PROCESS PAPER

Why I Chose the Topic

The topic that I have chosen that best fits the National History Day theme of: Rights and Responsibilities in History, is Centralia: A Town Built and Destroyed By Coal. As a citizen of Pennsylvania, I have chosen this topic because I have always heard about Centralia, but I never had the chance to really learn about what it really is, what caused it, and how it has affected the people living there.

How I Conducted My Research

I began my research by looking for online articles, photographs, and movie clips on Centralia that would give me a basic understanding of my topic, and the more important details in order to help me tie Centralia to the National History Day topic. I then took my research to the next step and visited the Bishop McDevitt High School Library. I picked up a few books on Centralia, and learned how the fire affected the rights and responsibilities of the citizens living there. The books gave me many ideas on which topics to research further and which topics I needed to understand better. To continue my research, I checked the Dauphin County Library and found more books and articles on specific topics that were previously researched. Once I felt I had a good enough understanding of the research I conducted, I began to organize my research as to how I would like to use it on my website in order to best explain Centralia’s significance and how it relates to the National History Day topic.

How I Created and Developed My Website

I decided that the best way to express the significance of Centralia was to create a website for my National History Day project. By creating a website, I could visually explain and portray important events and developments surrounding Centralia to the viewer. The viewer would then be able to read the information given on each individual page, as well as to see the pictures and images that correspond with them. I brought this idea to life by first laying out my website design by organizing and separating different key elements according to their category. Each page would introduce a new component about Centralia in relation to the National History Day theme.

How My Project Relates to the Theme

My topic of Centralia: A Town Built and Destroyed By Coal relates to the National History Day theme: Rights and Responsibilities in History, because although the residents of Centralia have the right to own property and live there, it is their responsibility, as well as the state’s, to keep them safe from danger or any possible harm from the underground fire that had been burning for more than fifty years. The rights and responsibilities of the American individual as well as the government are portrayed through the burning “Hell-town” of Centralia when many citizens flee the site for their safety and to avoid dangerous situations. The individual citizens’ rights were trumped by the government’s responsibility to protect them by banning them from residing there.