Encourage Literacy and Engage Students and Teachers with Primary Source Documents and through National History Day

Missy McNatt
National Archives and Records Administration
Education Specialist
DC National History Day Coordinator
Missy.mmcnatt@nara.gov

Why Engage Teachers and Students with Primary Source Documents from Libraries and Archives

- Incorporating primary sources in the classroom is part of the Common Core, (C3) Framework, and National Social Studies Curriculum Standards of Learning.

- Primary sources engage, excite, inspire, and intrigue students and teachers.

- Students improve academic skills including reading and analysis of primary sources.

- Teachers are more effective and thoughtful when they incorporate primary sources.

- The past is more meaningful to students and teachers.

- Documents from your facility are used more often!

Standards in Social Studies

- <u>National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies</u>
  – Thematic Strands
    - Time, Continuity and Change.
    - People, Places, and Environments
    - Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
    - Science, Technology, and Society
    - Global Connections
    - Civic Ideals and Practices

- <u>College, Career, and Civic Life (C3)</u> *Framework* for Social Studies State Standards
  - NCSS and Common Core aligned
  - Inquiry-based teaching/learning method
  - Heavily relies on primary source use in all grade levels
- <u>Common Core</u>
  - Promotes literacy
  - Sets minimal standards for HS graduation

How To Engage Teachers and Students in Archival Research

- Invite teachers to participate in teacher workshops over the summer and during the school year.
- Invite teachers to plan activities with the staff.
- Invite teachers to come to your facility with their students.
- Create activities with engaging documents.
- Be clear regarding the research process at your facility.
- Know that most students do not understand the research process.
- Patience, patience, patience with both teachers and students.

Examples of Onsite and Online Programming

- Incorporate exhibits in programming
- Ad-Hoc research for classes
- AP Class Research
- National History Day Workshops
- Programs connected to class curriculum
- Webinars/Hangouts
- Distance Learning

What are teachers looking for?

1. Document Sets
   a. DBQ
   b. Analysis Work
   c. Group Work
2. Photographs
3. Videos
4. Oral Histories
5. Simple Documents

"Curating" Documents for Teachers

1. Beginning, Middle, End
2. Timeline
3. Simplicity
4. Good descriptions, 'searchability'
5. Standards aligned
6. National History Day theme
7. Remember, you are their best resource!

What are students looking for?

1. School projects
2. National History Day projects
3. Genealogy
4. Subject-area experiences like summer camp or archival workshops
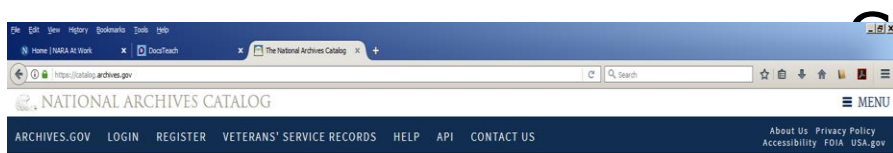5. You are their best resource!

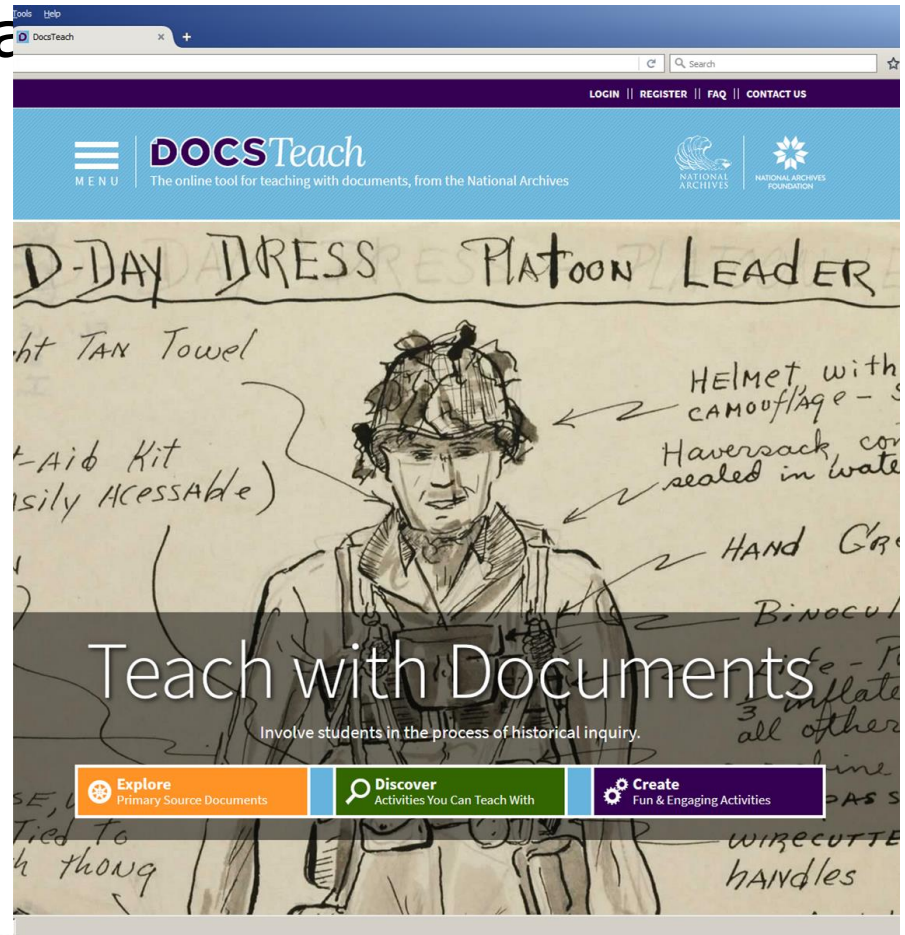# What about the student who wants "everything you have on _____"?

1. You can make a difference here!
2. Talk them through "right sizing."
3. Establish:
   a. What is the project
   b. What is the timeline
   c. What are the expectations
   d. What *specifically* they want to research

Digital Resources – DocsTeach and the Archives

How to Engage with National History Day

- Offer NHD specific research days and programs

- Respond to research requests from students and teachers

- Judge at an NHD contest (local, affiliate, or nationals)

- Connect with your state affiliate coordinator (nhd.org/affiliates)