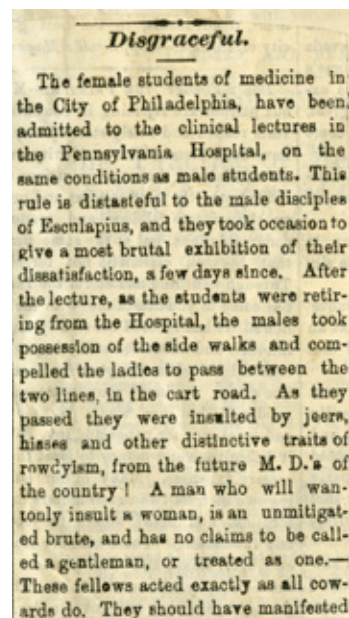
The nineteenth century was a period of rapid social change. Before 1850, most women did not receive much, if any, formal education. Women working as nurses and midwives lacked opportunities for formal medical education.

A small group of Philadelphia Quakers imagined a future that included women physicians serving their communities. In 1850, this group founded the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania—renamed the Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania (WMCP) in 1867—as the first medical school for women.

Almost 20 years after the founding, the number of female medical students and physicians remained very small. Many people fiercely opposed women attending medical

school lectures, during which students from several schools met in a single lecture hall. In November 1869, about 35 students from WMCP ventured into this forbidden frontier. They attended a lecture at Pennsylvania Hospital with several hundred male medical students.

Dozens of newspapers around the country covered the reaction and behavior of male medical students. The incident became known as the “Jeering Episode.” It was a defining moment in the history of the college and a turning point in accepting women physicians in the U.S. The 1869 newspaper articles showed outrage over the men’s “ungentlemanly” behavior and the cautious acceptance of the idea that “proper ladies” could be medical students.



One of many newspaper articles about the November 1869 “Jeering Episode.” The author called the behavior of the male medical students “disgraceful.” Drexel University Legacy Center (a133_054).

COMMUNITIES AS HEALTH FRONTIERS

Consider the relationship between individuals requiring health care and doctors providing that care. Often, people feel more comfortable when health care is provided by someone who looks like them. When few (or no) members of an underserved community are trained health care providers, health problems, including easily treatable ones, can proliferate. It creates a cycle of underserved communities and underrepresented health care workers. Furthermore, young people need to see role models and understand that medical career options are open to them.

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN PHYSICIANS

After the American Civil War, Jim Crow laws and segregation affected hospitals, medical care, and medical education. Most hospitals did not employ African American physicians and nurses. Some hospitals would not accept African American patients, and when they did, those patients were often assigned to segregated wards.

African Americans crossed frontiers to train as physicians and acquire the resources to treat members of their communities. African American women physicians struggled against both racial and gender discrimination. Many early African American women physicians created their own opportunities. They established hospitals and clinics in poor, primarily African American communities in the rural South and the urban northeast. They took a public health approach to patient care that included medical treatment and health education while advocating for good nutrition, clean and safe living conditions, and improved economic conditions.

Students interested in African American women physicians might research one of these women:

- › **Dr. Susan McKinney Steward** (1847–1918) was the third African American woman to earn a medical degree in the United States in 1870. She had a long career in New York as a physician, lecturer, teacher, and activist.
- › **Dr. Matilda Evans** (1872–1935) earned her medical degree in 1897 and began a life-long career in South Carolina. She established a hospital and created the Negro Health Association of South Carolina to provide routine health services and health education to low-income families.
- › **Dr. Virginia Alexander** (1900–1949) became a physician in 1925. She practiced medicine and improved community health through her Aspiranto Health Home, which she operated out of her own home in Philadelphia, providing neighborhood and maternal health care options regardless of whether patients could pay.
- › **Dr. Helen O. Dickens** (1909–2001) earned her medical degree in 1934. She had an active and prominent medical career for over 50 years, focusing on the health of women, teenagers, and children while teaching and advocating for educational opportunities for African Americans.

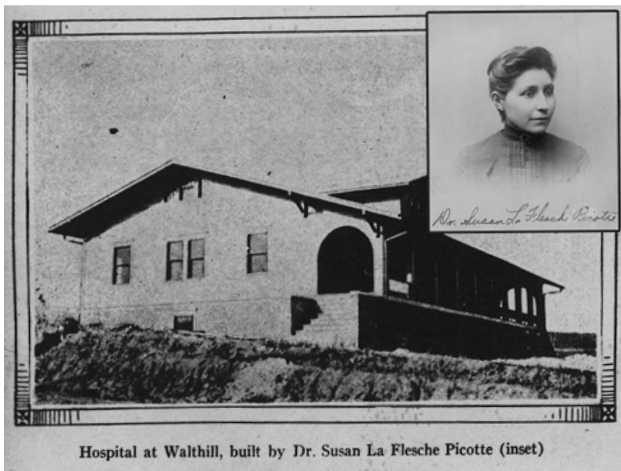


Dr. Matilda Evans was an African American graduate of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1897. Drexel University Legacy Center (p0278).

NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN PHYSICIANS

Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte (Omaha Nation) and Dr. Lillie Rosa Minoka-Hill (Mohawk Nation) earned medical degrees late in the nineteenth century and are often cited as the first and second Native American women physicians. Dr. Picotte advocated for government funding and recognition of the public health challenges present on reservations. She raised the money needed for a community hospital in Nebraska, which opened shortly before her death in 1915. Dr. Minoka-Hill ran a “kitchen clinic” out of her home on the Oneida Reservation in Wisconsin for 40 years, adjusting her fees to what her patients could afford.

Drs. Picotte and Minoka-Hill faced the challenge of straddling frontiers, between providing modern medical care while honoring traditional practices in their communities. Their stories speak to a history of racism and assimilation that have long shaped the experiences of Native Americans.



Hospital built by Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte in Walthill, Nebraska (around 1915), including an inset photo of Dr. Picotte (1889). Drexel University Legacy Center (p0164).

FRONTIERS IN MEDICINE

Women entering every sector of medical practice pushed frontiers. Even today there are still areas with disproportionate representation between women and men physicians. For example, while 60 percent of pediatricians are women, fewer than 10 percent of orthopedic surgeons are women.¹ When the factors of race and ethnicity are added, representation decreases.² The historical struggles of individuals who worked towards achieving these present-day levels of representation make for interesting NHD projects. Consider these examples of women practicing medicine and pushing the frontiers further.

AMERICAN WOMEN PHYSICIANS IN WORLD WAR I

War often led to increased opportunities for women. During World War I, Allied countries did not permit women physicians to serve as officers in the military medical corps despite the desperate need for doctors.

American Women's Hospitals (AWH), now known as American Women's Hospital Service (AMWA), is an organization founded and run by women physicians to advance the medical profession and help those suffering around the world. AWH's first hospital opened in France in

1918, crossing a medical frontier to treat civilians suffering from the destruction of modern warfare that displaced millions. AWH doctors treated injuries and diseases such as dysentery, typhoid, influenza, and pneumonia. They encountered infectious diseases spread by forced migration and inadequate housing during and following the war.

Another frontier was managing and funding the AWH. Women ran the organization. They provided services and sought funding and support from women in the U.S. In their fund drives, the women of the AWH used their atypical position as physicians to draw attention to this international crisis.



Dr. I. Jay Manwaring, staff, and patient return in an ambulance to the American Women's Hospital No. 1 in Luzancy, France, around 1918. Drexel University Legacy Center (a144_002).

AMONG THE FIRST IN HER FIELD

Modern medicine includes about one hundred medical specialties, each focusing on a defined group of patients, diseases, or skills. Women have been involved with some specialties since their earliest days—for example, obstetrics and gynecology or pediatrics, which would have been seen by some in society as “gender-appropriate” domains for women in the 1800s. Women entered other medical specialties later. As women expanded into every sector of medical practice over the last 170 years, each presented a fresh frontier. The earliest women in each specialty faced challenges, some of which are still present today.

1 “Physician Specialty Data Report: Active Physicians by Sex and Specialty, 2019,” Association of American Medical Colleges, updated 2019, accessed January 11, 2022. <https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/workforce/interactive-data/active-physicians-sex-and-specialty-2019>.
 2 “Diversity in Medicine: Facts and Figures 2019,” Association of American Medical Colleges, updated 2019, accessed January 11, 2022. <https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/workforce/report/diversity-medicine-facts-and-figures-2019>.

Consider these women who pushed the frontiers of their specialties:

- › **Dr. Catharine Macfarlane** (1877–1969) was an obstetrician and gynecologist who advocated for early testing for cancers and opened one of the first screening centers for uterine cancer in the U.S.
- › **Dr. Ruth Jackson** (1902–1994) was the first practicing female orthopedic surgeon in the U.S. and an expert in neck injuries, treating over 15,000 during her career. The Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society, an organization committed to supporting and mentoring women in orthopedics, is named in her honor.
- › **Dr. Alma Dea Morani** (1907–2001) was one of the first female plastic surgeons. She started a hand surgery clinic in 1948. Dr. Morani was also a sculptor and felt that her reconstructive surgery work and her calling as an artist were extensions of the same skill set.
- › **Dr. Virginia Apgar** (1909–1974) developed the Apgar Score in 1952 as a quick way for doctors to evaluate the health of newborns in the minutes after birth, a technique still used today. So widely used was the method that Dr. Apgar's name became a mnemonic memory device to assess a newborn's health: APGAR = appearance (skin color), pulse (heart rate), grimace (reflex irritability), activity (muscle tone), and respiration.



Dr. Alma Dea Morani examines plastic surgery instruments in her clinic, 1949. Drexel University Legacy Center (p0841).

CONCLUSION

Women have crossed many frontiers in the struggle for equal rights in the field of medicine, a struggle that continues today. In their persistence, women from all backgrounds changed the face of medicine. Many of these women's experiences have common themes: overcoming barriers to educational opportunity, dealing with help or resistance from family, struggling to find jobs, existing in workplaces where they were minorities, and needing to prove themselves to other physicians. Students may use some of these themes to navigate and understand the experiences of early women physicians.

Important questions to consider when exploring any of these stories and the lives of these individuals include:

- › How did women face frontiers in gender disparities and access to education and career paths? How did gender, race, ethnicity, and economic status affect a physician's education and career opportunities?
- › When entering the frontiers of communities, how did women physicians support the needs and interests of the people for whom they cared? How did societal restrictions, norms, or personal challenges prevent them from accomplishing more?
- › How were these women innovators, and how did they push the frontiers of medicine in their specialty areas?

Online resources to help students research the women featured in this article as well as other topics presented through the eyes of women physicians are available from the Legacy Center Archives and Special Collections, Drexel University College of Medicine at [Drexel.edu/LegacyCenter/NHD](https://drexel.edu/legacycenter/nhd).

To access more theme resources,
go to nhd.org/theme.

Frontiers of the Imagination: Exploring New Discoveries and New Realms of the Possible Using Primary Sources

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STACIE MOATS, Educational Resources Specialist, Library of Congress

STEPHEN WESSON, Educational Resources Specialist, Library of Congress

Frontiers can be physical: a mountain range, a broad river, a border beyond which travelers can glimpse enticing new territory. There are also frontiers of imagination—boundaries of thinking that, once crossed, expand the realm of the possible, opening up new intellectual terrain for exploration.

Primary sources such as those from the online collections of the Library of Congress ([loc.gov](https://www.loc.gov)) can help National History Day® (NHD) students explore the breakthrough moments, scientific discoveries, and dramatic changes in perspective that cross these frontiers. Firsthand accounts of people who lived during times of change provide evidence of new ways of thinking, as do newspaper articles, charts, posters, and maps.

This article will look at a few Library of Congress primary sources that reveal moments in which frontiers of the imagination were explored. It will offer students strategies to discover valuable primary sources for their projects for this year's theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*.

WHAT IS TIME? THE TELEGRAPH OPENS NEW FRONTIERS OF TIME AND SPACE

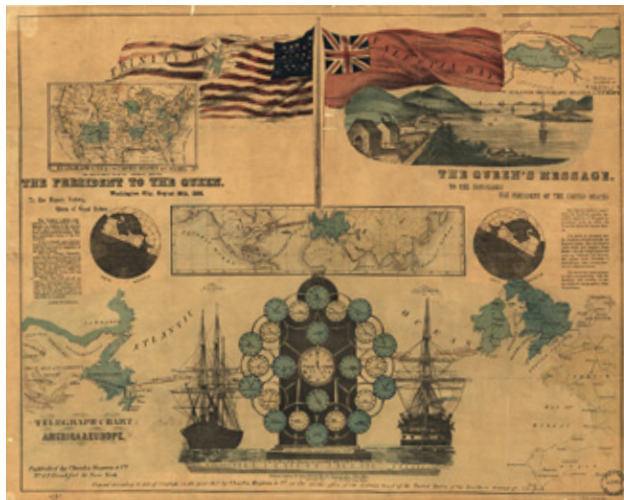
On May 24, 1844, Samuel F. B. Morse dispatched the first telegraphic message, asking "What hath God wrought?" over an experimental line strung from Washington, D.C.,

to Baltimore, Maryland. This leading-edge technology opened a new frontier in communication and concepts of time and distance.

People had tried various methods to send messages across long distances for many years. They relayed information from station to station through lights, drum beats, smoke signals, semaphores, and even the Pony Express. Each was successful, but each also had weaknesses and was prone to break down. Consider, for example, the effect of wind or fog, or the potential for an error when conveying a message between stations. The telegraph replaced the stations with electrical circuits, improving speed and accuracy. Though it took years of work to refine the technology and lay the required cable, eventually everything was in place to instantly send a telegram across the North American continent or across the Atlantic Ocean.

On August 16, 1858, Queen Victoria and President James Buchanan exchanged greetings through the newly completed transatlantic telegraph system. *Telegraph chart, America and Europe*, published in 1858, commemorates this moment. It includes the text of the first transatlantic telegram, sent from the queen to the president, and Buchanan's reply. In their messages, the two heads of state hailed the technology as a means of unifying the globe. The chart also reveals a preoccupation with time and distance by including several maps, a "profile of the

bottom of the Atlantic” and a “time indicator” with a clock representing New York City at the center surrounded by clocks purporting to tell the time in various places around the country and across the globe.



Telegraph chart, America and Europe, 1858. Library of Congress (99466769).

The cable that carried those messages between the queen and the president failed after only three weeks and was replaced by a sturdier cable several years later. The web of telegraph wires woven in the ensuing decades changed personal and political communications as well as the ways people thought about time and distance in their everyday lives.

In the late 1930s, as part of the Federal Writers’ Project, May Swenson interviewed telegraph operator Ance Vrboska.¹ In addition to vividly describing his work, he reflected on time, saying:

And then I get to thinkin, what is time? A few seconds it takes to throw a message from Frisco to New York. But if you walk it, say without stopping, it takes two months. Then say, they throw a wire from Frisco at 1 p. m. It takes only a few seconds to get New York, but when it’s intercepted, it’s 4 p. m. E. S. T. Four hours just squeezed down to zero.

Less than a century after Morse sent the first telegram such a short distance, a telegraph operator turned philosopher recognized that each telegram sent crossed a new frontier in time, becoming one of countless time travelers dispatched in the course of daily business.

Primary sources documenting the rise of electrical communication technologies such as telegraphy allow NHD students to explore how this lightning-fast media changed the way people experienced or described

distance and time and, if so, the forms those changes took. Were the changes immediate or gradual? Were the same words or images used to describe these changes across different regions and communities, or did everyone describe or depict their experiences differently? Students might also investigate any predicted changes that did not come to pass and what long-term impacts of these new technologies were unforeseen.

The Library of Congress offers several ways students can research topics related to the National History Day theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*.

- › The Federal Writers Project collected approximately 2,900 oral histories from 1936 until 1940 that contain evidence of dramatic changes of perspective in people’s everyday lives. Go to [loc.gov/collections/federal-writers-project/about-this-collection/](https://www.loc.gov/collections/federal-writers-project/about-this-collection/).
- › Charts and graphs can reveal a great deal about how people saw the world at a particular historical moment. They can be searched at [loc.gov/photos/](https://www.loc.gov/photos/).
- › Searching for a specific topic at [loc.gov](https://www.loc.gov) will produce songs, photographs, letters, and other primary sources documenting the varied and sometimes conflicting feelings people had during a particular historical era.

SKYSCRAPERS: CROSSING THE VERTICAL FRONTIER

Beginning with the completion of the world’s first skyscraper, the Home Insurance Building in Chicago, Illinois, in 1885, the vertical frontier has inspired and challenged Americans to reimagine many aspects of urban living and envision cities of the future. For over 135 years, innovators in design, engineering, materials science, and related fields have adapted and expanded upon the basic premise of the skyscraper—namely, a tall commercial building—to achieve ever-greater heights, overcoming shifting environmental constraints. Industry standards and government regulations evolved to address energy efficiency, waste and water management, earthquake resilience, and much more. The resulting skyscrapers influenced everything from artistic endeavors and popular culture to economic policies and political careers.

Skyscrapers’ seemingly limitless vertical rise created a new frontier for urban living. It ultimately changed people’s expectations, attitudes, concerns, and visions for city life—along with city skylines. The front page of the January 4,

¹ May Swenson (interviewer) and Anca Vrboska (interviewee). [Folklore of Communications.] Manuscript/mixed material. 1936-1939. Federal Writers’ Project, Library of Congress (MSS55715: BOX A724). <https://www.loc.gov/resource/wpalh2.24030808/?sp=7>.

1914, edition of *The Sun*, published in New York City, features eye-catching illustrations of skyscrapers with a headline that read “City’s First Skyscraper Now Being Razed While New Giant 800 Feet High is Planned.”² Two accompanying articles detailed various aspects of the city’s 25 years of “progress in the art of building skyscrapers.”



The front page of *The Sun*, a New York City newspaper, January 4, 1914. Chronicling America, Library of Congress.

One article, titled “Original Steel Frame Building Lasted Only Twenty-six Years but Gave to New York Pattern for All Its Great Structures,” highlights the lasting impact of the Tower Building, New York’s original steel frame structure,

an experimental triumph under demolition because “it cannot compete with the giants of its own family.”³ Another article, “More Excitement Created by 129 Foot Building Than Would Be Now by One of 1,000 Feet . . . Some of Its Forgotten Romance,” alludes to an increasingly hard-to-impress public. After describing several significant advancements in early skyscraper design and construction, the article concludes that only supplemental improvements have been made “in the intervening years since the pioneer skyscraper builders worked out the problems told of here.”⁴

The breakthroughs in engineering and construction that made skyscrapers possible also allowed people to imagine new ways of living that left the earth’s surface far behind. The December 30, 1906, edition of *The Washington Times* included an illustrated article that painted a picture of a future world of high-altitude cities, the inhabitants of which would never need to touch the ground. Not only would people travel to the upper floors of skyscrapers “by navigable airships, but the travel between various elevated communities will be by the same method.”⁵ A column published in *The Seattle Star* on July 12, 1912, predicted that “Skyscraper of the Future May Reach from Earth to Heaven,” and that every amenity a person might need could be contained in each individual building.⁶

NHD students can investigate how the rapid rise of skyscrapers transformed the daily lives and attitudes of Americans, in ways large and small, in cities and beyond. Examining historic newspaper articles may inspire NHD students to explore how skyscrapers and related advances in design, engineering, construction, and materials science may have affected nearly every aspect of urban living since the late nineteenth century. While investigating narratives focused on urbanization and industrialization, students may also seek additional perspectives. How did the new vertical frontier of skyscrapers affect people’s daily lives and experiences in cities? What new opportunities—and perhaps concerns—did these changing city skylines represent to those living in rural areas?

- 2 “City’s First Skyscraper Now Being Razed While New Giant 800 Feet High Is Planned,” *The Sun* [New York, New York], January 4, 1914. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1914-01-04/ed-1/seq-21/>.
- 3 “Original Steel Frame Building Lasted Only Twenty-six Years but Gave to New York Pattern for All Its Great Structures,” *The Sun* [New York, New York], January 4, 1914. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1914-01-04/ed-1/seq-21/>.
- 4 “More Excitement Created by 129 Foot Building Than Would Be Now by One of 1,000 Feet . . . Some of Its Forgotten Romance,” *The Sun* [New York, New York], January 4, 1914. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1914-01-04/ed-1/seq-21/>.
- 5 “The Marvelous World of 2407—a Prophecy,” *The Washington Times* [Washington, D.C.], December 30, 1906. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026749/1906-12-30/ed-1/seq-49/>.
- 6 “Skyscraper of the Future May Reach from Earth to Heaven,” *The Seattle Star* [Seattle, Washington], July 12, 1912. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1912-07-12/ed-1/seq-1/>.

Exploring Chronicling America (chroniclingamerica.loc.gov), the Library’s searchable database of historic newspapers, offers an accessible starting point for discovering and gathering evidence about this multi-layered history through diverse local and national perspectives. Students can also mine historic newspaper articles for names of people, places, and other search terms that may lead to new investigations and discoveries using the Chronicling America database and other digital collections. For example, using the January 4, 1914, edition of *The Sun* as inspiration for investigating the development of skyscrapers, a student might:

- › Search a broad term such as “skyscraper” or “skyline” for thousands of results, including advertisements, poems, photo essays, and much more.
- › Narrow results by date (1920–1939), state or geographic location (Manhattan), or building name (Woolworth Building).
- › Use one or more terms in combination, proximity, or as a phrase with “skyscraper,” such as:
 - Architectural/engineering/materials terms: concrete, elevator, fire brick, hollow tile, iron pneumatic caisson, steel frame, steel skeleton
 - Legal terms: building code, patent, height restriction law
 - Names: individual (a specific architect), organization, company
 - General terms: apartment, art, future, iron worker, music, office, penthouse, tenant, traffic, transportation, work

RIDING THE TROLLEY TO A NEW FRONTIER OF INDEPENDENCE

Oral histories and other firsthand accounts provide evidence of major changes in the way people lived their lives or imagined the world around them. Consider this oral history with an 85-year-old woman, available online as both an audio file⁷ and a written transcript.⁸ The account illustrates the impact of transportation technology on the lives and opportunities of early twentieth-century women.

The narrative’s Library of Congress item record shows that the speaker is Gladys Rowe Clark. The recording was made in 1977, placing the narrator’s birth around 1892, during a time of urbanization and other societal changes in the United States. Transportation is a key theme in the narrative. Clark mentioned several different transportation methods that existed during her lifetime, including bicycles, horses, trains, automobiles, and the electric car (trolley).

In one portion of the oral history, Clark singled out the trolley for its impact on her daily life.

The electric car revolutionized country travel. It brought people to Concord and took people out of Concord. It was a very happy day when the electric cars came especially for the women. It made them more independent. They could go anywhere by themselves. One of the things the electric cars did was give us Lexington Park. It was a joy spot enjoyed by adults and children. It was a park on the Lexington-Bedford line. It was an attractive spot with animals for the children and a fairgrounds with a stage where they had very satisfactory vaudeville entertainment once a week.

In the early twentieth century, trolleys made local transportation out of towns or rural communities much more accessible, resulting in the creation of suburban centers, which offered new opportunities and experiences to those who crossed these local frontiers. Recalling her childhood, Gladys Rowe Clark talked of “a very definite difference [between] the children of those that lived in town and those that lived outside of town.” Town children “could take dancing lessons, music lessons, and had more social life,” while “out here in the country, we were isolated.”

7 Renee Garrelick (collector) and Gladys Rowe Clark (speaker). Oral history with 85 year old White Female, Concord, Massachusetts, audio recording, July 19, 1977. American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (AFC 1986/022: AFS 24,309 a01). <https://www.loc.gov/item/afccal000076>.
8 Renee Garrelick (collector) and Gladys Rowe Clark (speaker). Oral history with 85 year old white female, Concord, Massachusetts, oral history transcript, July 19, 1977. American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (AFC 1986/022: AFS 24,309, folder 19). <https://www.loc.gov/item/afccal000465/>.

Primary sources show the connection between electric rail technology and suburban development. For example, early twentieth-century manuscripts⁹ and trolley maps¹⁰ clearly illustrate the significance of rail lines in the development of suburbs surrounding cities such as Baltimore, Maryland.



A Massachusetts streetcar timetable, 1888. Library of Congress (rbpe.07701400).

By looking closely at Ms. Clark’s narrative and others like it, NHD students can reflect on how innovations in transportation technology may have transformed opportunities, experiences, and perspectives for rural women. By exploring other narratives, students may also look for additional perspectives. How might evolving transportation technology have impacted people in cities, different ethnic groups, or others as identified by students?

Gladys Rowe Clark’s narrative is part of the Library’s Center for Applied Linguistics Collection (loc.gov/collections/american-english-dialect-recordings-from-the-center-for-applied-linguistics/about-this-collection/). The collection items often reveal unique insights into the American experience.

However, the Center for Applied Linguistics Collection is not the only oral history collection freely available at loc.gov. Interested students might also visit the Library’s Digital Collections page at loc.gov/collections/. If they type “oral histories” into the search window, they will find a number of collections showcasing different perspectives, including the *Civil Rights History Project*, the *Veterans History Project*, the *Occupational Folklife Project*, *Voices from the Dust Bowl*, and many more. The individuals who shared stories from their lives in these collections often experienced times of transition. Their accounts provide opportunities to examine the different personal or societal frontiers they encountered or crossed during their lifetimes.

SPACE: AN EVER-EXPANDING FRONTIER

Perhaps the most fascinating frontiers of the imagination are those created or crossed when we expand our ideas of the cosmos. The universe and the place Earth holds in it have captivated the human mind for thousands of years. Scientific discoveries have brought new ways of thinking about ourselves as denizens of a larger interstellar expanse. Maps and other depictions the earth in space can reveal how people’s ideas of the universe have changed over the centuries as the boundaries of our understanding have moved outward.

Many early depictions of the universe show a model in which the earth stands at the center of all creation, with other celestial bodies arranged in layers around it.¹¹ At that time, humans viewed the earth’s position in the cosmos with ourselves at the center, often through a religious lens. By the mid-nineteenth century, astronomers had observed and measured all eight planets in our solar system with some degree of accuracy.

9 Olmstead Associates Records . . . Baltimore, Md., 1908. Manuscript/mixed materials. 1908. Library of Congress (mss5257102623). <https://loc.gov/item/mss5257102623/>.

10 *Trolley Trips In and Out of Baltimore* . . . Map. c. 1910. Library of Congress (96681722). <https://loc.gov/item/96681722/>.

11 [An Illustration of the Ptolemaic Concept of the Universe Showing the Earth in the Center.] woodcut, 1513. Library of Congress (2007681147) <https://loc.gov/item/2007681147/>.

This poster from the 1860s shows a diagram of what was known about the planets, each in its own orbit, with the sun solidly in place as the center of the solar system and the Earth as one of several residents of a busy, crowded neighborhood.¹²



Map of the solar system, 1867. Library of Congress (2018756471).

Humans have sent satellites and telescopes into orbit during the last 60 years, visited the moon, launched space stations, and landed rovers on Mars. The Voyager missions launched in the 1970s recorded images and information about the outer planets of our solar system and continue to send data back to Earth from interstellar space. One set of images was described by astronomer Carl Sagan as showing Earth as a pale blue dot, “a mote of dust, suspended in a sunbeam . . . a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena.”¹³

Human beings have always looked to the stars and seen science, religion, and poetry in the heavens. Our changing relationship with the “final frontier” illustrates how we continue to push the frontiers of thought and imagination.

CONCLUSION

New advancements in communications, urban living, transportation, and visualization of Earth in space led not only to physical changes but also to mental ones, transforming how people saw their daily lives or imagined what was possible. All of these represent frontiers of the imagination—boundaries of thinking that, once crossed, expand the realm of the possible, opening up new intellectual terrain for exploration. Students who are willing to investigate such frontiers using primary sources from the Library of Congress can immerse themselves in times of great tumult and transformation, and in the process, investigate how these transformations shaped the way we see the world today.

National History Day, in collaboration with the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Consortium, created an open-access Teacher Guide filled with hints, tips, and activities to encourage student inquiry and historical research. *The Guide to Student Research and Historical Argumentation* (nhd.org/library-congress-tps) provides an overview of the inquiry process, explores primary and secondary sources from the Library of Congress, and helps teachers guide students to construct historical arguments.

Students can enrich their projects by consulting the forthcoming companion Student Guide, *Finding, Analyzing, and Constructing History: A Research Guide for Students* (coming fall 2022). This guide offers practical tips for selecting and narrowing a research topic, searching the Library of Congress, applying historical thinking skills, analyzing various formats of primary sources, selecting primary sources for each NHD project category, establishing an argument, and organizing research. Each chapter also includes guided student practice activities.

To access more theme resources,
go to nhd.org/theme.

¹² *Map of the Solar System*, print, c.1867. Library of Congress (2018756471). <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018756471/>.

¹³ Carl Sagan, *The Pale Blue Dot: Short Recording*. Audio recording. Library of Congress (cosmos000110). <https://www.loc.gov/item/cosmos000110/>

The Film(ed) Frontier: Twentieth-Century History Captured in Motion Pictures

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A popular 1960s television show once proclaimed to its viewers weekly that space was the “final frontier.” It made for an interesting (and long-lasting) tagline. In reality, frontiers are always around us and are often interwoven. A discovery in one area spurs new thinking and opens up frontiers in other areas.

The use of motion pictures began as an unexplored frontier. The earliest still photographic processes took minutes (or hours) to expose a single image. Over a period of decades, photographic exposure time decreased and the introduction of man-made flexible plastic film led to the ability to reproduce moving pictures on a screen. The first publicly projected moving images were screened in Paris in 1895 by brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière. Early film pioneers quickly recognized the power of film to entertain and began to discover that editing, close-ups, and camera movement could shape how audiences engaged with the onscreen images.

Moving-image technology developed rapidly. In 1908, Winfield Scott Clime, an artist and employee of the United States Department of Agriculture, took a movie camera to the site of another technological frontier: the U.S. Army’s first test flight of the Wright brothers’ Flyer.¹ The following year, a U.S. Army Signal Corps cameraman filmed the test of the first airplane purchased by the United States military (docsteach.org/documents/document/wright-flyer-first-army-flight). By the mid-1910s, the U.S. military used motion picture film to record all aspects of the First World War, venturing into the frontier of documenting combat in motion. The Signal Corps began making training films to replace live lectures and demonstrations, leading to new efficiency and uniformity in the education of soldiers.

Civilian agencies also realized the educational potential of motion pictures and dedicated resources toward producing and distributing films.



The first military airplane looked nothing like today’s airplanes. After tests in Fort Meyer, Virginia, the U.S. Army purchased this wood-framed Wright Flyer in 1909. Still from *First Army Aeroplane Flight, Fort Myer, Virginia*, National Archives and Records Administration (NAID 24690).

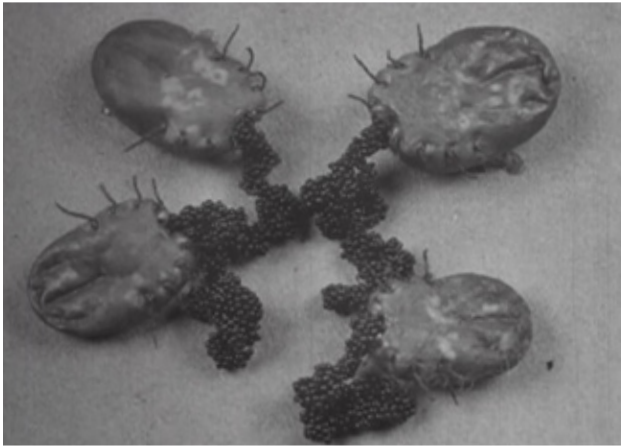
Motion pictures are excellent resources for students researching this year’s National History Day® (NHD) theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*. This article uses National Archives films and videos to explore the impact of motion pictures—a technological frontier in its own right—on the frontiers of technology, science, geography, and politics. Together, they drove the development of new ideas and knowledge.

1 Hermine M. Baumhofer, “Motion Pictures Become Federal Records,” *The American Archivist* 15, no. 1 (January 1952): 18-19.

USDA EXTENSION SERVICE EXPLORES FRONTIERS IN FILM AND SCIENCE

At first glance, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) seems an unlikely pioneer in educational filmmaking. James “Tama Jim” Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture from 1897 to 1913, made it known that he thought motion pictures were “of the devil,” so the Department carried out its first filmmaking activities in secret.² Once their motion picture program was officially recognized, the USDA sought to communicate agricultural information to the nation’s farmers. They developed visual communication and storytelling techniques, and pushed the boundaries of film exhibition technology.

The USDA campaign to eliminate cattle fever ticks from the American South illustrates the essential role that motion pictures played in the agency’s education efforts as it opened a new frontier of science communication.



This still image of female cattle ticks laying thousands of eggs comes from the educational film projected for an audience of farmers in the USDA’s *Mollie of Pine Grove Vat* (1922). National Archives and Records Administration (NAID 7169).

Groundbreaking USDA research identified that tick bites spread cattle fever among herds. In 1906, the government began a widespread eradication campaign. To kill the ticks and disrupt their lifecycle, farmers had to drive their cattle to community dipping vats and then through a chemical bath. Inconvenience, expense, and mistrust caused many farmers to resist the cattle dipping requirement.³

In 1914, the U.S. Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act creating the Cooperative Extension Service, an informal education program for farmers and rural communities that derived its curriculum from scientific research performed at the nation’s land-grant universities.⁴ The USDA employed extension agents who traveled to rural communities delivering lectures and demonstrations.

Agents began using motion pictures to add an exciting new attraction to their educational programs. At that time, many people in the rural South had never seen a movie, so merely adding films to the cattle tick program was enough to draw an audience. In 1919, the USDA released *The Charge of the Tick Brigade*.⁵ This cartoon was the first part of a double bill along with a more traditional informational film about the tick eradication program. Extension agents often found that some audience members left after the cartoon, so the USDA’s educational filmmaking strategy evolved again. In 1922, they released *Mollie of Pine Grove Vat*, featuring an informational film within a fictional film.⁶

A theater was available for showing the USDA films in some communities. However, extension agents often had to rely on portable projectors and screens set up in schools, churches, community halls, or even outdoors, at times using portable generators.⁷

The Cooperative Extension Service and the motion pictures it exhibited played an integral part in the success of the USDA’s tick eradication campaign. In 1943, 37 years after the campaign began, the former quarantine area was declared tick-free. As a result, Southern farmers could raise cattle as a cash crop, increasing cattle revenue many times over.⁸

- 2 Gladys L. Baker, Wayne D. Rasmussen, Vivian Wiser, and Jane M. Porter, *Century of Service: The First 100 Years of the United States Department of Agriculture* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1963), 41. <https://archive.org/details/centuryofservice00unit/page/41/mode/1up>.
- 3 Jennifer Zwarich, “The Bureaucratic Activist: Federal Filmmakers and Social Change in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Tick Eradication Campaign,” *The Moving Image* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2009), 30-31.
- 4 The Smith-Lever Act of 1914. National Archives and Records Administration. <https://www.archivesfoundation.org/documents/smith-lever-act-1914/>.
- 5 *The Charge of the Tick Brigade*. Film. 1919. National Archives and Records Administration (NAID 7102). <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/7102>. Watch the film at youtu.be/C9d9BE0znQk.
- 6 Zwarich, “The Bureaucratic Activist . . .,” 31-44. *Mollie of Pine Grove Vat*. Film. 1922. National Archives and Records Administration (NAID 7169). <https://catalog.archives.gov/ID/7169>. Watch the film at youtu.be/Rb76EPAXfkE.
- 7 Perkins, Fred W., Howard Greene, and George R. Goergens. *Miscellaneous Circular No. 78: Use of Motion Pictures in Agricultural Extension Work*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, November 1926), 2-3. <https://archive.org/details/useofmotionpictu78perk/page/n3/mode/2up>.
- 8 Zwarich, “The Bureaucratic Activist . . .,” 46.

SEARCHING THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES CATALOG

Students and teachers can access National Archives films and videos through the National Archives Catalog (catalog.archives.gov). The Catalog holds descriptive information about the sources and provides direct access to digitized records in multiple formats. Although not everything in the National Archives' massive collection has been digitized, many digital moving image files are available.

Search Tips:

- › Access the Catalog on a computer, rather than a mobile device, to provide the greatest degree of control and flexibility.
- › Refine the search to moving image records with digital files by selecting the “videos” option in the bar just above the first item in the search result.
- › Write down the National Archives Identifier (NAID) of any items of interest. Search using the NAID at catalog.archives.gov to access the item later.
- › Watch archivist Ashley Behringer's presentation, *Motion Pictures in the National Archives Catalog: A Beginner's Guide to Research*, to learn more about researching motion pictures in the collection, at youtu.be/I7YJQUT0qyM or read the “Using the National Archives Catalog” guide at archives.gov/research/catalog/help/using.html.

SCIENCE IN EXTREME FRONTIERS: FILMS OF POLAR EXPEDITIONS

With much of the planet well-documented, nineteenth-century explorers searching for fame and glory turned their attention to a new frontier: the inhospitable polar regions. The public was fascinated by stories of success and failure at these geographic frontiers as explorers vied to be the first to conquer the Arctic and Antarctic by ship, sledge, and aircraft. Lives were lost when ice crushed ships. Polar aviators tested planes that they were not sure could safely fly at such low temperatures. Once explorers reached the North and South Poles in the early twentieth century, they began exploring the science of these extreme environments.

Although the U.S. government sponsored some polar expeditions, private institutions and personalities were

drawn by the lure of the unknown. Students might explore the life and adventures of Louise Arner Boyd, a California Gold Rush heiress who spent her vast wealth exploring, photographing, and filming the Arctic.⁹ She began her travels in 1926 off the coast of Norway. When she returned to Norway in 1928 and learned that explorer Roald Amundsen disappeared while searching for another polar explorer, Umberto Nobile, she embarked on a search and rescue mission. Footage from her search shows the beauty and the endlessness of the icy landscape (docsteach.org/documents/document/boyd-1928). Her films contained explanatory intertitles, indicating she used them for educational purposes. She covered topics including types of sea ice and the proper way to treat and preserve polar bear skins.

The unsuccessful search for Amundsen brought Boyd into contact with other explorers and scientists and led her to organize future expeditions. She traveled primarily to East Greenland, where she photographed the terrain using a large-format camera to better map the unexplored region. Boyd brought together scientists from many disciplines to observe and record data in an unforgiving environment.



Louise Arner Boyd, holding a camera, stands on the deck of *The Hobby* while searching for polar explorer Roald Amundsen. Still from *1928 / R10-12 People 1-3*, Louise Arner Boyd Collection, National Archives and Records Administration (docsteach.org/documents/document/boyd-1928).

By the mid-twentieth century, the polar regions gained strategic importance as a frontier of the Cold War (1947–1989), a time of heightened tension between the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II. The U.S. Navy sent several expeditions to establish scientific stations in Antarctica, including Operation Highjump and Operation Deep Freeze. Government officials believed that exploring that region and gathering knowledge about the environment would provide an advantage over the Soviets. Today the North and South Poles are important

9 Audrey Amidon, “The Films and Stories of Marie Peary Stafford and Louise Boyd,” *Prologue Magazine* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2010). <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2010/summer/polar-women.html>.

sites of scientific exploration, including cutting-edge work in glaciology, biology, and astronomy.¹⁰

Footage of numerous scientific expeditions by the U.S. Navy and other government agencies, along with more than a hundred reels of 35mm film shot by Louise Boyd, can be found in the National Archives' holdings. Many of these films can be accessed in the online Catalog and at the DocsTeach National History Day resource page (docsteach.org/topics/nhd).

USING DOCSTEACH.ORG

DocsTeach (docsteach.org), the online tool for teaching with documents from the National Archives, is an excellent site for National History Day (NHD) research.

- › Teachers and students can access the NHD page (docsteach.org/topics/nhd), refreshed annually to support the NHD theme. A Popular Topics page provides primary sources and teaching activities on other subjects (docsteach.org/topics).
- › Students and teachers can browse through thousands of primary sources on DocsTeach. Researchers can filter by era and type of primary source. Each primary source on DocsTeach also includes citation information and a direct link to the National Archives Catalog.
- › Educators can access teaching activities related to different U.S. history topics by searching in the activities section of DocsTeach (docsteach.org/activities) or create their own primary source-based activities using DocsTeach tools (docsteach.org/tools). National Archives educators also offer DocsTeach-based online workshops for NHD students and teachers.
- › Want to learn more about Motion Pictures at the National Archives and see clips of some of our fantastic films? Join us for an interactive webinar with the authors of this article in October 2022! For more information, please see archives.gov/education/distance-learning/professional-development.html.

THE “FINAL FRONTIER” ON FILM: THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

On July 20, 1969, the Apollo Lunar Module Eagle touched down on the moon. Six hours later, astronaut Neil Armstrong stepped onto its surface, marking the moon with the first human footprint. Armstrong's famous steps were the culmination of six decades of aeronautical advancement after the Wright brothers' test flight for the U.S. Army. While Commander Armstrong and fellow astronaut, Lunar Module Pilot Edwin (Buzz) Aldrin, explored the physical frontier of space, cameras recorded their actions. Many cameras were specifically designed for the mission, marking new innovations in the ever-advancing frontier of moving image technology. Back on earth, a billion people watched a signal on their televisions that was broadcast from space.

The NASA film, *The Eagle Has Landed* (docsteach.org/documents/document/the-eagle-has-landed), tells the story of this moon mission. This film was created for general audiences and demonstrated how far government filmmaking had come since *Mollie of Pine Grove Vat*. *The Eagle Has Landed* was entertaining, educational, and featured more sophisticated editing techniques that can be seen in the fast scene changes. It can be considered a piece of subtle propaganda, as the entire Space Race was a Cold War battleground. Controlling the narrative around the moon landing was a victory for the Americans.



Astronaut Neil Armstrong, back from his journey to the moon, speaks on a phone from within a mobile quarantine facility where he and fellow astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins were sequestered. Since no one had been to the moon before, they could not be certain they would not return with a deadly pathogen. Still from *The Eagle Has Landed* (1969). National Archives and Records Administration (NAID 45017).

10 “Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station,” National Science Foundation, accessed December 22, 2021. <https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/support/southp.jsp>.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEETS

Teachers and students can find and use document analysis worksheets on DocsTeach ([docsteach.org/resources/document-analysis](https://www.docsteach.org/resources/document-analysis)). These worksheets focus on different types of primary sources and are designed for middle and high school students as well as younger students or those learning English. Students can use the Analyze a Video worksheet to help guide their analysis of films found on [DocsTeach.org](https://www.docsteach.org), [Archives.gov](https://www.archives.gov), or other repositories.

For example, *The Eagle Has Landed* can be analyzed from various angles. It is a narrative of the events of the Apollo 11 mission. Students should dig deeper and consider the perspective of this primary source. What did the space agency or the U.S. government want to present about the moon landing? What images were used? What words did the narrator use to describe the events? How does the music contribute to the overall effect? These elements tell us something about what the government was trying to communicate.

NASA created visual recordings of every aspect of the technology that made the moon landing possible. From the astronauts' gloves to the food they ate, millions of feet of film documented the pioneering scientific achievements of the Apollo program. Hundreds of reels of these films have been digitized.¹¹

The space program did not end with Apollo, as NASA sought further knowledge and scientific discovery. The frontier of space began to open up to more than the overwhelmingly white male astronauts and engineers shown in the Apollo films. A 1964 television show, *Space: Man's Greatest Adventure (The Woman's Touch)*, featured a day in the life of white electrical engineer Marjorie Townsend.¹² The 1973–74 Skylab Student Project, a national competition for high school students, culminated in NASA astronauts performing winning student-designed experiments in space ([docsteach.org/documents/document/skylab-student-project](https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/skylab-student-project)). Two films produced by African American filmmaker William Greaves, *Where Dreams Come True* in 1979 and *Space for Women* in 1981, highlight women and minority astronauts and engineers at the space agency.¹³



The 1981 NASA film *Space for Women* features interviews with pioneering women working in the space agency. Shirley A. Chevalier was an electrical engineer and project manager in the Space Shuttle program. She went to college to study electrical engineering after her brother said engineering was too difficult for girls. Still from *Space for Women*, National Archives and Records Administration (NAID 1262812).

CONCLUSION

Discovering historic, scientific, and cultural frontiers through motion pictures in the National Archives is a fantastic way for students to expand the boundaries of their primary source research skills. Incorporating motion picture film records into historical research adds new dimensions to our understanding of the movements and events of the past. It helps students build content skills and learn to critically “read” the language of cinema—whether camera placement, editorial rhythm, or directorial decisions about who is (and is not) depicted on screen. Whatever type of NHD projects students are researching for this year’s theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*, the National Archives vast motion picture resources are absolutely worth exploring!

To access more theme resources,
go to [nhd.org/theme](https://www.nhd.org/theme).

11 To access these digitized films, see Moving Images Relating to Documentary Stock Footage, 1959–1993, National Archives and Records Administration (NAID 23898397). <https://catalog.archives.gov/ID/23898397>.

12 *Space: Man's Greatest Adventure (The Woman's Touch)*. Television program. 1964. National Archives and Records Administration. <https://youtu.be/KUAIvU2UvIA>.

13 *Where Dreams Come True*. Film. 1979. National Archives and Records Administration (NAID 126803). <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1262803>; and *Space for Women (Extended Version)*. Film. 1981. National Archives and Records Administration (NAID 126812). <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1262812>. Watch the film at youtu.be/yypaV7IFcQM.

USING HISTORICAL FILM IN NATIONAL HISTORY DAY PROJECTS

For many students, embarking upon archival research may feel like crossing a new frontier. Archival films and videos can help bring an NHD topic alive, allowing the audience to engage with and understand historical events in exciting ways. Consider these examples of films that can support NHD projects:

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

- › *The March In Washington* (1963), NAID 49737
catalog.archives.gov/id/49737

UNDERSEA EXPLORATION

- › *SEALAB III: One Hundred Fathoms Deep* (1968), NAID 5917897
catalog.archives.gov/id/5917897

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

- › *Power and the Land* (1940), NAID 1714
catalog.archives.gov/id/1714

OUR NATIONAL FORESTS

- › *Building Forest Roads* (1921), NAID 7160
catalog.archives.gov/id/7160

- › *Discovering Alaska's National Forests: America's Last Frontier* (1990), NAID 6171538
catalog.archives.gov/id/6171538

U.S. MILITARY WOMEN

- › *Negro WACs; U.S. Fifth Armored Division Field Awards, Hoensbroek, Holland* (February 1945), NAID 16214
catalog.archives.gov/id/16214
- › *Air Force Television News Special Edition: Women in Combat* (May 21, 1993), NAID 4524847
catalog.archives.gov/id/4524847
- › For more films about military women, visit the National Archives and Records Administration's *The Unwritten Record* blog at unwritten-record.blogs.archives.gov/tag/women-in-the-military/

We invite students to explore *The Unwritten Record* (unwritten-record.blogs.archives.gov/tag/nhd) to learn about more topics and records—including films, videos, photographs, posters, and maps—as well as ideas on how to incorporate moving images into different types of NHD projects.

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Photo by Matailong Du.

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The Black-Owned Barber Shop: Using One Family’s Story to Explore Frontiers in History

BRANDICE NELSON, Director of Engagement, National History Day®

NICHELLE NELSON

The word “frontier” often conjures a specific set of images for students familiar with United States history—sunburnt, dusty travelers in overalls and bonnets inside an iconic Conestoga wagon, painstakingly making their way across a vast prairie somewhere in the American Midwest. Sometimes, though, frontiers are not so obvious or geographically sprawling. A frontier can be crossed when a person challenges the previously held beliefs, systems, or customs. Often, it can be no less risky to encounter figurative frontiers than it is to cross literal ones. In this article, we will demonstrate how to use family and local history to provide evidence for a National History Day® (NHD) project for the 2023 *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas* theme.

One frontier encountered by the entire U.S. was the aftermath of slavery’s abolition. Millions of African Americans found themselves able—at least in theory—to control the value and type of their labor. They faced a country deeply divided and, in many places—both North and South—unwilling to permit the influx of paid Black labor nor the establishment of Black-owned businesses. After Reconstruction ended in 1877, life in the American South was especially unsafe for African Americans.¹ Rampant racism severely limited opportunities for their socioeconomic success.

Of the population of African Americans who established roots in northern communities, journalist Ray Stannard

Baker wrote that many had “come to fit naturally into the life of the communities where they live, and no one thinks especially of their color.”² He observed, however, that while prejudice in the North was not immediately apparent, it was extremely difficult for Black people to find good jobs outside of unskilled labor.³ Being excluded from industrial, academic, financial, and other career fields influenced many Black men to turn to the skilled profession of barbering.⁴ Following the American Civil War, as the Black population slowly increased in the North, so did the presence of independently owned barbershops.

Booker T. Washington, a national leader during the Gilded Age, founded the National Negro Business League in 1900. From 1900 to 1915, he used its platform to encourage the African American community to pursue entrepreneurship. Barbering required learning a specific and highly sought-after skill set that would evolve alongside social trends. These skills could be passed down from one generation to the next, providing a long-term source of income. While the goal would ultimately be to own a barbershop, any Black man with the proper skill set could easily set up shop at home. With Washington’s endorsement as a viable career path, barbering continued to grow in popularity as a preferable alternative to other jobs. Black-owned barbershops became some of the most successful businesses in the locations where they were allowed to exist.⁵

1 Reconstruction is the period after the American Civil War from 1865 to 1877, during which the U.S. grappled with the challenges of reintegrating seceded states into the Union, and determined the legal status of newly emancipated African Americans. To learn more about this period, see Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (New York: Harper, 2015).

2 Ray Stannard Baker, *Following the Color Line: An Account of Negro Citizenship in the American Democracy* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1908), 110.

3 Baker, *Following the Color Line*, 129.

4 Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, Stanley Harrold, *African Americans: A Concise History, Third Edition* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2009), 153.

5 Juliet E. K. Walker, *The History of Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 109.



The National Negro Business League Executive Committee. Booker T. Washington is seated second from left, c. 1910. Library of Congress (2014688320).

While students often gravitate towards national stories, local and family history can provide insights into national trends applied in local communities. Every community has stories to tell. Perhaps their town was the site of a labor strike or helped to innovate a new agricultural method. Was the town known for its role in local or state government? Did it witness the American Revolution or the Civil War? Did its factories or universities drive innovation or change? Perhaps a hometown story weaves together stories of Native Nations, immigration, migration, or all three (most do). Local historical societies and museums offer unique primary sources that students can use to tie to national movements for NHD projects.

Encourage students to talk to their families to learn what events connect to their history. Student investment increases when they can weave the story of a relative into their research, or use the primary sources from a family member's attic or local archive. Depending on the topic, they might be able to conduct an oral history of a family member who experienced a moment in history. Many students might think that their family's story is too ordinary, when in fact it may be an excellent example of national events impacting local history. Consider this example of a barber from a small town in Pennsylvania.

BUSINESS ON A RAZOR'S EDGE

Levi Garland Nelson is the third great-grandfather of Brandice Nelson, one of the authors of this article. In 1884, he established a new frontier in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, when he founded Nelson's Barber Shop.⁶ Nelson was a Union Navy veteran who returned to Pennsylvania to establish himself with the barbering skills he acquired during the war. The 1880 census records of Berks County, Pennsylvania, show Levi's occupation as "barber" and reveal that his wife, Amelia, was "keeping house."⁷

U.S. Census records are treasure troves of information for local history projects. They include the names of family members, occupations, language spoken, age, and other biographical information. The manuscript census records up to 1940 have been digitized and can be searched using [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) or [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com). Many schools or public libraries have access to these sites. Students should check with a school or public librarian to create an account.

Barbershops were often family enterprises, with ownership passed from generation to generation. City directories from Reading and later Doylestown, Pennsylvania, list the Nelsons in residence as barbers through the end of the nineteenth century. Nelson's Barber Shop changed hands among the family until the mid-1960s, only closing when Randall Nelson, the last owner, died. Alvin Nelson, Sr., Levi Garland's great-grandson, relayed how his grandmother cooked for the family and the barbershop employees. When the workday was over, everyone often stopped at the family home for meals. As Alvin and his brothers did, the sons of barbers grew up learning the rules and customs of what would eventually become their businesses. From an early age, they were tasked with "taking Pa's meals to the barbershop, sweeping out the shop, washing spittoons, and shining shoes."⁸

6 "Nelson's Barber Shop," *The Doylestown Correspondent*, Spring/Summer 2019. <https://www.doylestownhistorical.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Newsletter-2019-Spring-Summer.pdf>.

7 Pennsylvania, Berks County, 1880 U.S. Federal Census. <https://ancestry.com>.

8 Alvin Nelson, oral history interview with Nichelle Nelson, December 2019.



Harry Nelson, standing outside his barbershop in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, c. 1960. A caption on the back of the photograph reads, "Harry Nelson, Doylestown / Barber." Courtesy of the Collection of the Mercer Museum Library of the Bucks County Historical Society (SC-29-07, 0240).

Those fortunate enough to be chosen as apprentices were often brought into the family as foster sons. They usually lived with a master barber, who assumed the responsibility of education on the trade combined with the authority of a parental figure.⁹ The Nelsons housed several apprentices at the family home on East Oakland Avenue in Doylestown. The young men were expected to do whatever task was assigned to them.

Training began between the ages of 10 and 15, and was usually considered completed by ages 18 to 21. The ultimate goal of apprentices was to become journeymen barbers, and to have the skills to either work in the barber shops where they were trained or open shops of their own.¹⁰ Many young men spent their entire lives moving among shops owned by former apprentices as their skills and business prospects increased.

This article includes information collected from an oral history interview with family members. Students with questions about conducting or using oral histories as part of their NHD projects should review these helpful tips from the Smithsonian Institution Archives (siarchives.si.edu/history/how-do-oral-history). Be careful! An oral history and an interview with an expert are two different things. Students might explore this video to learn more about dos and don'ts for conducting oral history interviews: youtu.be/U64dm2xrzyl.

The barbering profession fostered a sense of communal pride among certain groups of African Americans. It was a career that had the potential to last a lifetime. The relationships that began between shop owners and apprentices strengthened the community by forming professional guilds and mutual aid societies.¹¹ In this way, barbers utilized their craft to give practical training to the next generation and become advocates for and promoters of racial inspiration during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Black-owned barbershop became a primary site for African Americans to send their sons for trade education and empowerment.¹²

While they found success in their chosen field, African American barbers still faced new frontiers that were difficult to navigate. Barbers who opened a new shop needed to choose whether they would serve Black or white customers. While white people accepted, and in some cases even preferred a Black-owned shop, they did not find it tolerable to be served in the same shop as Black people. The location of the shop serving white customers, often within a business neighborhood of jewelers, portrait studios, and other upscale business establishments, was enough to designate that it was off-limits to Black patrons. The most successful Black barbers owned shops that catered to white men either as stand-alone establishments or within hotels in white urban business districts.¹³ In smaller towns such as Doylestown, where it was not possible to open a separate shop exclusively for the African American community, Nelson's Barber Shop pulled the shades and cut Black hair by night.¹⁴

9 Douglas Walter Bristol, *Knights of the Razor: Black Barbers in Slavery and Freedom* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 47.

10 Bristol, *Knights of the Razor*, 45.

11 Bristol, *Knights of the Razor*, 48.

12 Bristol, *Knights of the Razor*, 60.

13 Walker, *The History of Black Business in America*, 107.

14 Alvin Nelson oral history interview.

Students can consider a variety of African American labor and business history topics for NHD projects, including:

BROTHERHOOD OF THE SLEEPING CAR PORTERS

- › Learn more about A. Philip Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first all-Black labor union in the United States. chicagohistory.org/bscp/

BLACK WOMEN-OWNED BEAUTY PARLORS

- › Students interested in Black women's history might explore the rise in beauty parlors owned by Black women in the 1900s. They can start their research at the National Museum of American History. americanhistory.si.edu/blog/making-waves-beauty-salons-and-blackfreedom-struggle

BLACK WALL STREET AND THE 1921 ATTACK ON GREENWOOD

- › Economically successful Black communities were often targets of racially motivated violence. The Tulsa Historical Society provides primary sources on this event. tulsaehistory.org/exhibit/1921-tulsa-race-massacre/

In *Cutting Along the Color Line: Black Barbers and Barbershops in America*, historian Quincy T. Mills tells a story of an incident involving the shop in Washington, D.C., where African American anthropologist, author, and filmmaker Zora Neale Hurston was employed during the summer of 1918 as a manicurist to finance her Howard University tuition. A Black man entered the shop and demanded to be waited on for a haircut and shave. Embarrassed for the customer, the barber gave two reasons for not serving him. He ran a shop “on U Street near Fifteenth,” located in a Black-owned business district in Washington, D.C., the hub of Black social life that was a more acceptable location for the customer to patronize. More offensively, however, the barber claimed not to know how to serve the customer, stating, “I was trained on straight hair.”¹⁵

While it is probably true that the barber had been apprenticed in shops that served only white customers

with straight hair, it is less likely that he would have lacked the knowledge or ability to cut another Black man's hair. The shop owner risked losing his entire white clientele if a Black man was waited on during regular business hours, because white men would not allow themselves to be shaved with the same tools used on Black men.¹⁶

Within the African American community, these types of barbers were called “color-line” barbers because they shaved “white men at the expense of Black men” and chose to trade “deference for dollars.” Hurston herself was not opposed to the barber physically throwing the man out of the shop and admitted that she believed the man's presence threatened her livelihood as well as that of the shop owner. Black men were unwelcome in these Black-owned barbershops because, in those spaces, social relationships in place before the American Civil War were reenacted every time a white man entered the establishment.¹⁷ Despite their emancipation and alleged enfranchisement, Black men were not treated with the same respect and deference that white men were. Choosing to serve this Black man would have suggested equality, putting the entire establishment at risk of financial ruin and rendering several people unemployed.

The State Journal, an African American newspaper in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, from 1883 to 1885, reported an incident during which a Black sailor entered a barbershop in Philadelphia and requested to be shaved, only to be told that the Black owner of the shop “did not shave colored men.” The sailor became violent and was forcibly removed from the establishment.¹⁸ Another op-ed from *The State Journal* highlighted the hypocrisy of Black barbers for complaining about racial discrimination in other public spaces while reserving their barber's chairs for whites only.

Is there anything more absurd and ridiculous when some of our ‘Boss’ barbers read or hear of some colored lady or gentleman having been ejected from a first-class coach, or having been refused admission to some hotel, restaurant or theatre. Talk about the injustice done our people by the white man, when these very same men will refuse to accommodate a colored gentleman in their own barber shops, ought we not to be just as ready and willing to accommodate one man as another, if we are in business of whatever character it may be, exclude one of our own color, ought we to blame white men in business for doing the same?

The author of this piece sarcastically rebuked such barbers by instructing them to “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.”¹⁹

15 Quincy T. Mills, *Cutting Along the Color Line: Black Barbers and Barbershops in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 59.

16 Mills, *Cutting Along the Color Line*, 61.

17 Mills, *Cutting Along the Color Line*, 61.

18 “Striking for His Color,” *The State Journal* [Harrisburg, Pennsylvania], May 24, 1884.

19 “Reading Squibs. Personals and Other Notes from Our Regular Correspondent,” *The State Journal* [Harrisburg, Pennsylvania], October 25, 1884.



Nelson's Barber Shop was situated at the corner of State and Main Streets in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. Notice the barber pole on the sidewalk on the right side of the image, c. 1915. Courtesy of the Collection of the Mercer Museum Library of the Bucks County Historical Society (SC-29-01, 08-B-026).

The Nelsons did their best to navigate this new frontier between supporting the African American community in Doylestown and demonstrating their value to white society. During the 80 years that Nelson's Barber Shop was in business in various locations, generations of young Black men learned a valuable trade, while the Nelsons worked to change the community's attitudes in other ways. Randall Nelson, proprietor of the shop for over 20 years, was a World War II veteran who returned to his hometown and assumed the family business. While managing the shop's operations, Randall was also an active member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and the first Black president of a Kiwanis Club. The barbershop remained a social hub throughout the 1940s and 1950s and served several notable patrons, including aviator Charles Lindbergh, author James

Michener, composer Oscar Hammerstein, and jazz pioneer Duke Ellington. Upon Randall's death in 1964, the shop finally closed its doors.²⁰

The Nelsons of Doylestown did not intend to change the world, the United States, or even Pennsylvania. However, owning a barbershop allowed them to become local leaders within the new frontier of Black entrepreneurship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their story lives on in oral histories, family recollections, and tangible records such as city directories, newspaper articles, census records, and the building in Doylestown that still stands on the corner of State and Main Streets. Their story provides historical evidence to show the impact of Black-owned businesses on families and communities. Consider ways that families and communities crossed frontiers.

Are students considering local history topics for their NHD projects? Have them check out this *NHD Topic Tip* on local histories and how to get started (youtu.be/-mX6hUGx86o). When working on local histories, students should visit their historical societies and public libraries. They often have local history collections filled with primary and secondary sources on a wide range of topics.

To access more theme resources,
go to nhd.org/theme.

20 "Nelson's Barber Shop," *The Doylestown Correspondent*, Doylestown Historical Society, updated spring-summer 2019, accessed January 10, 2022. <https://www.doylestownhistorical.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Newsletter-2019-Spring-Summer.pdf>.



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Pushing Back Frontiers at the American Heritage Center

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The concept of the “frontier” is rooted in American history. In the settling of North America, the term frontier usually indicated a line to be crossed or the space beyond it. It was a place ripe for transformation. In reality, of course, it was a place populated by many Native American peoples and organized by their principles of civilization. European Americans often disregarded this perspective, and viewed Native Americans as part of the region’s wild character. By the late nineteenth century, the frontier took on a different meaning, a mythical one derived from stories about the American frontier and its heroes. These popular stories—whether true or exaggerated—told of people who explored, discovered, tamed, fought, and settled.

By the twentieth century, the myth of the frontier and its transformation were embedded in American culture and became a metaphor for the nation’s expectation of progress and continual improvement for its citizens. The metaphorical frontier was applied to the discovery of knowledge, social and political advancement, and even popular culture. The research of scientists and scholars pushed the frontiers of knowledge. The frontier metaphor has become part of social and political discourse; access to higher-level jobs and political positions for women and minorities often uses frontier metaphors.¹

National History Day® (NHD) students are invited to research topics related to these concepts of frontiers for the theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*. To illustrate how these concepts of frontier apply to different topics, we draw upon three archival collections from the American Heritage Center (AHC) at the University of Wyoming. The first examines the building of the

Transcontinental Railroad, a pivotal event in closing the physical American frontier. The second looks at two female leaders in Wyoming, Professor Grace Raymond Hebard, Ph.D., and Governor Nellie Tayloe Ross, who exemplify how women were beginning to cross political frontiers in the early twentieth century. The third focuses on the achievements of Stan Lee. He crossed a literary frontier and helped transform the “low-class” world of comic books into the widely accepted genre of popular literature that has morphed into popular culture, including movies, television, video games, and merchandising.

Established in 1945, the American Heritage Center holds more than 90,000 cubic feet (roughly 17 miles) of collection material and 55,000 rare books. The AHC contains nationally prominent collections on western history, environment and conservation, the mining and petroleum industries, air and rail transportation, popular entertainment, journalism, U.S. military history, and book history.

The AHC is proud of its active outreach and service to students and helps organize and host the Wyoming History Day (WHD) program. It contains many collections that lend themselves to this year’s theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*. Sources are readily available to all through the AHC’s Wyoming History Day website at wyominghistoryday.org. By clicking the “Theme and Topics” link, students can go straight to AHC collection materials that address this year’s theme.

1 Helpful readings defining a frontier include Leah Ceccarelli, *On the Frontier of Science: An American Rhetoric of Exploration and Exploitation* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013); Alfred C. Yen, “Western Frontier or Feudal Society?: Metaphors and Perceptions of Cyberspace,” *Berkeley Technology Law Journal* 17, no. 4 (2002): 1207–1263; and Patricia Nelson Limerick, “The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century,” in James R. Grossman, Editor, *The Frontier in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994): 12–34.

THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD: CONSTRUCTING THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

In the 1850s, the United States had two physical frontiers, one along the Mississippi River and another along the Pacific Ocean. Between them lay the Rocky Mountains, a rugged area beginning to transition from land occupied by Native Americans into an area dominated by European American settlement. In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railway Act, intended to build a transcontinental railroad between the two frontier lines to provide rapid transportation across the nation.

The Pacific Railway Act chartered the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific railroad companies, tasking them with constructing a transcontinental rail line of 3,000 miles. Over the next seven years, the companies raced from Sacramento, California, in the west and Omaha, Nebraska, in the east. They met at Promontory Summit, Utah, on May 10, 1869.² This railroad created a new frontier from which European American civilization could spread out into areas long settled by Native Americans.



This stereograph, titled *Westward, the Monarch Capital Makes its Way*, by John Carbutt, was taken as part of a series of the Union Pacific Railroad Company's 100th Meridian Excursion in October 1866. John Stephen and Frances Jennings Casement Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming (ah00308_0470).

John S. “Jack” Casement, a Union Army general, led the crews laying track for the Union Pacific (UP). UP’s Chief Engineer, Grenville M. Dodge, hired him in 1866 because of his reputation as a successful railroad builder. The UP, which was laying track westward from Omaha, Nebraska, made little progress until then despite breaking ground three years earlier. “General Jack” applied his expertise by refitting rail cars as worker dormitories and galley cars. He herded cattle behind the crews to supply fresh meat and sent hunting parties to harvest buffalo.³

Jack married Frances Jennings in 1857, an educated young woman from Painesville, Ohio, whom the family called “Frank.” His long absences from home meant the couple communicated through letters. Jack’s letters tell the story of the building of the Transcontinental Railroad through his eyes, at times describing the worst danger experienced by the construction crews—attacks by Native Americans. While the Transcontinental Railroad opened the western frontier for easier travel and settlement by white Americans, it meant the loss of ancestral homes for Indigenous Peoples. Indeed, the railroad further eroded access to prime hunting grounds and increased the pace of white settlement.

The allied Oglala Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Southern Arapaho Nations, already losing natural resources and weary of broken U.S. treaties, regularly attacked Union Pacific workers and the rail line. The U.S. Army was assigned to protect the crews while targeting Indigenous villages and their food sources, particularly bison, for destruction. However, not all Native Americans attacked the railroad. The Pawnee Nation allied itself with the U.S. Army to defend the railroad against the Sioux and Cheyenne, the Pawnee’s traditional enemies.⁴

Students interested in learning about the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad might explore the different people involved in the story. While it provided jobs to many Americans and immigrants, how did it affect Native Nations who already occupied those spaces? Is the story of the American frontier one of progress, or is it more complicated? These stories of the building of the American West are a unique way to get students to explore multiple perspectives within their National History Day projects as they research the different groups involved in these historical narratives.

The Wyoming History Day website provides access to more materials on this topic, including the correspondence of UP engineer Samuel H. Chittenden, a surveyor for the railroad. His letters described the end-of-track towns of Cheyenne and Bear River City in Wyoming that marked the UP’s progress across the Plains from 1867 to 1869. Students searching for photographs will find many on the WHD website relating to the construction of the railroad, issues impeding progress, and the development of the American West after the railroad’s completion.

2 Gregory Nickerson, “Industry, Politics and Power: The Union Pacific in Wyoming,” WyoHistory.org, updated November 8, 2014, accessed December 23, 2021. <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/industry-politics-and-power-union-pacific-wyoming>.

3 To learn more about resources to support this topic, visit wyominghistoryday.org/theme-topics/building-union-pacific-railroad.

4 Sam Vong, “The Impact of the Transcontinental Railroad on Native Americans,” O Say Can You See: Stories From the Museum Blog, National Museum of American History. June 3, 2019. <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/TRR>.

The Union Pacific Railroad Museum houses digitized primary sources about the railroad at uprrmuseum.org. The Union Pacific Historical Society posts a list of libraries and museums with Union Pacific collections at uphs.org/resources/library/.

The Central Pacific story is equally remarkable. Check out the collections of the California State Library (library.ca.gov) and the California State Railroad Museum Library and Archives (californiarailroad.museum) to learn more.



Grace Raymond Hebard used her influence at the University of Wyoming by pushing the university to offer its first honorary degree conferred on a woman to suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt on June 12, 1921. Hebard is shown left-center and Catt is center. Grace Raymond Hebard Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming (ah003390).

WOMEN CROSSING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FRONTIERS

The transcontinental railroad crossed areas of the American frontier that led the way to women's suffrage. On December 10, 1869, the Territory of Wyoming was the first place in the U.S. to give women the ability to vote and hold public office. Two significant collections at the American Heritage Center feature nationally-known suffragist Grace Raymond Hebard and the first woman governor elected in the United States, Nellie Tayloe Ross.

A review of the papers of Grace Raymond Hebard, Ph.D.—University of Wyoming professor, engineer, historian, author, and suffragist—provides a fascinating look at the power of one woman to push the frontier of women's rights. After earning an engineering degree from Iowa State University in 1882, she moved her family to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where she took a job in the Wyoming State Engineering Office. In 1890, as Wyoming petitioned for statehood, Hebard successfully lobbied the Wyoming constitutional convention to retain suffrage, also known as woman's suffrage.

In April 1920, as suffragists pressured Connecticut's government to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment, National Woman Suffrage Association Director Carrie Chapman Catt formed the Suffrage Emergency Brigade and urgently requested Hebard's participation "[t]o get [the] thirty sixth state mobilizing one woman each state . . . want you and only you."⁵ Hebard joined with bravado, providing bold statements such as, "I never before saw an anti-suffragist . . . out in Wyoming we have had woman suffrage for fifty years and there is no such thing as an anti-suffrage man in our state—much less a woman."⁶ Not entirely true, but Hebard did not let facts stop a good story.

The Suffrage Emergency Brigade is detailed in Hebard's papers, as is the Women's Suffrage Movement nationally from 1913 to 1920. Digitized items from Hebard's collection on the Wyoming History Day website illustrate not only strategies suffragists employed to cross a frontier in women's rights but also include the personal toll of the battle.

The Hebard papers tie in with collections at other institutions documenting women's suffrage. Resources include:

- Women's Rights Resources, National Archives and Records Administration archives.gov/women/suffrage
- *Votes for Women*, Smithsonian Institution si.edu/spotlight/votes-for-women
- *Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote*, Online Exhibition, Library of Congress loc.gov/exhibitions/women-fight-for-the-vote/
- Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, Iowa State University cattcenter.iastate.edu

5 Carrie Chapman Catt to Grace Raymond Hebard, April 12, 1920. Telegram. April 12, 1920. Grace Raymond Hebard Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming (21_6_1920_April 12). <https://www.wyominghistoryday.org/theme-topics/collections/items/telegram-carrie-chapman-catt-grace-raymond-hebard-april-12-1920>.

6 "Advance Guard of Suffrage Emergency Corps Arrives," *New York Tribune*, May 2, 1920. Hebard papers. This article can also be accessed at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1920-05-02/ed-1/seq-14/.

Nellie Tayloe Ross crossed a social and political frontier when she became the nation's first elected female governor in Wyoming on January 5, 1925. Her new position began as a personal tragedy for Ross—the death of the state's previous governor, her husband William Bradford Ross. While devastated by her husband's death, Ross weighed her options. She needed to support herself and her three sons, and she had debts to pay. She chose to run for governor. Her approach to campaigning and governing reveals an astute woman acutely aware that she was breaching a frontier.



Governor Nellie Tayloe Ross with a file case labeled "Her Honor the Governor," c. 1925. Nellie Tayloe Ross Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming (ah00948_004230).

At the time, it was inappropriate for a woman to be politically ambitious, so Ross remained behind the scenes and let friends and supporters stage her campaign. The strategy worked—she won by more votes than her husband had two years earlier. Upon taking office, Ross strived to reconcile feminine modesty with political ambition, seeking to please and reconcile male allies by giving them credit for good ideas while affirming women's right to exercise power.⁷ Ross gained a national reputation for success and ran for reelection in 1926. However in Wyoming, she was a Democrat surrounded by Republicans seeking a return to power. She campaigned fiercely. Traveling the state, she gave up to seven speeches a day. Her opponents emphasized that the governorship was a man's job, among other criticisms. She lost the 1926 election by only 1,365 votes.

7 Virginia Scharff, "Feminism, Femininity, and Power: Nellie Tayloe Ross and the Woman Politician's Dilemma," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 15, no. 3 (1995), 87–106.

The stories about Hebard and Ross provide examples of how students can incorporate local history into their NHD projects. Their narratives illustrate how they impacted the place where they lived and how they added to the much larger picture of women's rights. Students interested in local history topics should look at their local areas to see what new stories they might discover.

FROM MARGINAL TO MARVEL-OUS: CROSSING LITERARY FRONTIERS

Jump ahead in time to enter another frontier, this time into a surprising arena—the comic book industry. What are the origins of superheroes and villains such as Spider-Man, Black Widow, Black Panther, the Avengers, Loki, and the Fantastic Four? Many came from the mind of comic book writer, editor, publisher, and boundary pusher Stan Lee. Stanley Martin Lieber began his career in the comics industry, fetching coffee and taking notes at his uncle's company, Timely Comics, before moving on to writing scripts. It was the early 1940s, and comic books were considered lowbrow publishing. By the 1950s, an anti-comics crusade had begun.



Stan Lee at Marvel Super Hero Island in 1999. The attraction is located at Universal Orlando's Islands of Adventure Park in Orlando, Florida. Stan Lee Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

An assignment to create a new superhero team revived his passion and launched a new frontier in the industry. When competitor DC Comics introduced the *Justice League of America* to great success, Timely responded with *The Fantastic Four*, which Lee co-created with Jack Kirby. The comic debuted in 1961 and ushered a refreshing realism into the medium. The Four were an unconventional group—dysfunctional, quarrelsome, and petty—and also a

loving family. Their complexity appealed to older readers rather than a children’s audience, launching a new market. Lee and collaborators continued pushing boundaries in the comics industry by creating more unconventional, flawed superheroes. In 1962 alone, Lee and colleague Steve Ditko created the character the Incredible Hulk and a teenage superhero, Spider-Man, further expanding the comic book genre to teenagers.

The company name changed to Marvel Comics in 1967, and the “Marvel Age of Comics” was born. The collaborative approach to creating comics was another company innovation and became known as the “Marvel Method.” With the gregarious and at times grandiose “Stan the Man” as the face of Marvel Comics, the company built a sense of community between fans and creators.⁸ Together with rival DC Comics, the Marvel Cinematic Universe brought comics out of lowbrow literature and into television, video games, and motion pictures. On the WHD website, students can find documentation of Stan Lee’s career and Marvel Comics’ unique approach to creating comics.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the term “frontier” can be interpreted in several ways. However used, it represents a border between the known and the unknown. The American Heritage Center offers many opportunities to explore topics related to the 2023 National History Day theme of *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*. A look at the “Theme and Topics” link on the Wyoming History Day website opens the door to individually described primary sources—letters, photographs, artwork, audio, and video recordings—on a wide variety of subjects. Students may download the digitized materials at no cost for their NHD projects. Each year the AHC updates the website with more resources to coincide with National History Day’s annual themes. Explore history with us at wyominghistoryday.org.

To access more theme resources,
go to nhd.org/theme.

8 “Marvel Comics,” Marvel [database], accessed October 12, 2021. https://marvel.fandom.com/wiki/Marvel_Comics.



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Beyond Borders: Using Maps to Explore Frontiers

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When researching history, students tend to gravitate toward two types of primary sources—texts and art. These are the great standards. Unfortunately, most researchers ignore an important third category: maps. Maps are rich and complex documents that can do more than illustrate historical borders. They can make visible the worldviews of historical actors and shed light on the role space and landscape played in past events.

Frontiers can be described as undefined limits and edges. They are contested spaces, where each competing person or entity asserts their version of the truth. Maps of frontiers incorporate the “facts on the ground,” recording places, resources, and discoveries, while simultaneously asserting their makers’ beliefs, biases, and desires. Maps visualize the changes that occur when a space becomes a frontier. They record physical changes to the landscape, its history, and how historical actors viewed the territory.

While we think of maps as descriptions of space, they can also diagram other phenomena such as history, family relationships, and scientific discoveries. However, maps are not just objective depictions. Someone had to choose what to put in a map and what to omit, which place names to use and which to erase, and what to give prominence and what to leave in the background. Maps thus tell one person’s or a community’s ideas about a place or entity. They are both scientific and artistic. Often, teachers ask only geographic questions about maps: Where is the capital located? Who controls this land? These are great places to start. However, consider asking the types of questions typically reserved for text and art: Who made this document and why? What were they trying to argue? What can we learn about their culture by examining this object?

Maps are dense with geographic and cultural information. This is precisely why, until recently, they have been challenging to use in historical research. As a result of their complexity, maps need to be reproduced at full scale to read. A reduced-size map in a book is of little use to researchers, because essential details are difficult—or impossible—to understand.

This is an exciting time for old maps. They are an untapped resource. Map libraries worldwide, including Stanford Libraries, have begun putting high-resolution scans of their vast map collections online, effectively solving the problem of access. Stanford Libraries has an ongoing project to digitize any map out of copyright and provide high-resolution maps for viewing and downloading. We have a collection of over 300,000 maps, more than one-third of which are currently available online. These maps span a wide range of time, places, and concepts. Our partner site, David Rumsey Map Collection (davidrumsey.com), contains more than 100,000 maps available for viewing.

Analyzing a map is a skill, and like any new skill, it takes practice and time to master. It is a process of teasing out meaning bit by bit, not unlike being immersed in a great, complicated novel. Part of the task is to overcome being overwhelmed by information and complexity and develop methods to notice things and make connections.

This article features maps from the “Old Southwest,” an American colonial frontier, and Macau, China. They are examples of how students might use maps while researching topics for this year’s National History Day® (NHD) theme, *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*. Reduced-size versions of these maps are included in this article. However, they only hint at what can be found in the digitized maps. Students and teachers will need to access and enlarge the online interactive versions of the maps highlighted in the following sections to examine the details they contain.

Check out our video titled *Mapsolutely! for NHD Students* (youtu.be/uG4kmGKiEnI). This video introduces the idea that a map is not always just a map. Maps visualize the perspectives of time and place, as well as the people who created them.

How do students access and explore Stanford Libraries collections?

- › **SearchWorks** catalog (searchworks.stanford.edu) allows students to access maps available at Stanford Libraries. After selecting the resource type (map) and access (online), students can search by keyword to further narrow their searches.
- › **David Rumsey Map Collection** (davidrumsey.com) is a partner site that contains maps dating from the sixteenth century to the present. Students can search by keyword and then further narrow their searches. For instance, sorting by date puts maps in chronological order.
- › The **Map collections and resources page** on the library's website (guides.library.stanford.edu/mapcollections/findstanfordmaps) contains details about the Stanford Libraries collections and instructions for finding maps. Selecting "Find maps at Stanford" leads to detailed instructions for accessing the Stanford Libraries collections and the David Rumsey Map Collection. Students can also find a list of map collections from around the world, many of which have digital collections with images.
- › **National History Day | Maps Edition: A Guide for Finding, Analyzing, and Using Maps in Projects** (exhibits.stanford.edu/nhdmaps) provides topic and design ideas, hints for finding relevant maps, and guidance for developing map reading and analysis skills.
- › **Spotlight at Stanford: Digital showcases for research and teaching** (exhibits.stanford.edu) explores the vast number of exhibits housed at Stanford Libraries. Selecting Maps & Geography will lead to the digital map collections, providing great insight into the broad range of information maps contain and their use in research.

CLOSE READING: A MAP OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

Maps have shaped the way we imagine the colonial frontier in North America. Think of the standard multi-colored maps of the thirteen British colonies that illustrate most history textbooks. These maps make the colonies look like they existed as stable entities, with clearly defined borders and British power evenly spread across the territory. In effect, they paint an inaccurate image of frontier colonies, which faced instability and power struggles.

John Mitchell (1711–1768) lived between the colonies and Great Britain. He was born in Virginia, attended university

in Edinburgh, Scotland, returned to the colonies to practice medicine, and then moved permanently to Great Britain at age 35, where he developed his interest in cartography. Let us look at his 1757 *Map of the British and French Dominions in North America* (davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/lmq416). Upon inspection, this historic map, made and used during the Colonial Era, shows a dynamic and contested world of trade routes, Indigenous villages, settler towns, violence, and unclear or unknown borders. Unlike today's textbook maps, what emerges is a frontier that was in flux and where British domination was anything but certain.



John Mitchell's map showing British and French land claims in North America, 1757. David Rumsey Map Collection (2842.000).

Published in London, Mitchell's map measured approximately 53 inches by 76 inches and was very detailed. It overpowered its British viewers with the vastness of this "new" continent. Like many great mapmakers, Mitchell sought to communicate as much information as he could about these "unknown" (to the British) lands. His map was used by the military to plot strategy, diplomats to settle border disputes, trading companies to explore natural resources, and the public to learn about British territory. When European and Indigenous powers competed for control of North America's eastern seaboard, Mitchell's map helped assert Britain's claims on the land.

While it shows the entire map, the reduced size of Mitchell's map in this article causes the important details to be lost. Show students how to access the interactive version (davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/lmq416) to examine the vast amount of information in this map. Students should spend a good period of uninterrupted time exploring different sections of the map to give themselves time to get their bearings. They should write down what they see, things that seem interesting or mundane. Writing will help them notice, think through, and link ideas. They should not worry about observations being "right" or "wrong." This activity gets them thinking and situated with a new map.

To help students get started and introduce them to ways to think about maps more broadly, read Stanford Libraries comics-inspired guide, “This Old Map,” at exhibits.stanford.edu/nhdmaps/feature/analyzing-maps.

What can we learn about the colonial frontier from the interactive version of Mitchell’s map? Students might notice that there are no clear borders. Despite royal proclamations and other official announcements coming from Great Britain, North America was home to multitudes of factions, with vague realms of power competing for control of the land. For example, Mitchell clearly labeled the colony of “Pennsylvania,” even though the “Ohio Indians” and other Indigenous communities were also prominently occupying this “British” land. As seen on the map, Pennsylvania functioned more like a realm, with power diffusing over space, rather than a land with fixed boundaries. How did we get from this frontier map to today’s map? Part of the story of the settlement of the frontier is the story of placing lines of the nation, states, counties, townships, and private lots. As contested frontiers gave way to consolidated state lines, Native villages and realms disappeared from the map.

Mitchell’s map showed that actual British settlement, especially in the South, remained near the coast, while Native Peoples dominated the interior. For example, the Cherokee Nation had many villages in the land claimed by the Carolinas on the map. French and Spanish settlements existed nearby. Indeed, tracing the trade routes that linked this colonial world (indicated by single or parallel lines that look like roads) highlights that Indigenous communities were at the center of the trade networks, and thereby central to the colonial world. The routes that connect the Creek Indians to other communities are good examples of this. Mitchell relied on Native knowledge to create his map, especially in the interior, crediting “accounts of Indians” (for example, the description “A Fine Level and Fertile Country” north of “North Carolina.”). Indeed, as he relied on many different earlier maps to make his full-size map, Mitchell used much more Indigenous knowledge than he realized or credited.

New to exploring and analyzing the maps? The National Archives and Records Administration has analysis worksheets to help analyze primary sources, including maps. Visit [archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets](https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets) to get started.

Mitchell’s map also imparts a sense of the extraordinary violence of colonial conquest and the frontier. He labeled many places where Indigenous communities had been “destroy’d” or where battles had been fought or peoples “removed.” One example is “Messasagues [today the

Mississaugas] removed hereabouts,” south of Lake Ontario. Another is the label “Deserted Cherakee Settlements,” which intersects the “R” in “South Carolina.” Mitchell identified many battle sites and the quick succession of control in some places, as land changed between Indigenous, French, English, or Spanish hands. For example, Mitchell noted in Louisiana, along the “River of the Yasous”: “The Indians on this River were in Alliance with the English, for which they have been destroyed by the French.” These details illuminated the frontier as a site of an ever-changing balance of power.

The fight for control played out through battles on the ground and symbolic means, such as place names. Mitchell’s map reflected the British desire to control the Indigenous lands that the European nations had “discovered.” Mitchell’s largest and most prominent place names were those the English gave to their new territory. These symbolic gestures were important and pointed to the mapmaker’s agenda. In an uncertain frontier, the map asserted British power. In some places, and written with a smaller typeface, Mitchell did include original Indigenous names (some of which the English later adopted) or places where the names were still in flux, such as the labels of Lake Erie (“or Okswego” written below) and Lake Ontario (“or Catarukui” below).

Check out the video of our *Mapsolutely!* webinar (youtu.be/mkBISyNHNTk). This program leads teachers through the National History Day | Maps Edition digital exhibit and practices reading and analyzing maps of the American frontier using Barnevelt’s c.1744 map of southeastern North America.

MAPS VISUALIZING A FRONTIER EXPANDING OVER TIME: MACAU

The term “frontier” often finds itself closely related to expansion, as seen in the example of the American frontier. That frontier was an edge of land that colonists pushed and penetrated to expand their existence, with physical consequences occurring between Indigenous Peoples and colonists. Exploring a point, such as a city, is another way to analyze the relationship between frontier and expansion. One such city is Macau, located on the southeastern coast of the People’s Republic of China.

Maps can be used to observe the changes that occurred and the way Macau was presented to external audiences over time. The observable changes began as a result of Portuguese traders settling in Macau, an obscure southeastern village in China in the 1550s. During this early period, the Chinese allowed the presence of traders in exchange for duties paid on anchorage and exports.

Students can explore the interactive version of these maps to examine its development between 1625 and the 1950s.

1625



One of the first maps of China, printed in London in 1625. The Barry Lawrence Ruderman Map Collection, Stanford University Libraries (pt598yt1121).

In one of our earliest maps depicting Macau (labeled Amacao on the map), the city is included among a number of other settlements and cities located throughout China. Though early maps, such as this one, tend to fall short of complete accuracy, the coastal location of Macau signals it as a gateway between maritime trade and China.

The interactive version of this map (searchworks.stanford.edu/view/pt598yt1121) allows students to see the vast number of Chinese cities and settlements (designated by circles and squares), provinces, and boundaries between provinces. Amacao is on the southern coast.

1787

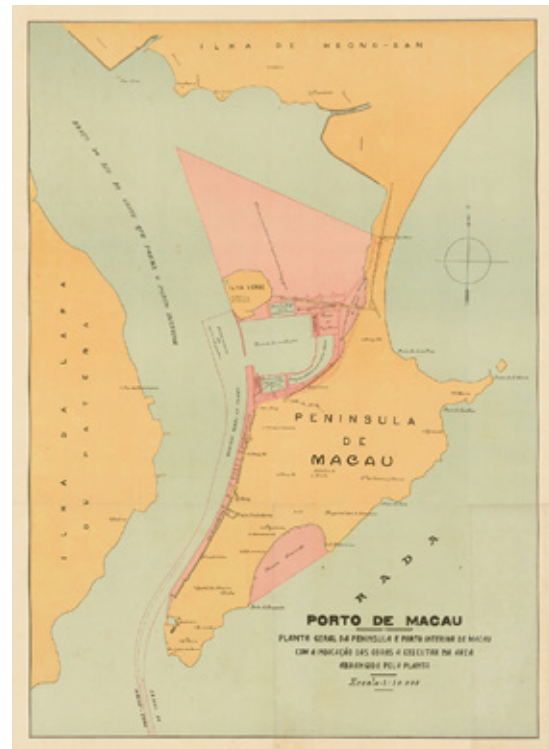


Segment of a map showing Macau, printed in Paris in 1787. The Barry Lawrence Ruderman Map Collection, Stanford University Libraries (gc167ht4290).

This gateway comes into focus in a map published in 1787 that presents individual maps of parts of Russia, Japan, and China. Macau is now more than just a label on a map. The settled beginnings of Macau that were rooted in commerce were still present in 1787. Traders sought Chinese silks, then opium, and finally firecrackers, incense, tea, and tobacco.

The interactive version of this map (searchworks.stanford.edu/view/gc167ht4290) allows students to examine the small city plan of Macau. Red symbols identify the location of buildings. Navigation routes leading to regional ports mark the surrounding waters.

THE 1920s



Decorative map of Macau showing its expansion and development, 1920s. Barry Lawrence Ruderman Map Collection, Stanford University Libraries (nr600qn8205).

This map of Macau from the 1920s signals the beginning of a significant expansion phase. In attractive colors and typography, the map illustrates proposed land reclamation projects to create space for further development to include factories, railways, and of course, a big beach.

The interactive version of this map (searchworks.stanford.edu/view/nr600qn8205) shows students both Macau as it existed (in beige) and the proposed human-constructed changes (in pink). They can view the entire peninsula and then close in on specific sections.

THE 1950s



Map of Macau by Huang Yifei Bian, published in Macau in the 1950s. Branner Library Map Collections, Stanford University Libraries (11754993).

As a result of the Chinese Civil War, many refugees fled to Macau in the 1940s, expanding its workforce and growing its manufacturing industry for clothing and textiles. The city also began to develop its tourism industry and signaled its modern future by legalizing gambling. This map of Macau published in the 1950s is a graphic visualization of this frontier city at the height of its transition.

The interactive version of this map (searchworks.stanford.edu/view/11754993) allows students to examine Macau in the 1950s. Its itinerary (index) marks the locations of factories, including those manufacturing firecrackers, knitted goods, and matches. A new trend emerges in the form of hotels, palaces, and tourist attractions. The map's contemporary design, with bold, fun colors and typography, also signals the emergence of a modern and global city.

CONCLUSION

Encourage students to use maps creatively and critically for their National History Day projects. By studying maps, students will learn how to approach (and not shy away from) challenging sources and begin to question the seeming neutrality of scientific documents. Especially in the study of frontiers, maps can serve as valuable tools. They shed light on how historical actors viewed frontiers, revealing them as dynamic and complex spaces. Maps are visualizations of complex information that reflect the perspectives of people, places, and ideas during that time period, while also illuminating the connections between each of these elements.

By taking the time to find, read, and analyze maps, students will tap into a wealth of resources available at Stanford Libraries and other institutions worldwide. Analyzing spatial data to understand the world around us and solve problems is an ever-growing discipline. Students can begin contributing to this work by using maps in their NHD research and projects.

To access more theme resources,
go to nhd.org/theme.



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