

History Day Process Paper

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I found my topic in a book called *Minnesota 150: The People, Places, and Things That Shaped Our State* by Kate Roberts. It gave brief descriptions of important historical events that took place in Minnesota. The event that caught my attention the most was the lawsuit of the State of MN versus Phillip Morris Inc. I have always been interested in the law, science and medicine. The case combined all of those interests. The discoveries in the case made me think of the theme.

Through my online research, I found government sources, transcripts, newspapers, and legal documents. I found transcripts of interviews with attorneys and others involved in the case, which gave me a good understanding of who was involved and what role they played.

I added an interview to my project to help me understand the impact of the case and the legal strategies involved. I contacted an attorney from the case, Ms. Roberta Walburn. My personal interview with Ms. Walburn gave me a deeper understanding of the challenges her law firm faced. As well as telling me about her first-hand experience, Ms. Walburn shared documents utilized in the trial.

In preparation for Minnesota History Day, I followed the recommendations from the judging feedback forms and I attended at help-session at the University of Minnesota Library with a History Day Staff member. Specifically, I tied my project more closely to theme, I placed the topic in historical context, and I found more primary sources.

In preparation for National History Day, I conducted two additional interviews. One was with Jeanne Weigum who was deposed at the trial by the Defendants and another with Pat Stieg who works as the Director at the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross Blue Shield. I explored new ways of integrating media and made significant changes to my bibliography by reorganizing it by theme and adding more newspaper sources.

I wanted a kind of presentation that I was comfortable with doing. I chose a website over other presentation categories because the website has a higher word count, which allowed me to tell more of the story, and I could utilize different types of media.

My topic relates to all aspects of the theme. Lawyers for the Plaintiffs encountered new information from previously hidden industry documents. As a result of the case, children were less likely to encounter tobacco. There was a lot of medical exploration into the health effects of tobacco as a result of the lawsuit. Both the state and the tobacco manufacturers had to explore new legal strategies in their attempts to win the case. Documents and other information were exchanged during the case.