



# Texas Students Shine at 2026 National History Day Contest, Represented in Every National Showcase

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*76 Texas History Day students competed against 3,000+ peers nationwide and abroad, earning top honors and representing Texas in all four national showcases.*

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, July 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Texas State Historical Association ([TSHA](#)) is proud to applaud the exceptional achievements of the 76 Texas students who participated in the National History Day ([NHD](#)) contest held at the University of Maryland from June 14-18, 2026. These remarkable young historians showcased their passion for history, demonstrating exceptional research and presentation skills, and represented Texas with distinction.

Texas History Day ([THD](#)) students from across the state, who advanced through local, regional, and state-level contests, earned the opportunity to compete at the national level. Amidst fierce competition with over 3,000 students from all 50 states, international schools, and U.S. territories, Texas students shone brightly, impressing judges with their insightful historical analyses and engaging presentations.

"This experience truly impacts students and adults alike. It gives you hope for the future of our country when students choose to become active researchers with critical thinking skills," said Kimberly Peña, Director of Education for TSHA, who attended her first NHD contest with Texas History Day Coordinator Danny Corbett.

Under this year's NHD theme, "Revolution, Reaction, and Reform in History," students explored narratives that offered new perspectives, untold stories, and transformed ideas. Their dedication, creativity, and commitment to historical scholarship were evident in their exceptional projects. TSHA congratulates the following Texas students for their remarkable achievements at the NHD contest:

## National 1st Place:

-Emery Hobson, Mya Kacal & Sarah Jackson, Lake Belton Middle School, Belton, TX — "Brought to You by the Letter R! As a Reaction to Poverty, Sesame Street Became the Revolutionary Idea that

## Reformed Children's Television" (Jr. Group Documentary)

-Austin Thomas, David Orellana & Jack Pettine, Baytown Junior High, Baytown, TX — "On The Line of Scrimmage: Revolution, Reaction and Reform Under The Helmet" (Jr. Group Exhibit)

-Karol Arriaga, Isabella Castaneda Garcia, Damian Ledezma & Sergio Cisneros, Rivera Early College HS, Brownsville, TX — "The Space Race: Revolution Through Rivalry" (Sr. Group Performance)

## National 2nd Place:

-Nora Gillum, Dripping Springs Middle School, Dripping Springs, TX — "The King's Revolutions: Rethinking the Historical Significance of Elvis Presley in 1950s America" (Jr. Individual Website)

-Arko Barua, Arya Gurumukhi, Amrutha Veeramaneni, Collin Nguyen & Nanditha Sharath, Plano East Sr. HS, Plano, TX — "Deciding Destiny: How the God Committee Revolutionized Bioethics and Reformed Federal Healthcare Policy" (Sr. Group Website)

## Special Awards:

## Junior Outstanding Entry from Texas:

-Selah Smith, Austin Classical School, Austin, TX — "The Book That Tore America Apart: How Harriet Beecher Stowe Directly Influenced the Civil War Through her Novel Uncle Tom's Cabin" (Jr. Individual Performance)

## Senior Outstanding Entry from Texas:

-Amy Hernandez, Savannah Acarto, Serenity Acarto & Zoe Mauricio, Bryan Collegiate High School, Bryan, TX — "Upton Sinclair and The Meatpacking Reform: How Muckraking Journalism Exposed Industrial Abuse and Revolutionized Food Safety" (Sr. Group Exhibit)

## Showcase Selections:

The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History displayed 58 exhibits, one from each affiliate. Texas was represented by the Sr. Group Exhibit "Sanitation and Sovereignty: Reaction, Revolution, and Reform in the 1917 El Paso Bath Riots," by Abel Castanon, Giuliana Williams, and Matthew Rodriguez from Andress HS in El Paso, TX.

The Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History hosted the Documentary Showcase. Two entries from Texas were selected:

-Emery Hobson, Sarah Jackson and Mya Kacal of Lake Belton Middle School, Belton, TX, with their Junior Group Documentary, "Brought to You by the Letter R! As a Reaction to Poverty, Sesame Street Became the Revolutionary Idea that Reformed Children's Television."

-McKenna Brindley, Isabelle Howson, Swikriti Lamichhane, Brynlee Newberry, and Emry Olivarez of Lake Belton High School, Belton, TX, with their Senior Group Documentary, "The Forgotten Story."

The National Archives hosted the website showcase, and Texas was represented by Alexandre Lopez of St. Joseph's Catholic School in Bryan, TX, with his Junior Individual Website, "The 'Spirit' Rebellion: How the Whiskey Tax Challenged the Stability of the Young American Republic."

The White House Historical Association hosted the paper showcase. Texas was represented by Naureen Hossain of the Austin Peace Academy, Austin, TX, with her Junior Paper, "The Second Founding and the Reconstruction of American Citizenship: Revolution, Reaction, and Reform in the Fourteenth Amendment, Southern Resistance, and Its Enduring Civil Rights Legacy."

Texas was the only state with entries added or invited to all showcases. These achievements are a testament to the dedication and passion of Texas students, as well as the support provided by educators, parents, and mentors. TSHA expresses its gratitude for their invaluable contributions in nurturing young historians and fostering a deep appreciation for Texas's rich heritage.

### About National History Day (NHD)

NHD is a non-profit organization based in College Park, Maryland, that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. The National History Day Contest was established in 1974 and currently engages more than half a million students every year in conducting original research on historical topics of interest. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels, where the top entries are invited to the National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. For more information, visit [nhd.org](http://nhd.org).

## About Texas History Day (THD)

Texas History Day (THD), sponsored by the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA), is an affiliate of National History Day (NHD). THD is a yearlong education program that culminates in an annual state-level history fair for students in grades six through twelve. It provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their interest in and knowledge of history through creative and original papers, performances, documentaries, websites, or three-dimensional exhibits. More than a thousand students participated in THD in 2026, and 76 students represented Texas at National History Day in June. For more information about THD and TSHA, visit [tshaonline.org](https://tshaonline.org) or contact Kimberly Peña at [kimberly.pena@tshaonline.org](mailto:kimberly.pena@tshaonline.org).

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