

Process Paper

For this year's theme, frontiers in history, I mainly had one idea come to mind. I knew I wanted to do something pertaining to medicine, because I am very passionate about it. Before finally committing to healthcare, I considered other alternatives, but I felt there were no other ideas that I was truly inspired by. I then began thinking of a subtopic I could research, and I began to think of women's suffrage and women's rights. I then ultimately committed myself to doing women in healthcare. By discussing foundations of healthcare and women's education, I would be differentiated from any other students choosing to research medicine or the 19th amendment.

After choosing my topic, I began to search for pioneers in women's healthcare that could be relevant to what I wanted to discuss. I wanted someone that was easy to find sources for, and I wanted someone that not only changed the face of medicine in America, but women's rights to an education. I quickly found out that Elizabeth Blackwell was the first woman in American history to get an education to become a doctor. I then found out she educated other women and opened her own foundations for healthcare. This ultimately gave me reason to choose her. Given my thesis, which I came up with before having my pioneers chosen, I then decided to do more than one woman, because it gave my project more variation, educated people more about women in America, and prevented my project from becoming too repetitive. I then chose Clara Barton, as she was very passionate about women's rights as well as helping soldiers in the Civil War. She also started an important foundation for American healthcare, the American Red Cross.

I began to conduct my research, and I gathered a bit over forty sources before committing to starting my website. I began looking for quotations, because I knew of the word limit and knew I would have to prove my point using less of my own words and the words of others. I knew if I could get someone to prove my point for me, it was the best option. I concentrated on collecting both modern information and as many primary sources from the 1800s as well. I focused on using old newspapers, photographs, illustrations, and court testimonies and interviews.

I decided to use the website for my project because it was versatile, and could be worked on at any time. I am not quite fond of presenting, so documentaries and the performance were out of the question. Our class was also limited in the sense that we could not do the research paper, but I ultimately didn't mind because the website sounded more appealing.

My project is heavily linked to the category as well. As I understood the theme, it seemed to me that it was "the extreme limit of understanding or achievement in a particular area." In which I chose achievements by women in medicine and women's education.