Historical, archival materials are an often overlooked treasure when it comes to legal studies and legal research. ProQuest History Vault provides digital access to primary source materials relating to the development and implementation of the rule of law throughout U.S. history. Read letters and reports from civil rights organizations describing how they worked to get Federal legislation passed. Trace the development of the NAACP’s legal campaigns as they fought in the courts to overturn discrimination in education, employment, housing, the armed forces, and the criminal justice system. Examine key government records that describe the Federal response to key events such as the Freedom Rides, My Lai Massacre and Watergate. Study organizational records from key women’s groups that fought for equality under the law.

Here is a sampling of the types of primary source material found in History Vault that directly support legal studies curricula and research.

**Civil Rights In the 20th Century**

**NAACP Papers—Board of Directors, Annual Conferences, Major Speeches, and National Staff Files**

- Behind-the-scenes correspondence regarding the NAACP’s legal strategy for civil rights litigation
- Trace the NAACP’s deliberate and well-constructed lobbying efforts for civil rights legislation
- The speeches and the resolutions passed at the annual conferences are excellent ways to study the major concerns of the NAACP on a yearly basis

Letter from Clarence Mitchell regarding meeting with then Senator Lyndon Johnson about the Civil Rights Act of 1960

First page of June Shagaloff memo regarding segregated schools outside the South
NAACP Papers—The NAACP’s Major Campaigns: Education, Voting, Housing, Employment, Armed Forces

- Legal case files
- Letters to the NAACP from ordinary citizens seeking legal assistance
- Case files from the NAACP’s 20 year campaign against discrimination in education, culminating in Brown v. Board of Education
  - Early education cases sought equalization of facilities rather than desegregation.
  - The Education files fully document the key education discrimination cases of McLaurin v. Board of Regents and Sweatt v. Painter. These cases, decided in 1950, involved higher education, and were a key victory on the road to Brown v. Board of Education.
- Case files from the NAACP’s efforts to implement and expand the Brown v. Board of Education decision after 1954, as they took on legal cases regarding discrimination in education throughout the United States
- Voting rights is covered in extensive detail from early cases against the “white primary”, discriminatory registration practices, and the “grandfather clause” to the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965
- Files on the armed forces detail the complaints and inquiries made by NAACP on behalf of Black servicemen
- NAACP efforts regarding employment discrimination include state fair employment practices laws, nondiscrimination clauses in collective bargaining contracts, boycotts of major corporations, and presidential orders requiring equal opportunity in federal contracts

NAACP Papers—The NAACP’s Major Campaigns: Scottsboro, Anti-Lynching, Criminal Justice, Peonage, Labor, and Segregation and Discrimination Complaints and Responses

- A highlight of this module is the records on the Scottsboro case, one of the most celebrated criminal trials of the 20th century
- The NAACP’s campaign for the enactment of anti-lynching legislation is well documented in this module
- Legal cases pertaining to discrimination in the criminal justice system

NAACP Papers—The NAACP’s Major Campaigns: Legal Department Files

- Consists of the working case files of the NAACP’s general counsel and his Legal Department staff for the period from 1956 to 1972
- The files document the NAACP’s aggressive campaign to bring about desegregation throughout the United States, particularly in the South
- In total, this module contains over 600 cases from 34 states and the District of Columbia
- The cases in this module pertain to school desegregation, abuses of police procedure, employment discrimination, freedom of speech, privacy freedom of association, and housing discrimination

Pages 1 and 4 from a 1944 letter from Jackie Robinson requested legal assistance after he was arrested for refusing to leave his seat in a bus at Camp Hood, Texas.

See the collection list under view title list at proquest.com/pdpq/historyvault
NAACP Papers: Special Subjects

- A major highlight of this module is the organizational records and personnel file of the NAACP Legal Department itself, featuring a large subseries on Thurgood Marshall
- NAACP’s campaign to remove the “Birth of a Nation” movie from movie theaters
- Prison conditions throughout the United States
- Documentation on voting rights school desegregation, urban riots, and the War on Poverty
- Prosecution of conscientious objectors during World War II
- Vigilante violence and economic retaliation against Blacks in Mississippi in the 1950s

NAACP Papers: Branch Department, Branch Files and Youth Department Files

- NAACP branch files in this module chronicle the local heroes of the civil rights revolution via NAACP branches throughout the United States, from 1913-1972
- The contributions of scores of local leaders—attorneys, community organizers, financial benefactors, students, mothers, school teachers, and other participants—are revealed in these records
- Virtually every major topic in the history of the NAACP is touched on here: investigations of lynchings; campaigns for voting rights and against employment discrimination, police brutality, and the abusive use of federal slum clearance projects; and the fight against Jim Crow laws
- Documents typically consist of correspondence between branch and national offices, with reports to the secretary of branches, requests for legal assistance, minutes of branch meetings, and financial reports

- The Branch Files for 1956-1965 place NAACP local branches in the midst of 1960s political activism
  - The records cover:
    - Hundreds of local civil rights cases inspired by the Brown v. Board of Education ruling
    - Voter registration and voter turnout drives
    - Campaigns for local fair housing and fair employment statutes
    - Efforts to influence policies of local boards of education and local housing authorities
    - Pressuring local congressmen to support federal civil rights
Black Freedom Struggle in the 20th Century: Federal Government Records

- Federal government records on civil rights
- Department of Justice files on lynching, the push for antilynching legislation, and the civil rights movement
- Commission on Civil Rights coverage of discrimination in education and police brutality
- Response of law enforcement to civil rights demonstrators
- FBI files (civil liberties, privacy, use of government surveillance)
- Kerner Commission files and 1960s riots
- President Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights—the committee called on the federal government to take the lead for civil rights reform, and provided 34 far-reaching recommendations for specific national, state, and local action. With the PCCR report as inspiration, Truman would present, within a year, a Special Message on Civil Rights to Congress and issue executive orders to eliminate discrimination from the United States civil service and armed forces
- Peonage cases (forced labor)

Black Freedom Struggle in the 20th Century: Organizational Records and Personal Papers, Part 1

- A. Philip Randolph Papers, documenting Randolph’s role in the fight for legal equality and economic rights
- Bayard Rustin Papers, documenting the career of this behind-the-scenes activist who served as a key adviser to A. Philip Randolph and Martin Luther King Jr. Rustin’s Papers also include files on labor law reform
- Southern Christian Leadership Conference voting rights files; use of public demonstrations to effect legislative change
- Documentation on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and March on Washington (one march goal was civil rights legislation)

Black Freedom Struggle in the 20th Century: Organizational Records and Personal Papers, Part 2

- Features the records of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)
- The SNCC collection includes correspondence, project files, internal reports, and printed materials generated by the SNCC organization as it challenged racial barriers, faced internal crises, and sought a leadership role in the fight for desegregation, voting rights, and Black power.

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From Commission on Civil Rights files on police brutality

First page from annual report of the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division

See the collection list under view title list at proquest.com/pdq/historyvault
• Legal issues in the Congress of Racial Equality collection are centered on CORE’s Scholarship, Education and Defense Fund for Racial Equality (SEDFRE).
  - The records of SEDFRE’s Legal Department consist of the correspondence of CORE general counsel Carl Rachlin; general correspondence of the department; general administrative records; extensive case files concerning legal cases litigated by SEDFRE; case files from numerous civil rights cases not conducted by SEDFRE, but which were kept for reference and research purposes; complaints and requests to SEDFRE for legal assistance; housing and rent strike cases; and papers from undeveloped legal cases.
  - Most of the cases litigated by SEDFRE involve CORE civil rights workers in the South, cases brought against CORE itself, and various civil rights “test” cases (i.e. testing the availability of public accommodations, federal school desegregation, equal opportunities, and voting rights legislation). Other cases pertain to welfare rights, housing and employment discrimination, and public accommodations in northern urban areas, and the many arrests and legal action stemming from the civil rights demonstrations at the 1964 New York World’s Fair.

• Congressman Arthur W. Mitchell Papers
  - Mitchell ran in the Illinois 1st Congressional District against incumbent Oscar De Priest, and on November 6, 1934 was elected as the first Black American Democrat in the U.S. Congress. In Congress, Mitchell became an important champion of President Roosevelt’s New Deal.

From early on as Congressman, Mitchell proposed anti-lynching legislation—legislation that was criticized as weak and ineffective by the NAACP, the start of a long, often prickly relationship with that organization and also the Black American press. A second civil rights issue that would become a cornerstone of his career in Congress stemmed from a personal experience of racial discrimination aboard an interstate passenger train service in 1937. In Mitchell v. Lowden and later Mitchell v. U.S., the Congressman pursued, at his own expense, legal challenges to the Jim Crow practices of railroads operating under the Interstate Commerce Act.

• Ford administration files of Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department detail the implementation of federal civil rights law from 1973 through 1977, and, therefore, are an important complement to the other Black Freedom modules that focus on the campaigns that led to the passage of landmark civil rights legislation.
• Reagan administration documents in this module cover affirmative action, the Bob Jones University and Grove City College discrimination cases, busing and school desegregation, fair housing, the passage of legislation for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988 and the Voting Rights Act of 1992.

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Highlights of the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division in 1972, from the files of Assistant Attorney General J. Stanley Pottinger, in Civil Rights during the Ford Administration, Folder 105947-006-0264
Slavery and Southern Life

Slavery and the Law

- Treatment of slaves as people and property proves an interesting juxtaposition between the fact that they could be bought and sold but were also subject to taxation.
- Allow for students to study the question of how did slavery and the law interact?
- Petitions to Southern courts and legislatures—insight/firsthand evidence into the legal actions and considerations of the time.
- Divorce petitions.
- State Slavery Statutes, 1789-1865.

Women's Studies

Struggle for Women's Rights, 1880-1990: Organizational Records

- Women's Action Alliance (women's rights, child care, employment law, health care, child care).
- National Woman's Party Papers chronicle the campaign for the suffrage amendment from 1913-1920.
- National Woman's Party proposed the first draft of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923. For the next 50 years, it fought a determined but ultimately unsuccessful campaign for the passage of this amendment.
- Study how social movements influence Federal legislation and lobbying.

Women's Studies Manuscript Collections from the Schlesinger Library: Voting Rights, National Politics, and Reproductive Rights

- Fascinating collections on voting rights, national politics and reproductive rights.
- Collections include:
  - Helen Gardener, the extraordinary NAWSA lobbyist whose ability to influence members of Congress would make many highly paid modern lobbyists look like amateurs.
  - Florence Allen, the first woman to sit on the Ohio Supreme Court, and the first on the United States Court of Appeals.
  - Alice Stone Blackwell, daughter of Lucy Stone and architect of the 1890 merger of suffrage organizations.
  - Harriet Laidlaw, who was involved in the suffrage movement in New York, band was a key figure in the birth control movement, the international peace movement, and the Consumers' League.
  - Interviews regarding family planning and reproductive rights, including interview with Estelle Griswold (of Griswold v. Connecticut).
  - Papers of Mary Ware Dennett, a pioneering activist for reproductive rights.
Women at Work during World War II: Rosie the Riveter and the Women’s Army Corps

- Two major sets of records documenting the experience of American women during World War II: Records of the Women’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, and Correspondence of the Director of the Women’s Army Corps
- The Correspondence of the Director of the Women’s Army Corps, 1942-1946 documents the women who joined and served in the Women’s Army Corps (WAC, known as the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps [WAAC] from May 1942 until July 1943) during World War II
- Every topic of importance to the WAC is covered in the correspondence, with an emphasis on issues such as recruiting, public support for the WAC, personnel matters like discipline and conduct, and race
- Personnel matters covered include a series of records arranged in alphabetical order by last name of the WAC officer or enlisted person being discussed. These records provide researchers with invaluable information on codes of conduct under which WAC personnel were expected to operate. Documents include investigation reports and exhaustive witness testimony transcripts. Among the topics covered are alleged violations for abuse of alcohol, being absent without leave (AWOL), or sexual misconduct. A file of courts-martial contains additional material related to discipline.

Thomas A. Edison Papers

- Thomas A. Edison Papers documents the life, work, and vision of Thomas Edison in laboratory notebooks, diaries, business records, correspondence, and related materials. Inventor, businessman, scientist, industrialist, entrepreneur, engineer, Thomas Alva Edison developed many of the technologies that have shaped the modern world. Perhaps more than anyone else, Edison integrated the worlds of science, technology, business, and finance; and his work laid the foundation for the age of electricity, recorded sound, and motion pictures.
- Between 1869 and 1933 the U.S. Patent Office issued 1,093 patents to Edison. The complete set of Edison’s patents appears in chronological order by issue date. Reissued patents follow immediately after their associated patent
- The Thomas A. Edison Papers also include a litigation series that contains records relating to civil court litigation, along with records of Patent Office interferences, which are similar in many respects to litigation

Political and Diplomatic History and International Relations

American Indians and the American West, 1809-1971

- This module focuses on the interactions between American Indians, white settlers, and the U.S. federal government in the 19th century, as well as records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the 20th century
- A series of “Letters Received by the Attorney General” spans from 1809-1884, and chronicles the implementation of a federal law enforcement system in the states west of the Mississippi River
- “U.S. Army in the Era of Indian Removal: Case Files of Military Courts and Commissions” documents military courts of inquiry centering on questions of tactical missteps in the Creek Campaign, Florida Campaign, and Cherokee removals of 1835-1837, violent interactions between white and American Indian populations in the 1860s and 1870s, and a series of courts-martial of military officers in the 1870s-1880s
Immigration: Records of the INS, 1880-1930

- Presents the investigations made by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) during the massive immigration wave at the turn of the 20th century
- During these years, the Bureau of Immigration performed several law enforcement related functions in its work regarding prostitution and white slavery, and suppression of alien radicals
- Among the interesting documents pertaining to prostitution and white slavery are the investigation files of Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization inspectors such as Helen Bullis, Frank Gabarino, Earl Coe, and David Lehrhaupt who, in cooperation with local authorities, raided houses of prostitution in cities such as New York, Detroit, Buffalo, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, searching for immigrants within three years of arrival who could be deported on grounds of moral turpitude and in violation of the 1907 Immigration Act
- The files on suppression of radical aliens document a number of notable figures, including Luigi Galleani, George Andreytchine, Giovanni Baldazzi, Emma Goldman, and Salvatore Schillaci. On the government side, notable correspondents include Commissioner General of Immigration Anthony Caminetti, Assistant Secretary of Labor Louis F. Post, and J. Edgar Hoover (at the time Special Assistant to the Attorney General)

Law and Society since the Civil War: American Legal Manuscripts from the Harvard Law School Library

- A murder case that attracted worldwide attention, behind-the-scenes correspondence of Supreme Court Justices from the landmark Brown v. Board of Education case, and the Civil War diaries and correspondence of Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.
  These are just three examples of the fascinating material in this module
- This module consists of 11 collections from the Harvard Law School Library, highlighting three Supreme Court Justices, the first Black federal judge, high-profile cases, and insights into developing ideologies and laws, as far back as 1861 with the Papers of Oliver Wendell Holmes, which span from the Civil War to the Great Depression
- The Papers of Louis D. Brandeis and Felix Frankfurter provide a behind-the-scenes view of the Supreme Court between 1919 and 1961. The Frankfurter Papers are of special note because they reveal how the Supreme Court approached the Brown v. Board of Education decision, the landmark school desegregation case that is well documented in other History Vault modules
- The murder case covered in this module is the Sacco and Vanzetti case. Italian immigrant laborers and philosophical anarchists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were accused of the 1920 murder of a paymaster and his guard in South Braintree, Massachusetts
FBI Confidential Files and Radical Politics in the U.S., 1945-1972

- Under the leadership of J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI vigorously investigated and tracked the activities of Communist groups, Communist-front groups, and other radical organizations in the United States.
- This module highlights issues of government surveillance and civil liberties.
- Highlights of this module include J. Edgar Hoover’s office files; documentation on the FBI’s so-called “black bag jobs,” as they were called before being renamed “surreptitious entries” and the “Do Not File” File.
  - The “Do Not File” file consists of records that were originally supposed to be destroyed on FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover’s order, however, through both intended and inadvertent exceptions to this order, large portions of these files survived.
  - The “Do Not File” Files offers insights into FBI policies and priorities at the highest level, the scope of the bureau’s investigations of subversives, the purposes of investigations of both liberal and conservative activists, and the bureau’s relationships with other intelligence agencies.
  - The most prominent subjects covered in the “Surreptitious Entries” file pertain to the Socialist Workers Party and the Weather Underground, both dating from the early 1970s.
- Another key collection in this module consists of the records of the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB). The SACB files constitute one of the most valuable resources for the study of left-wing radicalism during the 1950s and 1960s.

Workers, Labor Unions, and the American Left in the 20th Century: Federal Records

- A wide range of collections documenting the American workers and labor unions in the 20th century, with a special emphasis on the interaction between workers and the U.S. federal government.
- Highlights include:
  - Strike Files of the U.S. Department of Justice provides a remarkably complete record of the Department of Justice’s evolving policies of intervention in labor disputes and documentation on the major strikes during the period from 1894-1920.
  - Papers of the President’s Mediation Commission cover labor struggles by Arizona and Montana copper miners, the infamous deportation of Industrial Workers of the World-affiliated miners in Arizona in July 1917, and the tumultuous situation among workers in the Chicago meat-packing industry.
  - Government surveillance files consist of U.S. Military Intelligence Reports on radicals from 1917-1941 and Department of Justice investigations of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the Communist Party, and the use of military force by the federal government in domestic disturbances between 1900 and 1938.
  - Other collections in this module cover labor strife during World War II, and records on migratory labor in the 1950s and 1960s.

Page from testimony in the Sacco-Vanzetti case
World War II: U.S. Documents on Planning, Operations, Intelligence, Axis War Crimes, and Refugees

- Files on Evacuation of the Japanese from the West Coast
- FBI Files on the case of Tokyo Rose
- Nuremberg War Crimes trials documents from the Office of United States Chief of Counsel For Prosecution of Axis Criminality

American Politics and Society from JFK to Watergate, 1960-1975

- Official transcripts of proceedings in the four major Watergate trials
- War on Poverty
- Administrative history of the Department of Justice
- Church Committee investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy
- Presidential commissions on women’s rights, violence, law enforcement, and campus unrest
- Records of the Department of Justice Cabinet Committee on Drug Law Enforcement
- FBI files on the American Indian Movement and on the Weather Underground Organization
- FBI files on White Supremacist Organizations
- Records of the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse, 1970-1973
- Records on U.S. Army Surveillance of “dissidents” from 1965-1972

Vietnam War and American Foreign Policy, 1960-1975

- War crimes (My Lai Massacre)

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