

Project History Day

Project History Day is a collaboration between a local historical organization or museum and a student group (school, club, etc.) to take full advantage of project-based learning and the Michigan History Day® (MHD), or National History Day (NHD) in Michigan, program. This program was piloted by the Hamtramck Historical Museum and Hamtramck High School, under advisory council of Wayne RESA. We would like to thank the following people for their efforts and leadership during the pilot:

Greg Kowalski, Executive Director of the Hamtramck Historical Museum
Sarah Cook, Hamtramck Historical Museum
David Hales, Wayne RESA
George Hloros, Hamtramck High School

Focus: Increase awareness of subject matter in local history, to connect students in meaningful ways to their city and community, and strengthen students' ability to analyze resource material by introducing them to primary and secondary resources.

Objective: Evaluate national or global events and the effect on their region, neighborhood, community and/or family based on the annual NHD theme.

Outcome: Each student or group of students will complete a project to be entered (or considered for entry) in Michigan History Day. The project developed in this program will follow the guidelines and rules as established by National History Day.

Participants: Students in grades 4 to 12 are eligible to participate in Michigan History Day.

Outline:

- 1) Presentation at a Historical Museum or Organization (Field Trip)
 - a. Classroom teacher will introduce the students to MHD prior to visiting the Museum.
 - b. Presentation Day at Museum (If students aren't able to visit the historical organization or museum, museum staff could travel to the school and share the different collections/exhibits available at the museum.)
 - i. Classroom teacher reviews MHD and recaps the theme and the types of projects that can be considered. **(5-10 minutes)**
 - ii. Museum staff gives a presentation incorporating the History Day theme. Staff should select a topic that relates to the annual theme (e.g. WWII, Prohibition, Civil Rights) and present a local history connection (and possibly a neighborhood and family tie). Primary source materials are used during the presentation. **(20 minutes)**
 - iii. Students break into groups and explore the museum, generating a list of possible topics motivated by their interaction with the exhibits. **(20 minutes)**

- iv. In small groups, students discuss topics and choose their top 3 choices for possible topics and discuss the resources that motivated them to choose those topics. (**10 minutes**)

2) Independent and Classroom Research

- a. Museum staff visit class(es) for updates and discussions. Information about individual projects and brief interviews (5-10 minutes) with each of the student groups will help determine the materials that will be gathered for the second visit to the museum.
 - i. Interview Questions:
 - What is the topic of the project and why did you choose this topic? (Make sure they say how they think it ties to the annual theme.)
 - What sources have you reviewed so far?
 - What type of project are you doing? (IE: Documentary, Exhibit, Paper, Performance, or Website)
 - b. Students complete preliminary research in classroom before next phase of the project. It will help if students have a basic understanding of the event or person they are researching before they visit the museum for primary source research. It would also be helpful if students are familiar with a source analysis tool. The teacher should share his or her preference with museum staff. Examples of source analysis tools can be found at:
 - i. Library of Congress - www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html
 - ii. National Archives - www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets

3) In-depth Research at the Museum

Museum staff will prepare primary source materials for the students to investigate. These will be a combination of books, research papers, news articles, photos, and artifacts in hard copy or electronic (e.g. Library of Congress site) as applicable. Volunteers from the museum, historical organization, and possibly past MHD judges will be assigned to student groups to assist students as they research.

Provide volunteers with a general overview of the agenda and expectations of the day before the event. Include the annual theme narrative and examples of the source analysis tool with the message. If possible, provide time before students arrive to answer questions from the volunteers and go over any logistics.

- a. Museum staff introduces the work the museum did to gather resources and where to go to do more research.
- b. A representative from the local public library will give a 10-minute presentation on library resources and how to work with librarians to further your research. He or she will also talk about primary source material.
- c. Groups go to their pre-set stations and start their research. Provide source analysis tools from the National Archives or Library of Congress to each group of students. (Check with teacher about preferred source tool)

- d. Groups begin outlining the construction of their project.
- 4) School-level Competition
Student projects will be judged by current and former judges of Michigan History Day. This is an opportunity for students to strengthen their presentations and refine their answers to judge questions. The judges will familiarize the students with the rubric for judging. Each school can send the top three projects in each category to the MHD district contest and students are encouraged to improve their projects based on judge feedback.
- 5) MHD District Contest.
Dates for contests vary, visit hsmichigan.org/mhd/district-information/ to learn more.
- 6) Project Display Open House
 - a. The Museum will host an open house for students to present their research projects after competitive judging. The open house event will be attended by student and school invitees including family and friends. Projects that advanced to the MHD State Finals will be announced. The regional winners from Hamtramck will be able to leave their projects on display at the Museum.

Sample Timeline for Project History Day (2019/2020)

- Summer – Key staff members and participants meet to schedule events and develop a plan.
- **September 16th** – First day field trip to the Hamtramck Historical Museum. Two classes were broken into a morning field trip (27 students) and an afternoon field trip (33 students).
- **September 18th** – Debrief meeting with planning committee (telephone). Debrief happened day of field trip.
- **September 24th** – Classroom visit. First class is at 10:00am
- **October 17th** – Second day field trip to Hamtramck Historical Museum
- **November 14th (Optional)** – Open hours at the Hamtramck Historical Museum
- **January 13th-17th (exact date TBD)** – School Level Competition
- February 17th – Registration for District 10 MHD contest closes
- **March 7th** – District 10 MHD contest
- **March 17th** – Student Showcase/Open House at Hamtramck Historical Museum
- **April 25th** – MHD State Finals