Using Government Documents in your National History Day Research

NHD.org Suggested Federal Resources Online
- National Archives
- Library of Congress
- GovInfo
- Census Bureau

What is National History Day?

NHD @ CPL

Making the Case for Print

In the era of “everything is online,” there are a few times when a student can still be impressed with good old fashioned paper. Many students come in with topics regarding well-known legislators or court cases. When asked “would you like to see Title IX” or “Do you want to see the actual doc from Justice Ginsburg?” their eyes widen in wonder. “Can I see it? Is this the actual book?”

Producing a print copy of the United States Code of the United States Reports brings a sense of joy to the library staff. Having a book to hold in their hand brings the topic and the people to life. No longer is the student an afternoon of scrolling on a smartphone.

The primary materials that government documents provide live voice to our nation’s leaders. It takes the resource from “about...” to “Title IX”.

National Endowment for the Humanities
Govinfo.gov

Sample project: Loving V. Virginia

National Archives
Marriage licenses - primary document
Library of Congress
Library Print Resources
Scan of the original case in the Supreme Court Reporter in the Government Documents Department

LOC staff blog containing case summary, timeline, and links to original documents and authoritative websites.

Census Bureau
Mapping Interracial/Interethnic Married-Couple Households in the United States: 2010

Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Health Bulletin V.41 Extra No.2

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Mapping Interracial/Interethnic Married-Couple Households in the United States: 2010

National Endowment for the Humanities
Govinfo.gov
Memorial of Mildred Loving in the Congressional Record

Take it a Step Further

What other legislation can you find? Search on congress.gov shows the Senate of Virginia Act (1, 1745-1746), which only recognized marriage between a man and a woman. This was overturned by Loving v. Virginia (1967) as unconstitutional.

As a result, ‘Marriage Equality’ for same-sex couples of any race was finally legal in 2015 as well.