

They Also Served: The Rights of Women Airforce Service Pilots

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We began the process of selecting our topic by determining which period of history we wanted to focus on. We narrowed it down to American history and the mid-twentieth century. Then, we brainstormed people and events that we found interesting within this timeframe. Many heroes sprang from World War II; the nurses, the soldiers, the factory workers. We chose to do our project on the overlooked heroes, the Women Airforce Service Pilots. Many of the women who served in the military were underappreciated. Those women had commissions however, while the WASPs did not. The Women Airforce Service Pilots didn't receive military benefits until 30 years later when their rights were recognized.

We began our research online by examining mostly secondary sources for a general idea about what the WASPs did and how they contributed to the war effort. We then selected books from our local library and online that dealt with the WASPs, women in our modern Air Force, and World War II pilots. In order to understand their impact we tried to analyze both WWII gender stereotypes and the inclusion of women in the Air Force long after the WASPs. After gaining valuable information from books and websites, we decided to focus on primary resources that would contribute to proving our thesis. The primary sources were by far the most valuable as we conducted our research.

After beginning our research, we decided that a website would be the best choice for our project. Perhaps the main reason was the need to present media. Images and videos are an essential element in telling the WASPs story. Additionally, we both have enjoyed designing websites for NHD in the past. We each have a great deal of experience working with Weebly, making it the best conveyer of our project.

The National History Day theme for this year is Rights and Responsibilities. Our project directly relates to this theme because it examines the rights that the WASPs should have received but were denied. It also analyzes how the government is/was responsible for taking care of the people who sacrifice their lives to protect and serve their country.