

John Muir: Leadership and Legacy in Establishing and Preserving National Parks

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Individual Website

The process in which I came up with my NHD topic included many steps. I started out by brainstorming ideas about topics I am interested in such as nature and art. After much debating, I decided to focus on the establishment of National Parks since I have always loved hiking in such places and wondered how someone came up with the idea and initiative of preserving pieces of nature for the enjoyment of future generations. After some research of secondary sources, I discovered that John Muir was a huge figure in the conservation movement and I decided to present his leadership and legacy in the establishment of National Parks. December 2014, I became even more interested in this topic after visiting Yosemite and walking in Muir's footsteps. I also visited Muir's National Historic Home Site in Martinez, California.

Throughout my research process, I utilized many different sources. The first step in this process was when our class met at our public library with historian John Van Dalen who provided us with useful sources and tips on research. Next, I used the internet to find sources pertaining to Muir such as the Sierra Club Website and primary source scans of John Muir's writings. I also watched the series of documentaries and read the book Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns made on John Muir, both helpful secondary sources in further illustrating my topic. One of the most important sources I used were e-mail interviews with writer Dayton Duncan and Professor Bill Swagerty.

In order to organize and present my research, I needed to select a presentation category which would best showcase my topic. I decided to do a website because I felt that I could be creative with emphasizing John Muir's leadership and legacy in establishing National Parks with different photos, videos, colors, and backgrounds. It was easy to organize my research into main topics through tabs at the top of my website so anyone could comprehend factors that greatly

contributed to John Muir's leadership and legacy, even if they did not read through the written material in the tabs.

A very large part of my deciding on a topic was connecting it to the theme of Leadership and Legacy. John Muir was a leader in many ways. He would give numerous lectures to everyday people and greatly inspired them through his recounts of the beauty and grandeur of nature, and evoke these same feelings through his many eloquent writings. Most famous of all, he was a leader to the leader of the United States: Theodore Roosevelt. John Muir guided him through a 3-day camping trip in soon-to-become Yosemite National Park where John Muir influenced Roosevelt to support the protection of nature. John Muir's major legacy is the National Parks in the United States and throughout the world, and also The Sierra Club which he had established to continue preserving his aspirations for the environment.