

Process Paper

1. How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?

We were considering disasters that altered Chicago, and we eventually narrowed the topic down to influential events that left an impact on Chicago, and decided on the reversal of the Chicago River. The Chicago River caused debate such as the Missouri v. Illinois Supreme Court Case, which demonstrated St. Louis' concerns about the undiplomatic effects it had on other communities. The lack of diplomacy is also presented through the harmful consequences on the sanitation of multiple civilizations that depend on the Mississippi River for a water source or are located downstream. However, the plentiful diplomatic benefits of the Chicago River Reversal for the hygiene and development of Chicago cause the topic to be quite controversial.

2. How did you conduct your research?

We looked for basic information on our topic, and after we determined our claims we researched more to better support our individual claims and overall argument. We utilized multiple reliable sources to retrieve historically accurate and unbiased knowledge on the Chicago River Reversal.

3. How did you conduct your project?

We created an exhibit in which we started with all our information and primary sources, and then proceeded to add textual descriptions of how the evidence displayed connects to our argument afterwards.

4. What is your historical argument?

The reversal of the Chicago River was a controversial architectural achievement that benefitted Chicago in many ways, decreasing cases of water-borne diseases, installing/developing cleaner drinking water, and creating safer waste disposal systems, yet undiplomatically caused sanitation concerns that both increased pollution and disease-based death rates in places downstream on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

5. In what ways is the topic significant to history?

It implemented better sewage systems throughout the city of Chicago, along with allowing Chicago to overcome the health risks and therefore continue to grow and thrive without negatively affecting the progress of industries that relied on the Chicago River for waste disposal.