

Marching Towards the 19th Amendment: The 1913 Women's Suffrage Parade

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Ever since I learned about feminism and the women's rights movement, I felt as though I needed to make my own contribution. Naturally, when History Day began this year, I considered topics based around feminist concepts. Since the History Day theme is "Communication in History", I started researching women's rights protests. The 1913 Parade jumped out at me because it was so close to the ratification of the 19th Amendment. This parade was also fairly well known and I knew there would be enough sources for me to put together a project.

Due to the COVID-19 virus, I did my research solely on the internet. I started by looking at basic websites which summarized the events of the parade. After looking at enough of these sites, I began a research outline. This outline described the different topics I wanted to research in-depth. I looked for primary sources, including newspapers and photographs, to build upon these topics. I also looked for longer websites from more trustworthy sources. One of my most used websites was the Library of Congress. Unfortunately, since this parade took place over 100 years ago, I wasn't able to gather any interviews or video footage.

After I finished my research, I began writing on a Google Doc. I continued to revise it and add more information over time. Finally, I started my website. I began the design by choosing theme colors. Purple, green, and white are recognized as the colors representing women's equality. Next, I organized the text I had written on my Google Doc into pages. I copied my writing onto these pages. Then I began adding pictures and quotes in order to break up the text. After a couple finishing touches, I was done with my website. I feel that my technology skills have improved through this experience. I wasn't used to the Web Central program but by the end of the project, it was easy to manipulate.

This year's History Day theme is "Communication in History". The 1913 Women's Parade relates to this topic because it communicated to the country the importance of women's suffrage. The press and media were all over the parade. Suffragettes across the country were inspired and the movement thrived. There was also communication between the women in order to plan the parade. Supporters needed to be aware of the upcoming event in order to participate. Lastly, the spectators communicated their opposition to the women's suffrage movement through violent acts and insults.

As I continued to research and build my website, I developed so much respect for these women. I cannot imagine how difficult it must have been to stand against hundreds of thousands of spectators, most of whom did not support their cause. The right to vote is something I had not fully appreciated. It makes a person an individual. It gives them the right to a political opinion outside their family and community. Without the promise of this right, I would feel at a loss of identity.