NEH Constitution Day Emancipation Programming and Student Contest

To mark the 150th anniversary of emancipation, the NEH plans to host a series of events on National Constitution Day, September 17, 2012. The NEH has partnered with University of Richmond president and Civil War historian Edward L. Ayers, who will conduct a discussion among leading Emancipation historians at the Smithsonian Museum of American History in Washington, DC before a live student audience. This theatrical dialogue features University of Richmond President Edward L. Ayers moderating historians Eric Foner (Columbia University), Thavolia Glymph (Duke University), Gary Gallagher (University of Virginia) and Christy Coleman (American Civil War Center). This event will be available for viewing through live-streaming to student audiences across the country in order to encourage students to consider the immediate and long term implications of Emancipation, specifically its importance to the history of the U.S. Constitution.

Live Event
September 17th, 2012
1:30pm ET/12:30pm CT/11:30am MT/10:30am PT

On New Year’s Eve 1862 abolitionists and slaves anxiously waited in churches throughout the nation at “Watch Parties” for the Emancipation Proclamation to become law at the stroke of midnight, January 1, 1863. You can register to host your own “Watch Party” where community members can come together to watch the live streamed event at your campus or community center.

Sign up now! Register your watch party.

Student Contest
In addition to the live streamed event, the NEH has created a student contest for students over 18 years of age who are currently enrolled in high school, community college, or a four-year college or university.

How do I enter?

- Analyze and interpret any historical document(s) from either the Freedmen and Southern Society Project or Visualizing Emancipation (both NEH-funded sites), identifying the speaker, subject, and relevance to the emancipation experience

- Present your analysis creatively and be sure to cite the primary source you are using. Possible submission formats include, but are not limited to: a short essay, a first-person narrative, a letter, a one scene play, a poem, a blog post, a video, an original song, or a digital recording.

- If you are interested in submitting media content, please attach a brief abstract along with your work. When you are finished, upload your entry to our submission page

What are the rules?

- All projects must be historically founded in their respective primary sources. Students should specifically address their documents but also consider them within the greater context of American history and the significance of the Constitution.
• Any submissions of audio-visual media should not exceed five minutes in length and be
accompanied by an abstract of no longer than 500 words, formally addressing the questions
of speaker, subject, and relevance.
• Written material must be submitted in size 12 Times New Roman, and double spaced.
• There are no other contest limits; potential entry formats include letters, blog posts, poems,
songs, faux Facebook/Twitter dialogues, one scene plays, videos, etc. Please read our
additional legal guidelines before submitting your project.*

Who is eligible?

Students over 18 years of age who are currently enrolled in high school, community college, or a
four-year college or university. Contestants must be US citizens. Only one author permitted per
project.

What is the prize?

• First place, runner-up, and honorable mention will receive an all-expenses paid trip to
Washington, DC for two, and be invited to join the NEH for a special ceremony in the White
House’s Eisenhower Executive Office Building on September 17th.
• They will also be invited to participate in the live-streamed event at the National Museum of
American History as well as an evening performance and wreath-laying ceremony at the
Lincoln Memorial.
• While in D.C. the winning students will tour the East Wing of the White House and receive a
specially guided tour of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Travel,
hotel, and meal accommodations will be provided.

Dates to Remember

July 22: website’s “dropout” open for entries
September 4: Final deadline to submit entries
September 13: Winners will be notified and contacted to coordinate transportation to Washington
D.C.
September 16 and 17: Winners travel to D.C. to participate in NEH’s National Constitution Day
events and receive prizes