

National History Day 2015 Theme: Leadership and Legacy in History

The Shift of Leadership: The Great Leap Forward

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Individual Website

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Process Paper

One thing that had always appealed to me ever since I was young was modern world history because I loved to read about how countries developed over human history. Upon researching appealing topics for National History Day (NHD) 2015, one idea that popped into my head was doing a creative project that would relate to my Chinese heritage even though I was born in America. Additionally, my family is tied to Mao Zedong's reign by my great-grandfather's death in the Cultural Revolution. During an interview with my grandmother, she said, "My father-in-law did not do anything wrong." She explained that he had slurred speech due to the genetic psychological disorder known as dysarthria. She also stated that no one has any clue how my great-grandfather encountered the Red Guards. In addition, he had never mentioned the situation to anyone. However, the careless Red Guards were not satisfied with his answer, so they abused him verbally, physically, and mentally. He was forced to wear a paper dunce cap decorated with insults while beaten in front of a crowd. No doubt about it, I decided to tie the 2015 NHD theme, Leadership and Legacy in History, to the Great Leap Forward (GLF), the genocide of the Chinese led by Mao.

I started my research on Mao and the GLF by going to several county libraries in Victorville, Apple Valley, and Hesperia. I found out more information about the GLF by checking out many books. Upon learning about Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi, I further researched different individuals and events that took part in Mao's GLF. I also took advantage of my internet access, gaining additional research by citing articles on the GLF, biographies and pictures on significant individuals, and videos/audio on Chinese Communism.

For my NHD project for 2015, I decided that a website was a good choice to present my topic. I could be creative with a website and write in depth about my topic and its thesis.

Additionally, websites can have pictures and videos that back up my research. Websites could also show the different types of content, media, and methods used for research on the GLF.

I constructed my website from NHD Weebly starting with selecting a theme. I then placed in information in chronological order. Alongside the text, I placed relevant pictures of Communism in China. Additionally, I placed in some audio and videos in my website to further support my thesis.

My project relates to the NHD theme, Leadership and Legacy in History, because the GLF changed the leadership of China and China's opinion of Mao. Since he rushed straight to Communism utopia, millions of innocent Chinese died from starvation, suicide, torture, and strain. Once Mao lost his post as chairman after the GLF, Deng and Liu rose to power. This change in leadership was a foreshadowing of Deng's rise as paramount ruler after Mao's death following his Cultural Revolution.