

Process Paper

I chose my topic by examining events that would relate to me on a personal level. I recently found out that Louisa Catherine Johnson, first lady to John Quincy Adams, was my direct ancestor. I researched her letters to the Adams' family, and found the Missouri Compromise. It fit perfectly into the National History Day theme! I settled into the project, and gave it a twist, so the performance would focus on John Quincy Adams, who was Secretary of State at the time.

I looked on the Chronicling America database to find some valuable sources hidden in American newspapers. I looked on INSPIRE for sources on the other people involved in the Missouri Compromise and how John Quincy interacted with them. I also looked on the National Archives' database, and found his well-kept diary, which helped me not only learn about his opinion, but emulate his manner of speech.

In the process of making my script, I was also cross referencing my words with John Adams' diary. I wanted to try and copy his speaking manners, but this grew difficult. Thus, I tried giving the script a formal air, with a few eighteenth century slang words dropped here and there. I feel like mixing eighteenth century English and present day English was the best way to get my point across clearer. I looked at his Inaugural Address to see how he would address the public, people not in his social circle or family, and I tried to keep his formal ambiance that he used to address the people. I decided that I wanted three people to speak. First, I needed a tour guide to open up the scene. Then Adams would transition in, and I wanted Adams to be alive, and speaking of the event after it happened. Then I would become the narrator, who would explain all the events that happened after Adams' role, and the conclusion.

My topic relates to the National History Day theme, Conflict and Compromise, because the Missouri Compromise was a compromise to resolve a conflict. The conflict was Missouri asking for statehood, and also asking for slaves to be allowed. Unfortunately, the Missouri Compromise was proven as only a temporary fix. As tensions grew in the United States, it reached an all time high when the Dred Scott v. Sandford case reached the Supreme Court. This compromise was stated unlawful in the Supreme Court, due to this case being ruled in Sandford's favor. The compromise said that Maine would be a free state and that Missouri would be a slave state. The court ruled that it was not a federal matter, and the government could not restrict slavery in any state. The Missouri Compromise was overturned with the introduction of the Thirteenth Amendment. This amendment abolished all slavery, in all states, and fixed the problem that was plaguing the nation from its start; the blatant lack of inclusion on the topic of slaveholding within the Constitution of the United States.

