

Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas

National History Day 2022-23

The **National History Day** office chooses a different theme each year to unite all National History Day projects. While your topic must connect to the theme, the annual theme is broad enough for you to pick a topic from any time period or location. Before getting started, be sure to check with your teacher to make sure they do not have any guidelines on topic choice.

During the 2022–2023 school year, the annual theme is **Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas**. This guide will help you think about the theme, how to narrow topics to the right size, and think of some topic ideas.

What is a Frontier?

To understand this year's theme, it is best to take a closer look at the word "frontier." Here are some common definitions of frontier:

- a wilderness at the edge of a settled area
- an uncharted territory
- the farthestmost limits of knowledge or achievement in a particular subject
- an undeveloped field of study

Those definitions cover a lot of possible historical research topics! As you brainstorm on ideas, go beyond the physical definition of frontier, and think about times that people pushed the boundaries in science, technology, medicine, transportation, economics, media, law, justice, sports, and art. Remember that everything has a history – investigate subject areas that fascinate you!

If you want to pick a topic that examines physical frontiers, think about how the word may differ between perspectives. For instance, the "New World" might have been a frontier to the Europeans, but that was not the case to the many people who already lived here. Manteo and Wanchese were two American Indians that interacted with the English during the Roanoke Voyages. They both traveled to England. To them, wouldn't England be a frontier? Considering **multiple perspectives** is key to a strong NHD project.

Important to Remember as You Hunt for Topics

As you hunt for topics, look for ones that you will be able to show both **historical context** and **historical significance**. Historical context considers what was happening at the time of your topic that influenced it to happen. Ask yourself what factors led to the development of a frontier? Why did it emerge, and how did it change? These influences may come from political, social, environmental, and economic climates of the time. Keep in mind that these people, places, or ideas all occur as part of a larger story and its important to show how it fits.

Historical significance examines the impact of your topic and demonstrates why it matters today. As NHD likes to ask, "**so what?**" Did your chosen frontier have a lasting impact on society? Did it inspire future events that might not have otherwise been

possible? When did it cease to be a frontier and why? Investigate how your topic affected individuals, communities, nations, or the world and what changes took place over time because of it.

Ultimately, the answers to these questions must be found through **research**. Keep an open mind as you search your sources and discover examples of frontiers.

Narrowing Down a Topic

As you choose your topic, also remember not to be too broad. A topic such as, "Space Exploration" might seem like a good choice at first, but it covers way too much time, people, and places. Broad topics like this one might make finding sources easy, but it will be that much harder to make a clear argument and stay within the word or time limits in your project category. For example, narrowing that topic down to only looking at how the Morehead Planetarium prepared early astronauts for space exploration helps focus research and forming a **historical argument**.

The chart located below shows how you can use **Who**, **What**, **When**, and **Where** questions to narrow down your broad history interests into focus topic ideas.



N.C. History Topic Ideas

The topic ideas listed on the following pages explore possible connections to this year's theme within North Carolina history. Though sorted by type of history, many topic ideas fit into multiple sections so explore the list carefully. A great place to start to learn more about these topics is on www.NCpedia.org. Looking for American or World History topic ideas? Check out NHD.org/theme.

African American History

1971 Durham Schools Charette
1986 "Somerset Homecoming"
Elreta Melton Alexander Ralston
Floyd McKissick and Soul City
George Henry White
Harriet Jacobs
Founding of Princeville
James F. Shober
Palmer Memorial Institute
The Montford Point Marines
Ocean City of Topsail Island
Lunsford Lane
Pauli Murray
North Carolina's 1865 Freedmen's Convention
Dorothy Counts – Charlotte School Integration
Asheville's Young Men's Institute
North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company
John Hope Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom*
David Walker and His Appeal
W. F. Johnson's Electric-powered Airplane
Royal Ice Cream Sit-in
Thomas Day
Wilmington Insurrection of 1898

Agricultural History

John Blue – Farming Inventions
Nicholas Nichols Nixon and Peanut Cultivation
Priestley Mangum and His Innovative Terrace
Silas McDowell and the Thermal Zone
Pasteurization Initiative in Tarboro, 1918

American Indian History

Chief Osley Bird Sanooke
Salola's Rifle
Royal Proclamation of 1763 and Tryon's Line
Lula Leta Owl Gloyne
Lumbie Organize Against the Ku Klux Klan, 1958
Creation of Oconaluftee, Replica Village
Chief Yonaguska and the Oconaluftee Cherokee
Manteo and Wanchese Travel to England
Sequoyah - Inventor of Cherokee Syllabary

Asian American History

Chang and Eng Bunker
Charles Soong (born Han Chiao-shun)
Edward Tie
George Masa
The Hindu Society of N.C.

Arts & Entertainment

Black Mountain College
Cecil B. DeMille
Ernie Barnes
Romare Bearden
Bennie Lydell Glover: Record Industry Downfall
Hugh Mangum
John Coltrane
Mel A. Tomlinson: Rubber-Band Man
Nina Simone
North Carolina Museum of Art
Charlie Clay Poole
North Carolina Symphony
Pam Grier
Paul Eliot Green
Roberta Flack
Thelonious Monk

Civics and Government

1669 Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina
Bayard v. Singleton
Carolina Charters (1663, 1665)
Creation of UNC at Chapel Hill
Governor Sanford's North Carolina Fund
Governor William Woods Holden's
Impeachment
Formation of the Committees of
Correspondence
Halifax Resolves
Jacob Henry
Mecklenburg Resolves
North Carolina's Prohibition Vote
North Carolina's Provincial Congresses
The Regulator Movement

Environmental & Natural History

Brown Creek Soil Conservation District
Carl Schenck and the Cradle of Forestry
Creation of Mount Mitchell State Park
Creation of Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Andre Michaux & the Appalachians
H. H. Brimley & C. S. Brimley
John Lawson's *A New Voyage to Carolina*
North Carolina Zoological Park
R. W. Graeber and North Carolina Forestry
William Bartram

Exploration

Francisco de Miranda
Hernando de Soto's 1540 Expedition
Giovanni da Verrazzano – Explores N.C. Coast
John White: Documenting the "New" World
John Lederer Expedition
Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón
John Lawson

Fashion

André Leon Talley
Molly McCoy Hancock
Willie Virginia Otey Kay

Immigration, Migration, and Settlement

Bethabara – 1st Moravian Settlement in N.C.
The Donner Party (Donners born in N.C.)
The Great Wagon Road
The Roanoke Voyages
The Watauga Settlement

Industry or Labor History

Burlington Industries
Crystal Sutton
Ella Mae Wiggins
The General Textile Strike of 1934
Lowe's and Homegrown Home Improvement
North Carolina Gold Rush – Reed Gold
R. J. Reynolds and the Tobacco Industry

Innovation in History

Astronaut Training at Morehead Planetarium
Astronaut William Thornton
Beulah Louise Henry - "Lady Edison"
Caleb Bradham and Pepsi-Cola
Construction of the Linn Cove Viaduct
Creation of Research Triangle Park
Ham, The "Astrochimp"
Henry Gatling and His Flying Machine
Henry Louis Smith and Early X-ray Experiments
Joseph Caldwell's Pleas for Railroad
Krispy Kreme Doughnuts
Lunsford Richardson and Vicks VapoRub
Mary Beatrice Davidson Kenner
N.C. State's On-Campus Nuclear Reactor
Pamlico County Schools Motorized School Bus
Reginald Fessenden's N.C. Wireless Experiments
William Luther Paul & "Bumble Bee" Helicopter
The Wright Brothers

Hispanic and Latino American History

1995 Strike at Morganton's Case Farms
Creation of El Centro Hispano in Durham
Creation of Latin American Coalition in Charlotte
Creation of Student Action with Farmworkers
H. Nolo Martinez

Journalism & Broadcasting

Betty Debnam and The Mini Page
Charles Bishop Kuralt
Charlotte's WBTV
Edward R. Murrow
James Davis - North Carolina's First Newspaper

Medical History

Alice Threatt Perry
Anne Penland
Ann Johnson – Pioneer in Aging and Senior Care
Doreatha Dix's Work in N.C.
Dr. Connie Guion
Dr. James Buren Sidbury – Est. of Pediatrics
Dr. James Webb
Karl Von Ruck
Leonard Medical School
Martha Mason and Life in an Iron Lung
Mary L. Wyche
Dr. Michael Hoke
Dr. Louis Burgin McBrayer
Dr. Perry Reaves' Radiograph-scope
Radiology Pioneer Margaret Kennedy Goodwin

Military History

Bombardier Thomas Ferebee
Camp Lejeune & Females in the Marine Corps
Culpeper's Rebellion
Dorothy B. Austell – WWII Undercover Agent
Fort Dobbs
Frank Armstrong
"Glory" Hancock, World War I Nurse
James Dobbin's Vision for the U.S. Navy
Kiffin Rockwell and the Lafayette Escadrille
Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base Gliders
Loyalist Fate after War (Revolutionary War)
NC Artificial Limbs Program After Civil War
Richard Jordan Gatling and the Gatling Gun

Naval and Maritime History

"Gentleman Pirate" Stede Bonnet
Project Azorian and Cold War Espionage
The Civil Air Patrol Protecting N.C.'s Coast
The Pea Island Life-Saving Station

Sports/Athletics

Cataloochee Ski Slopes
Dr. Frank Jobe Pioneers Saves Baseball Careers
Hang Gliding
Lilliputian Golf
Jim "Catfish" Hunter – A Free Agent
Michael Jordon
Professional Ice Hockey's 1956 Debut in N.C.
The Secret Basketball Game of 1944

Women's History

Bayard Wooten
Edenton Tea Party
Gertrude Weil
Viola Gentry
Ethel H. Porter
Sarah DeRippe Falkener and Female Education
Barbara Bynum Henderson
Mary Maria Petty - Pioneer Female Chemist
Jane Simpson McKimmon - Home Economics
Georgia "Tiny" Broadwick
Lillian Exum Clement Stafford
Tabitha Holton
Charles McIver - Female Education
Samarcan - State Home & Industrial School