



San Antonio College Black History Month Essay Contest 2016

The 2016 National Theme: Hallowed Grounds: Sites of African American Memories
1st prize: \$500; 2nd prize: \$250; 3rd prize: \$150; 2 Honorable Mentions: \$50 each.

Requirements:

Participating STUDENTS must be currently enrolled in at least 6 hours at San Antonio College, with a 2.0 GPA.

The essay is a research based analysis, at least 850 words in length, which integrates a minimum of 5 (five) historic and scholarly sources into the text. Some possible sources include – but are not limited to – newspaper articles, interviews, any sort of testimony by individuals directly involved, books, articles, court cases, police reports, memoirs, and magazines; remember that library resources are more reliable than general internet sources.

Please be as specific as possible with examples. Formal writing conventions such as intro, body, conclusion – although necessary – should take on less importance than the coherence, clarity, form, structure, and specificity of your essay. Answer the prompt to the best of your ability. The essay must be double-spaced, 11 or 12 point type, Calibri or Times New Roman.

Use MLA Manuscript style, a sample of which is found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUQMKaNcCw>; likewise all parenthetical and Works Cited page citations must reflect Modern Language Association (MLA) style, one of many styles used in the Humanities.

DEADLINE: Submit as a rich text file (rtf) to Jane Focht-Hansen (jfocht-hansen@alamo.edu) by Wednesday, February 17, 2016, 5 pm.

Include a cover sheet providing your name, Banner ID, last 4 digits of SSN, a current phone number, and an e-mail address that you check frequently. DO NOT include your name in a header.

You may work with a Writing Center tutor, consult your professors, and seek assistance in your research from a SAC librarian.

Choose ONE of the prompts below:

1. James Weldon Johnson wrote the lyrics for “Lift Every Voice and Sing” in 1900 as part of a celebration for Abraham Lincoln’s birthday. J. Rosamund Johnson composed the music. The brothers’ work eventually became known as The Negro National Anthem. The Johnsons intended the inspirational song to serve as a musical protest against the humiliating conditions of Jim Crow and the wave of racial lynchings that swept the country. It is said that this song revived the flagging spirits of the Negro 366th Infantry Combat regiment in Italy

during WW II. What are the long reaching effects of this enduring song and how might we learn from the contexts of its history? In what ways does this historical text reflect the concept of Hallowed Grounds: Sites of African American Memories?

2. In 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation declared all slaves free, but freedom was a slow process in reaching all the regions of the U.S. due to limited communication and supportive reinforcement by federal troops. On June 19, 1865, Union troops landed in Galveston, Texas sharing the news that the war had ended and all slaves were free. General Order Number 3, which read in part, "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor." First celebrated in 1867, Juneteenth remembers former slaves and their descendants. What were the complications former slaves endured in coming to terms with personal rights and rights of property during the next 100 years? How did Texas' African-Americans surmount the conflicts and contradictions surrounding their freedom, and what far reaching effects are related to Juneteenth? How might this particular memory be important for African- Americans, for all Americans?
3. Scholars note that Hollywood is almost wholly responsible for expunging black cowboys from American history. The role of the Black Cowboy in settling the territory west of the Mississippi during the nineteenth century presents racial and ethnic complexity as well as triumph. More than one-third of the cowboys who worked on ranches and cattle trails were African American. Bill Pickett (c1870-1932) is one of these cowboys. Discuss the function and importance of Black Cowboys in the South Texas Cattle Trade, their relationships with each other in the tri-ethnic area of Texas adjoining Mexico where the cattle business was king, and the conflicts they surmounted. Why should the icon of the Black Cowboy remain an important feature of historical memory?
4. Listed on the National Register of Historical Places, the Menger Soap Works was built in 1850 on the west bank of San Pedro Creek, less than a half mile from the San Antonio River, now a leasing office for an apartment complex. Between 1868 and 1873, it was rented for \$15 per month to "Colored Methodist" and African Methodist Episcopal (A. M. E.) church congregations founded by former slaves. These congregations developed to serve African American communities within one mile of Main Plaza, on the west side of the city. Successors of these original Black congregations still survive in San Antonio, approaching their 150 year anniversaries. Trace the histories of these congregations, their members, their impact on the city of San Antonio, and their continuing impact on its citizens and congregations. What indeed will their memories teach us?