

## **Process Paper**

The impetus behind our project occurred during the summer of 2020. One of our members participated in a course at the University of Chicago, and her professor provided her with a source that sparked this project: the NAACP Appeal to the World. Inspired, she took the source to her history teacher, who suggested that the Appeal to the World would be a fantastic lynchpin of a NHD project focused on the civil rights of African-Americans. After all, the Appeal to the World is a primary source, illustrating how African-Americans attempted to communicate the facets of their immense difficulties to the United Nations and the world.

Our research was built around the NAACP Appeal, but we prioritized variety over similarity. Rather than finding sources that would concur with each other and the Appeal, we, determined finding sources depicting the nuance and diversity of the Civil Rights Movement, would provide a richer argument. The decision to compare the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter movement came about after finding sources for the Civil Rights Movement. We committed to earnestly observing the nature of the Black Lives Matter movement so that our evidence would drive our thesis, and we discovered similarities between the two despite the advances in technological communication.

Given the state of our country, all of our work was conducted over Zoom. All of our members participated in NHD prior, but this was the first time we created an NHD project entirely online. Ironically, communication in creating this project was key, whether it be over text message or video conferencing software. Thanks to our familiarity with NHD, however, the creation of our project went relatively smoothly with a few unsurprising minor bumps here and there.

Our historical argument spans the entire history of the United States. We all realized the US goes through trends regarding racism: from a high-level perspective, the cycle goes as oppression, progress, and then regression. We argue that the US started with a society reliant on the oppression of blacks, began to make progress favoring African-Americans, then used various methods, most of which are false and spark fear, to ensure such progress would be undone. For example: oppression (slavery), then progress (Civil War), then regression buried in falsified narratives (Birth of a Nation), then oppression (Jim Crow), then progress (Civil Rights Movement), and so on. So long as methods are used to cultivate fear against African-Americans, whether it be the War on Drugs, Birth of a Nation, or police profiling, we believe racial progress in the US remains impossible.

Our topic is inexpressibly crucial to our country's history and present. Systemic racism in our country has plagued our economic, cultural, and social narratives from the very beginnings of the United States. We believe finding justice and equity for all in the US is what will help us achieve democracy at its finest, and we hope that by thinking critically about this problem, our society may begin turning the tides of racism for the better.