

When we first heard “Communication in History: The Key to Understanding” would be our History Day theme, we wondered how many topic ideas there could be. Then, we came across the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. We learned about the wireless telegraph and the miscommunication that occurred aboard the ship; immediately, we knew our project. The challenge of this theme was enjoyable because it allowed us to dive deeper into the Titanic. The sinking of the Titanic broadcasted the need for changes in safety, resulting in key safety reforms, improved regulations at sea, and strengthened laws for the safety of every passenger onboard a vessel.

The pandemic prevented a trip to the Cleveland Public Library, an excellent resource for primary sources. Instead, we found many of our sources online. One source was *The Titanic Disaster Hearings: The Official Transcripts of the 1912 Senate Investigation*, which allowed us to analyze the investigation that took place after the sinking. We learned about the reaction of the ship owner, which gave us more insight because it was a firsthand account. Our most important source was an interview with Lieutenant Donald Rudnickas of the International Ice Patrol. To avoid a similar disaster to the Titanic, the Ice Patrol was formed in 1912 to patrol for ice and communicate the location of ice to other ships, using aircrafts and satellite radar. Lieutenant Rudnickas enlightened our group about how the seas have changed and how he has been part of that experience.

To begin the process of making a website, we wrote research papers containing our notes. From the papers, we extracted key points and turned them into different pages for a website plan. Most of our group was inexperienced with making websites, so we watched tutorial videos on how to use the NHD Website Builder. At first, navigating the website was tricky but, with time,

we learned all of its functions. The most difficult part of our project was keeping the word count down to the crucial information readers would need to understand our topic. We compiled quotes from websites and found pictures in numerous books. Then, we polished our website, changing font styles, sizes, and background colors. After qualifying for the state competition, we addressed the judges' feedback. The same step was repeated for moving on to the national competition. We mostly edited our website information, bibliography, and process paper.

The Titanic was a beauty destined for disaster and a tragedy that revealed to the world how lacking the safety regulations at sea were at the time. Since many races and classes boarded the ship and sank with it, the disaster reached all corners of the world. The misuse of radio technology was the downfall of the ship, but the messages that were sent out were the reason anyone survived. The disaster became the key to understanding the need for new methods of communication that advanced and improved the safety of sea travel for future generations of people and vessels to come.