

Process Paper

This year when it came time to choose a topic that fit within the theme we had a harder time. In the past, we have been interested in topics that happened to already fit the theme however, we found it would be different this time. We have been doing NHD for several years and wanted to stray away from wars and common topics and focus on an individual. While researching topics we came across the National Women's History Museum page and decided to look for ideas there, which is where we came across Rachel Carson. We were immediately drawn to her story and had briefly studied her work in middle school, but had always been interested in studying her life further. In choosing this topic we combined our favorite things, women's history, and environmental science.

Because of the pandemic, we had to approach our research methods in a new way. Instead of venturing to our local and school libraries we found books online and then figured which ones were best suited for our needs. Subsequently, since we chose such a well-known person for our topic, we found an excess of sources and information. This made it difficult to narrow down our material to find the most informative and credible sources. We continued our research by finding primary and secondary sources such as archived newspaper articles, websites, photographs, and many other sources. After watching documentaries, interviews, and reading books we found potential interviewees and after many emails, spoke to David Kinklea, author and environmental historian.

For this year's project, our group decided to create a website as both of us had used it in the past. We had already faced the learning curve of navigating the new website creator NHD WebCentral and found the design process smooth and easy. Due to the pandemic, we were unable to meet in person as a group frequently, but we found that working on a website made it easier to collaborate and share our ideas. In the beginning, we picked a theme for the website and once sufficient research had been gathered, we started to assemble. We used pictures, quotes, audio, and video clips, and our text to convey what we had learned.

The theme, "Communication in History," challenged us but was also something new and exciting to work with. We chose Rachel Carson and how she communicated the dangers of pesticides because it matched with the theme so perfectly. Carson had the ability to present scientific topics to the public while keeping them engaged and interested. Through her book *Silent Spring*, she was able to tell the public about the damage that pesticides were causing to the environment and the detriment they would eventually have on human health. She helped to launch an environmental movement that has inspired and continues to inspire change today. While it may not be the same fight, we are still on a mission to keep the planet and all its living beings alive today.