

ereviews

NAACP Papers, History Vault

ProQuest and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); cisupa.proquest.com/ksc/assets/history_vault/naacppapers.pdf; to request a free trial please go to: proquest.com/pdpq/historyvault

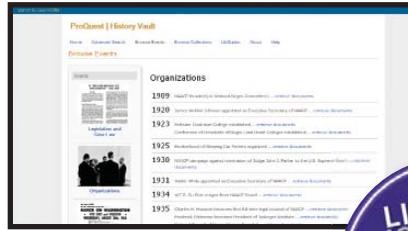
■ *By Cheryl LaGuardia*

CONTENT The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Papers, History Vault is the digitized, full-text, searchable content of the NAACP's archives, with approximately two million pages of action summaries, legal briefs, memos, reports, personal correspondence, proceedings, and the rest of the association's organizational records dating from 1909 (when it was founded) to 1972.

The file consists of six collections, all under the heading "NAACP Papers": The first three collections are "Board of Directors, Annual Conferences, Major Speeches, and National Staff Files"; "Branch Department, Branch Files, and Youth Department Files"; and "Special Subjects." Three remaining collections with the subhead "The NAACP's Major Campaigns" are "Education, Voting, Housing, Employment, Armed Forces"; "Legal Department Files"; and "Scottsboro, Anti-Lynching, Criminal Justice, Peonage, Labor, and Segregation and Discrimination Complaints and Responses."

USABILITY Links on the opening screen lead to, for example, advanced search, browse events, browse collections, and LibGuides. Users will also find a simple search box labeled, "What would you like to search for?" Below that is a carousel of clickable images to browse events (in the categories of legislation and case law; organizations; demonstrations; riots; elections; sports and athletics; and violence and assassination), beneath which is a section for browsing collections (the six listed above). Suggested searches are listed and linked. These include: Black power; boycotts; *Brown v. Board of Education*; Robert L. Carter; Gloster B. Current; discrimination in administration of justice, education, and in the military; Charles Hamilton Houston; lynching; Thurgood Marshall; NAACP Annual Conventions; NAACP Veterans Affairs Committee; racial intimidation and violence; the Scottsboro Boys; *Smith v. Allwright*; Stephen Gill Spottswood; *Sweatt v. Painter*; Walter Francis White; and Roy Wilkins.

I started exploring by clicking the suggested "*Brown v. Board of Education*" link, which led to 112 items. The first result



was for "*Bradley v. School Board of the City of Richmond* school desegregation case, general case material," from FOLDER: 016309-015-0725 in the collection, Papers of the NAACP, Supplement to Part 23: Legal Department Case Files, 1960–1972, Series A: The South, Section II: Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. There I was able to download a PDF of the file (an especially nice time-saving feature here is that you can download portions of a file, rather than the entire file all at once).

Back at the result list I saw valuable options to narrow my results by start and end dates, subject, geography, person as subject, federal agency, organizations, collections, and principal correspondents, with links to individuals and organizations named multiple times in the result list.

Next I clicked on browse events and got a time line running from 1909 (with the founding of the NAACP) to 1974 (with a link to *Bradley v. Milliken*, a Detroit school desegregation and school busing case). I scrolled through the list of events and chose demonstrations, which, when I clicked on it, revealed a time line for these events ranging from 1915 ("NAACP begins its campaign to have *Birth of a Nation* movie banned from movie theaters") to 1966 (the Meredith March Against Fear). In that time line I discovered documents related to the National Conference on Lynching held in May 1919 in New York City, describing sit-in demonstrations throughout the 1960s, recording planning and preparation for the March on Washington in 1963, and recounting the experiences of Freedom Riders in the 1950s and 1960s.

When I clicked on browse collections I went directly to a page describing the Scottsboro case, 1931–1950. Just to offer an idea of the remarkable detail and scope of this file, here's a note about this one collection among the many included in the NAACP Papers:

"The contents of this collection are contained in some 421 folders which typically are arranged by document category or by subject matter, and thence by date. Document types include correspondence, legal transcripts, memoranda and other administrative and organizational records, financial accounts, and news clippings, press releases, and related news media files; also noted are a series of handbills, flyers, posters, fact sheets and other aspects of public aware-

ness and fundraising campaigns launched by the NAACP and the Scottsboro Defense Committee (organized formally in 1935 as an umbrella organization specifically to raise funds for the legal defense of the Scottsboro defendants)."

My first search, for "Fannie Lou Hamer," found three results; a search for "Malcolm X" brought up ten sets of documents. When I tried a search of the file for

"miscegenation or interracial relationships" I got 101 items, with one as recent as 1976. An advanced search for "Medgar Evers and Emmett Till" found five results, and in the course of doing that search I learned that when using advanced search you can choose to mine all six modules at once or just a single module. Overall, searching this database is easy. The History Vault LibGuide (proquest.libguides.com/historyvault) holds useful information for searching and citing various History Vault modules, as does the help section of the site. Both also describe how to create and manage user profiles in any of the History Vault modules.

The content here is astounding in quantity and quality. The image resolution is excellent, even for hand-written items. Searching this file is a valuable history lesson in itself. One misgiving: I wish the particular file in use were identified at the top of the screen; the title bar lists only: ProQuest | History Vault, and it's necessary to look further down the screen to discover exactly what it is you're searching. Having "NAACP Papers" listed along with ProQuest | History Vault would make it clearer to researchers the file they're using.

PRICING Each of the six NAACP modules is sold either as a subscription or a perpetual archive. Pricing is based on several variables including FTE. An academic library serving an enrollment of 5,000 could expect to pay about \$13,628 for a perpetual archive or \$2,725 for an annual subscription, per module.

VERDICT This file's print counterpart is the most heavily used collection in the Library of Congress's Manuscript Division, and it's all the more impressive that researchers can now have 24/7/365 access to this remarkable record. An essential acquisition for libraries serving scholars in civil and human rights, American history, criminal justice, social choice and political theory, military history, and sociology. A tremendously significant historical resource.

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