

National History Day 2020

The Transcontinental Railroad: Breaking Barriers from East To West

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Senior Division

Group Website

1,200 Student-Composed Words

4 Minutes of Multimedia

500 Word Process Paper

Process Paper

National History Day is always a fun but stressful time of the year. There's always the camaraderie when we work as a group; with so many different perspectives, each of us has the ability to interpret the project and its topic in so many ways. The website category also allows us to work on the project without having to be at the same time and place with our busy schedules. Overall, this website has allowed us to open our eyes and discover the many barriers broken in American history.

Deciding on a topic that went with a theme was somewhat difficult this year. We didn't want something too broad or too specific. With either of those outcomes results in a lack or overabundance of research material. The Transcontinental Railroad broke a multitude of barriers. It physically linked the nation, boring through harsh mountains, flat plains, and dense forest with miles upon miles of track. It broke communication barriers, allowing the rapid transportation of letters and information. Socially, it connected America as it became the East and the West, and allowed the price of migration to become affordable. Many Americans were able to seek a new life without having to travel six months by land or a few weeks by boat around South America.

This year, we tried to pull resources from a variety of formats, to include websites, books, newspapers, films, etc. A big help was using our local library's online catalog, as well as finding primary sources through the Library of Congress' Website. As we have done in the past, we began the writeup of the website's text first. This makes the process go quicker as we don't have to navigate through multiple pages to change a word or two. As we went along with research, we made sure to cite as we went; it is difficult to compile the annotated bibliography all in one fell swoop.

The most difficult portion of the project this year was actually building the website. Design is very important when it comes to the presentation of information. The transition from Weebly to NHDWebCentral was problematic sometimes; missing features or bugs in the system required us to find creative workarounds in order to accomplish what we wanted to do. The challenge actually helped us learn about the basics of web design; we can apply this knowledge to our fields of study. All in all, we are proud of the way the project turned out with the tools we were given.

The past four years of High School have been a whirlwind of our lives, but National History Day has been the one event that remains set in stone. We have always looked to this competition because it broadens our knowledge of history and allows us to incorporate volumes of information. And, of course, it challenges us to be compendious and competitive. Now, for our fourth and final year of participation, we present our last website, The Transcontinental Railroad: Breaking Barriers from East To West.