

Wounded Knee:
Failed Communication

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Group Documentary
Process Paper: 499 words

Our project explores how the press, newspapers and magazine writers, and editors, may have caused the hundreds of deaths at the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890. We picked this topic because we wanted to explore a subject in our vicinity. We like to explore our area's history. At first we thought we would do a documentary on the Pony Express, but we felt this subject had more long-term impact on people, particularly the Oglala and Lakota Sioux.

The topic we picked fits the theme, Communication in History--Key to Understanding because after the Wounded Knee Massacre there was a lot of argument about who was at fault for the hundreds of deaths. Was it the Sioux or was it the U.S. soldiers? We looked at different causes. We really didn't know what we would find at the beginning. Then we saw the way the press flocked to Wounded Knee and reported that the Native American Ghost Dance was a bad thing and that it was a war ritual. Those inflammatory messages caused the soldiers to strike aggressively instead of trying to keep the peace. History shows that the Ghost Dance was a religious ceremony to honor ancestors. This explains that the communication of the newspapers and press may have been the reason for the hundreds of deaths on Wounded Knee Creek in the Pine Ridge Reservation. Ironically, both religious freedom and freedom of the press are part of the First Amendment, and yet the press forgot that entirely.

We picked to do a documentary this year because we did one last year on the Buffalo Soldiers, so we are a little more experienced with it than any other type of project. We also decided on recording a documentary because there are not many others doing a documentary. We like doing something that is a little different.

This year's experience with the project has been quite the roller coaster. When Colton and I started out he was actually going to work on his own project, but since we worked really well together last year we decided to team up again. We spent the first two days searching and arguing between which projects to do, until we agreed on the Wounded Knee Massacre because it is close to where we live and it is something we were both interested in, and something we would like to learn more about.

It got off to a slow start, but once we got the script started all the information just kinda started falling into place. We were about a third of the way done recording when all of a sudden I woke up with a fever. It turned out I had covid-19. Unluckily my partner, Colton had to go to state wrestling with the highschool wrestling team. We did not give up hope though. My teacher figured out a way that I could be quarantined and get the project done at the same time. We made it, and we're proud that we finished it.

Bibliography

Primary:

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“Sting of the Bee: A Day-By-Day Account of Wounded Knee and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890-1891 as Recorded in the Omaha Bee.” Army at Wounded Knee.

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