

Nike Missile Sites: The National Security Measure that Sparked Conflict and Compromise

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Process Paper

How did we choose our topic?

While researching potential National History Day topics, we came across Nike Missile Sites. This particular website claimed that there used to be nuclear missiles sites in our town and state during the Cold War. Curious about the issue, we continued researching and realized while they were Cold War relics, the Nike sites were also symbolic of much more. The remaining site infrastructure signified an era where national security was the utmost priority and free and open discourse allowed the nation to be defended against an imminent threat. We considered the close proximity and the little known-historical significance of the topic intriguing, and decided to learn more.

How did we conduct our research?

We first became interested in our topic through the internet, on a Westport blog known as 06880. Dan Woog, author of this post, was contacted. From there, we used database Proquest to find historical newspapers and documents related to the missile sites. We called the Fairfield, Milford and Westport Historical societies to attain newspaper clippings and images relating to the sites. The westport library also provided us with information from their databases. We spoke with Anne Sheffer, the daughter of a prominent Nike site supporter. John Burgeson, a subject matter expert and local veterans like Eric Muth met with us in person and gave a site tour, primary images, a notes packet and a CD about missile sites. We also looked into every NHD-recommended database for more information.

Why did we choose our category and how did we create our project?

We chose to create a website since we are tech savvy students familiar with Weebly. During after-school meetings, we came up with a topic-suting website layout. Often one person worked on the website while the other organized the information. When we were finished conducting our extensive research, we placed this information in the website layout. We added our images, quotes and other add-ons to greatly enhance the project. The last few days were used to finalize the website and produce the final product.

How does our topic relate to the theme?

While our connection to Conflict and Compromise for our topic might not appear to be evident at first glance, the Nike Missile Sites in Connecticut are a prime example of the theme. The military encountered a great deal of conflict between local residents over the placement and other concerns over the missile sites. However, the citizens and the military were able to come together and compromise for national security purposes. This compromise was noticeable from both sides, being that the both put in efforts to compromise with each other. The military compromised by attending to the citizens' requests for the sites. The locals compromised by embracing national security and allowing the army to implement the sites. These efforts clearly demonstrate conflict and compromise being readily apparent in Connecticut Nike missile sites and the Cold War.