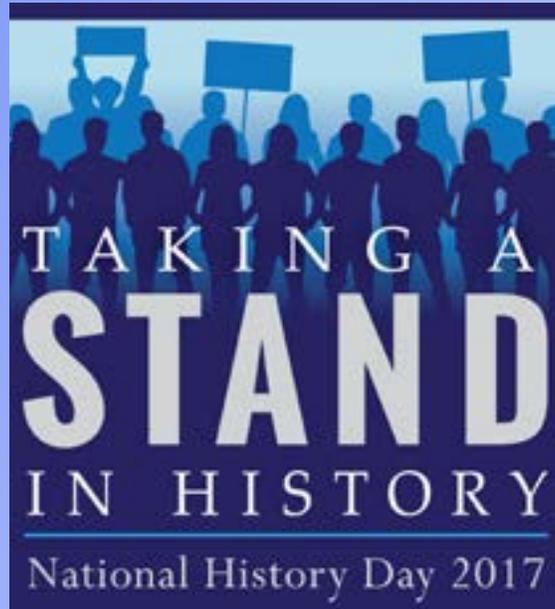
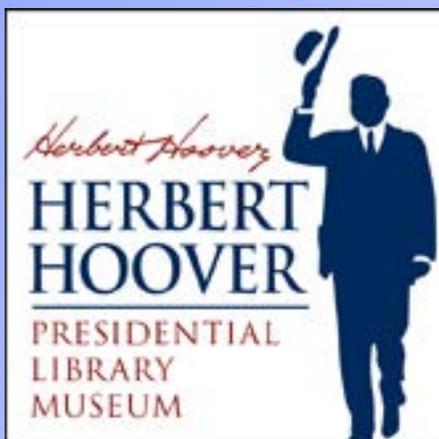


# Topic Ideas



## National History Day 2016-2017

**Prepared by the Archival and Education  
Staff at the Herbert Hoover Presidential  
Library and Museum**



## **Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Resources**

### **National History Day, 2016**

#### **Taking a Stand in History**

This year's theme for National History Day, 'Taking a Stand in History,' offers students a multitude of topics with a wide range of primary and secondary sources to investigate. The theme also gives students, and teachers, a point of entry to discuss the personal and philosophical ramifications of taking a stand. What are the costs? What are the benefits? When should one take a stand? In examining these types of questions, students will see the relevance of history to contemporary decisions.

The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library has created several topics that fit neatly with the National History Day theme. Students can work on: America's non-intervention in World War II, educating Native Americans, security clearance for atomic scientists, Hoover's reaction to the New Deal, and race relations in both natural disaster relief and social events at the White House.

Some documents related to topic suggestions have been added to [www.docsteach.org](http://www.docsteach.org).

#### **America First: Verne Marshall and the No Foreign War Committee, 1939-1941**

Anti-war sentiment ran high in America in the decades after the First World War. When war threatened Europe in the late 1930s, Congress, reflecting the will of the majority of Americans, passed legislation to insure America's neutrality. When war came to Europe in the fall of 1939, President Roosevelt began to edge America toward involvement. Verne Marshall, editor of the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, took a stand and established the No Foreign War Committee to oppose American intervention.

Primary Sources: Verne Marshall Papers--No Foreign War Committee series.

Gerald Nye papers--America First files.

## **An American Reformation: Hoover and Native American Education in 1930s**

During Hoover's Presidency improvements in the government's Indian education policy began to humanize the system. The schools began to accommodate the backgrounds and cultures of Native Americans, replacing boarding schools with a program of integrated public education. Hoover's administration took a stand that saw Native American children as humans and citizens instead of government wards.

Primary Sources: Ray Lyman Wilbur papers--Indian Affairs  
Meriam report, 1928; National Advisory Committee on Education

## **Atomic Secrets: Lewis Strauss Revokes Robert Oppenheimer's Security Clearance**

In the 1950s some of the most closely guarded secrets revolved around the development of the atomic and hydrogen bombs. Robert Oppenheimer, dubbed the father of the atom bomb, had frequently been accused of being a Communist spy. As Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Lewis Strauss voted to uphold the decision to remove Oppenheimer's access to atomic secrets.

Primary Sources: Lewis L. Strauss papers -- Atomic Energy Commission series  
Lewis L. Strauss autobiography, Men and Decisions, 1962

## **Challenge to Liberty: Herbert Hoover's Stand against the New Deal**

After losing the 1932 election to Franklin Roosevelt, Herbert Hoover went into 'exile in the political wilderness,' repairing to his home in Palo Alto. From this vantage, Hoover watched, with growing horror, the development of Roosevelt's New Deal. Hoover saw in the New Deal's disregard for a balanced budget, disdain for the gold standard, and vast increase in federal authority, threats to American ideals. In the mid-1930s, Hoover made a series of speeches attacking the New Deal and its threat to American individualism. He took a stand and wove the ideas of these speeches into a book, The Challenge to Liberty:

Primary Sources: Hoover Post-Presidential papers -- Books, Challenge to Liberty

## **Mississippi Flood of 1927: Hoover's Idealistic Stand and African-American Reality**

When the Mississippi River flooded in May 1927, Herbert Hoover was appointed to coordinate relief for over 600,000 refugees. Hoover formed the Colored Advisory Committee (headed by Robert Moton) to investigate reported discrimination in relief efforts. Hoover took the stand that needs of refugees must be met regardless of race, and trusted that Moton's committee findings would find no discrimination toward African-Americans.

Primary Sources: Hoover Pre-Commerce papers--Mississippi River flood, Negroes

## **DePriest Tea Incident: Taking a stand against Racism in the White House**

In June 1929, First Lady Lou Henry Hoover, in keeping with a long tradition, invited wives of members of the House of Representatives to attend tea at the White House. In accepting this invitation, Jessie DePriest, wife of Oscar DePriest, stood to be the first African-American woman to attend a White House social function. This created quite a stir as the press and citizens took umbrage at the prospect of an integrated tea party. Mrs. Hoover and Mrs. DePriest took their stands, holding that race should not matter.

Primary Sources: Lou Henry Hoover papers--DePriest Incident files

# **All topics can be researched at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum**

## **Research Room Procedures**

The reading room is open to researchers Monday through Friday, 8:45 a.m.-noon and 12:30-4:45 p.m. It is closed all federal holidays and weekends. Archivists are happy to assist NHD students, teachers, and families. Appointments are suggested by calling 319-643-5301.



**The archivists and education staff at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum are available to help all NHD students, regardless of topic choice. Please e mail [elizabeth.dinschel@nara.gov](mailto:elizabeth.dinschel@nara.gov) or call 319-643-5301 for additional assistance.**