

Press Release
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Virginia History Day Continues On in Virtual Format for the 2021 Season

Richmond, VA — Recognizing the current reality of education in the Commonwealth, all Virginia History Day contests, including district contests and the state contest, will be held virtually in the Spring of 2021. Virginia History Day (VHD), a state-wide history competition for students in grades four through twelve, is coordinated by the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC), in conjunction with the National History Day Contest (NHD). While adapting to school districts' reopening decisions, the VMHC remains dedicated to providing students the opportunity to actively engage history through the VHD framework.

Virginia History Day is the state affiliate of the National History Day program. Similar to a science fair, but for history, the National History Day Contest was founded in 1974 to inspire students to conduct original historical research. Since its creation, the contest has grown into an international competition with more than half-a-million participants and thousands of dollars in scholarship awards and prizes annually. "Creating a project for the National History Day Contest is challenging. It requires hard work and dedication. But, it also provides great reward," said Dr. Cathy Gorn, National History Day® Executive Director. "The skills of conducting research and recognizing credible sources are crucial to increasing civic engagement in young people."

The VMHC makes this decision after the successful 2020 VHD contest season this past spring. Due to the pandemic, VHD staff converted four district contests and the state contest into virtual formats. The program remained one of the few extracurricular programs in the state that was not canceled. Despite the challenges involved, 983 students, 94% of those who qualified, submitted their projects to a VHD contest. This high participation rate is a testament to the resilience of Virginia's teachers and students.

Students will spend this fall choosing topics for their projects and connecting those topics to the 2020-2021 NHD Theme, *Communication in History: The Key to Understanding*. They will then begin researching primary and secondary sources related to their topics. To assist in this research, most of which will have to be done virtually, the VMHC has partnered with the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library, Echoes & Reflections, and the Library of Virginia to offer free webinars, aimed at teachers and parents, focused on virtual research techniques. Additional partnerships are planned for later this fall and winter. To register for these sessions, please visit the VMHC's [Calendar of Events page](#). Additional information regarding specific details of the 2021 VHD contests will be released this winter.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society — a private, non-profit organization established in 1831. The historical society is the oldest cultural organization in Virginia, and one of the oldest and most distinguished history organizations in the nation. For use in its state history museum and its renowned research library, the historical society cares for a collection of nearly nine million items representing the ever-evolving story of Virginia.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is located at 428 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard in Richmond's Museum District. Hours are Monday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the galleries and museum shop, Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the research library. For more information call 804.340.1800, visit VirginiaHistory.org, or connect on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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Virginia Museum of History & Culture

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