

Process Paper

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When I first began brainstorming ideas for my National History Day project, I looked for historical figures who contributed a great deal to America, but are “unsung heroes.” I first researched people who contributed to women’s rights, but nothing caught my attention. When I found black rights leaders, however, I came across a name I had never heard of before, but contributed much to black society today: Edgar Daniel Nixon. Very few people I spoke to of Edgar Nixon knew his historical background and contributions to our country today. Remarkably, a man who offered such improvement to the black community today is unknown almost, and this man immediately caught my attention. His work in the Montgomery Bus Boycott shocked me, since I knew nothing of him when previously taught about the subject. This man and his contribution led me to selecting him for this project.

In conducting research, I searched for documents and interviews which both related to Edgar Nixon, his life, African American life, and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, since these are well-known themes and events in history that made him stand out as a leader in African American history. I located a 700+ page book relating to civil rights struggles in 4 different Alabamian cities and the black struggles within them, including stories about Nixon, Rosa Parks, and other significant leaders. I found many NAACP and MIA documents which specifically addressed the Montgomery public, the members of the organizations, and the issue of black segregation. These documents, mostly written by MIA president Martin Luther King, Jr., highlight the issues at the time and the resolution of boycotting the Montgomery bus lines.

I selected a website to represent my research because I found it the most effective way to display all of the research I have conducted to complete this project. Unlike the other types of entries, this interactive display allows you to interact with the project, and to “look back” at all of the data collected. Unlike a documentary or presentation, that only happens once, a website allows you to revisit sites multiple times in order to view every aspect of it. For the website, I selected many pictures to signify the main ideas of each part of the webpage. I used Windows Movie Maker to trim some of the video “E.D. Nixon: The Forgotten Hero” to help support my thesis and provide interviews from Rosa Parks, Joe Azbell (Montgomery Advertiser Editor), and E.D. Nixon himself.

This topic relates to “Leadership and Legacy” because E.D. Nixon led the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Alabama’s NAACP, and ultimately the Civil Rights Movement. His actions during the 1950s helped secure the blessings of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. He holds a legacy in successfully promoting the rights of black people, and by convincing Martin Luther King Jr to joining his movement. These two were the significant leaders who in the end won the civil rights battle and secured black constitutional rights.