Marauders Without Merit: The Luddites in 19th Century Great Britain

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Process Paper

Our interest towards creating a project about the Luddites was sparked through a desire to learn about a unique topic. We wanted to analyze a subject unrelated to the culture we live in daily that would expand our range of thinking and exploration. Therefore, after considering various different topics, we finally decided to select the Industrial Revolution as a broad theme to focus on. After researching about momentous events which occurred during this era, our attention was grasped by fascinating stories of protests and rebells against machinery. The mysterious tales of the Luddite uprising was especially captivating and became our number one choice of possible topics. After discussing this subject over with previous NHD contestants our choice was determined.

During the researching process we searched through an array of various databases, governmental websites, fan sites, text books, documents, and even listened through hour long radio broadcasts to gather information about the Luddites. We took advantage of the available school funded subscription databases, such as EBSCO host and ProQuest Library Researcher and accessed numerous scholarly reports and periodicals. However, the most beneficial and insightful resources were the radio broadcasts and formal lectures. They assisted us with analyses and were defiantly more interesting ways of contemplating information.

In the beginning of our NHD project our focus in media was targeted towards creating a documentary film; mainly because of personal experience in this realm. However, as we examined our topic more closely and evaluated the resources available for creating a 10 minute video, our decision changed. In order to create a successful documentary, film and images must be integrated into the project. However, due to the time period the Luddites emerged in, it was impossible to obtain any original footage on their actions or even the conditions of Britain during that time. Pictures were also a limited resource, the only images available were paintings replicating the events taking place. Therefore, in order to portray our project in a more effective and powerful way we changed our media as a website. Considering, the decent amount of audio and interviews we had gathered about our topic a website seemed the most applicable to present with.

The Luddite revolts and uprising is directly related to this year’s NHD theme because it represents all aspects of revolution, reaction, and reform during the 19th century in Britain. Though, the Industrial Revolution is commonly assumed to be the most significant change in Britain, the Luddite uprising was an equally important, yet unrealized, revolution that occurred during that time as well. Our group wanted to greatly emphasize all three components of the NHD theme by noting that the Luddites were not just another group of rebells, but rather a symbol of change. Their reactions towards the Industrial Revolution not only caused a revolution as well but also led to a momentous reform in Great Britain. All three of these aspects were included in our presentation to clearly show relation to the NHD theme.