

McKenzie Botbol

National History Day Process Paper

In order to begin the project, I started by generally researching big “breakthrough” events that have happened in history. In addition to this, I spoke with my family and friends to see what ideas they had. One event that my stepmom told me about really caught my interest. She told me about a woman who swam from Alaska to the Soviet Union right in the middle of the Cold War. Immediately, this outshone all of the other ideas, as I myself am on the swim team at school, and I was deeply interested. This is how I decided I would research Lynne Cox and her historic swim.

As I began researching, I chose to start with background information on the Cold War. I used about two secondary resources to gain a basic understanding of the war and then began going into databases to find primary resources relating to big events. In addition to this, I read letters between the leaders of the United States and Soviet Union and addresses given by the presidents. After this, I began researching the actual details of the swim and listened to interviews of Lynne Cox. I used a variety of primary and secondary sources to learn about the swim and to find pictures of the event. Lastly, I researched the effects of the swim and the relationship between the United States and Russia now. Throughout my research, I kept a list of sources and how I used them along with a document containing all of the facts I found.

In order to select my presentation category, I used the National History Day rule book to look in depth at the types of projects and see which stood out to me. I decided on creating a website, as I understand technology well and thought it would be a good way to express my

creativity while keeping the focus on the facts of the event. To create my project, I used my research to divide the website into three total sections: a background history on the Cold War, the details of the event, and the effects of the swim on relations between the United States and Russia. From there, I wrote about the important information I found in my research and added in pictures for context.

My project relates to the theme of “Breaking Barriers” as this swim opened the border between the United States and the Soviet Union for the first time in 48 years and right at the height of the Cold War. The two countries had been at a war of ideals for years and Lynne Cox was able to show how close they really were by swimming through extremely cold waters and shaking the hands of Soviet citizens. In addition to this, no one had ever been recorded to swim the waters of the Bering Strait, making this historical event one of a kind.