History Day in Review

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol7/iss4/34
I first became interested in the History Day contest through my history teacher, Mr. Randy Beutler. I had heard of it before, but I never seriously thought of entering it. Mr. Beutler approached two other students, Ray Harris and Steve Seigler, and me about History Day in late November of 1985. He told us all about the contest and the theme of it, which was, "Conflicts and/or Compromise." It sounded interesting to Ray, Steve, and me, so we decided to enter the contest and try our best at it.

There were several different categories in the contest. They were Historical Paper, Individual Project, Group Project, Individual Performance, Group Performance, and Media Presentation, from which we had to choose one. We decided upon the Media Presentation because we figured that it was one of the harder categories and not very many people would enter it.

The next step was deciding on a topic for our project. We considered many different subjects before choosing the conflict between Clinton and Arapahoe over who should have the county seat of Custer County. We chose this particular topic because it was local and would be easier to research and gather information. We also thought that the judges would appeal more to local history, to which they could relate, rather than national or world history. We decided to make our project a slide projection with the narration on a cassette tape.

We started our research soon after we got back from Christmas Break. The District Contest was to be on March 26, so we didn't have much time.

We obtained most of our information from old newspapers contemporary with the time of the conflict. We used the microfiche at the Al Harris Library on the campus of Southwestern Oklahoma State University and the Clinton Public Library.

Many long hours were spent after school and into the evenings doing research. Along with the microfiche, we used books, files, and old documents. We took pictures of many of the newspapers to use in our slide presentation. We also used some old pictures of the towns of Clinton and Arapahoe during the time of the conflict.

Mr. Beutler knew of two elderly ladies who lived during the time of the conflict. Helen Gossman of Arapahoe and Vesta Cassady of Clinton were both involved in the heated disputes over the county seat. We traveled to Arapahoe and Clinton to interview these two ladies to get a primary source of information. The women were
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