

A History of Performances

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I had no idea that when I chose to do an individual performance about Alice Paul in sixth grade, I would fall in love with National History Day. In that year I was able to channel my competitive side and my passion of history to create a history project, and, well, the rest is history.

I have studied broader topics including Irene Sendler, a savior of children in the Warsaw Ghetto during War World II, and the Interstate System, to more local topics such as the Missouri Compromise and the Kansas City Massacre. I love learning about history, and in my sophomore year in high school, I decided to focus more on my hometown of Kansas City. I love this city, and really liked learning more about events that happened here.

My favorite part of National History Day is researching. I love going to various places to do my research. Among my favorite places I have gone to have been the Eisenhower Library and the Missouri Valley Special Collections. The best part about researching at destinations like these is being able to look through primary documents that were written during the time of my projects. When I went to the Eisenhower Museum, I loved reading papers that Eisenhower himself had read in the Oval Office.

This year I did a performance entitled "Little People Like Us". My performance portrayed Esther Brown, a native Kansas Citian, and her battle to integrate schools in South Park, a small city nine miles away from downtown

Kansas City. I particularly loved working on this topic because I was able to research a historic event that is not widely known while being able to make a connection about how this was a pivotal turning point in the Civil Rights Movement. To build a solid understanding on this topic, I not only researched dozens of primary documents, but I also interviewed the author of one of my articles. No matter how much joy I get from researching, I also enjoy the process of writing the script. Playing five different characters, I put together a performance portraying Esther Brown's fight to integrate South Park and how this little case had such a tremendous impact on the nation.

My goal was to make it to the national competition at least once, and this year my performance made it! It was a blast taking a project all the way from the Kansas City regionals, through the state competition, to College Park, Maryland. From the opening ceremonies to the awards ceremony, that week in June was the best week of my summer! My favorite part was watching all of the performances. While I did not advance to finals at nationals, I had a great time being surrounded by people who shared the same passion for history as I do, as well as the same enthusiasm for the competition.

National History Day is an amazing program. It has helped me gain confidence in myself and helped me find my passion for history. I am honored to have had the opportunity to represent Missouri at the national competition. I hope as I enter into my senior year of high school I will have the opportunity to represent Missouri again.