

The St. Valentine's Day Massacre: A Bloody Valentine

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Senior Division

Documentary

Process Paper: 365 Words

Process Paper

Selection of Topic

We chose our topic (The St. Valentine's Day Massacre) for multiple reasons. It is a topic that is rather obscure to the public eye and one that is frequently forgotten about, especially when put into perspective with all of the other things that happened in the 1920s during the Prohibition era. Our topic also correlates to the National History Day 2025 theme of rights and responsibilities quite well, as it shows how the government failed to ensure the safety of the public as well as how it failed to give the public sufficient information during the time of the massacre, and overall during the Prohibition era.

Conduction of Research

We conducted our research by first becoming more knowledgeable with the subject of the St. Valentines massacre by reading books, finding news articles, and searching through documents that could be found on the FBI Archives website. We then began to search for images relating to the massacre, either those that were taken directly after it took place, or those of exhibits relating to the massacre in museums all over the country.

Creation of Documentary

We began creating our documentary by recording our narratives as outlined in the script. After recording our narratives, we inserted images and music from the WikiMedia Commons Public Domain, with those images and music files being primarily ones from pre-1930. We then incorporated transitions and animations to make the documentary look smoother and run more efficiently.

Historical Argument

The St. Valentine's Day Massacre was primarily caused by an increase in government Laissez-Faire policies relating to dangerous gangs and mobs in urban areas, which therefore led to a dramatic decrease in public safety, especially in cities such as Chicago. The massacre was also caused by the creation of the 18th Amendment, which is also known as Prohibition.

Historical Significance

Our topic is a major event in history because it showcases just how violent the gangs were throughout the 1920s, and it shows how the 18th Amendment worsened the quality of living for Americans. It also shows how, when the government incorporates extreme Laissez-Faire policies, they are not particularly ensured to work out as expected.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources:

Federal Bureau of Investigation. "St. Valentines Day Massacre." *FBI Records: The Vault*, <https://vault.fbi.gov/St.%20Valentines%20Day%20Massacre>. | This was the most influential source in our documentary. It provided the answer to our historical question -- how did the government fail to keep people safe during the prohibition era?, as well as insights on the repetitive denials of information to the general public by FBI Director John Edgar Hoover.

King Rose Archives. "Prohibition Booze Barrels Destroyed." YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sODc1BH96EA>.

Kinolibrary. 1920s, 1930s Al Capone, Gangster, U.S. Archive Footage. Accessed from YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/@thekinolibrary>. | Used for video footage of Al Capone.

Secondary Sources:

The St. Valentine's Day Massacre | February 14, 1929 | *HISTORY*, 13 November 2009, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-st-valentines-day-massacre>. | This source gave our group general information about the massacre, but our main use for it was for accessing images for our documentary.

The Mob Museum. "St. Valentine's Day Massacre Evidence." *The Mob Museum*, <https://themobmuseum.org/artifacts/st-valentines-day-massacre-evidence/>. | This source gave us insights on the evidence of the massacre, as well as some images for the documentary.

“The St. Valentine’s Day Massacre” *The Mob Museum*

<https://stvalentinemassacre.org/>. | This resource was great for retrieving pictures of the St.

Valentine's Day Massacre Wall as seen in the documentary, as well as for information on how the massacre "went down in American History".

Hogan, Stephen. “Books About the St. Valentine's Day Massacre on Chicago's North Side.”

Chicago Public Library, 24 January 2024,

<https://www.chipublib.org/blogs/post/books-about-the-st-valentines-day-massacre-on-chicagos-north-side/>. | This was used to find information about where the massacre took place, as well as

for more detailed information on the victims and people involved in the massacre.

PBS. “Murder to Massacre.” PBS,

<https://www.pbs.org/video/prohibition-al-capone-murder-to-massacre/>. | This source was used for information about Prohibition and for footage of Al Capone for the documentary.

“Fred “Killer” Burke” My Al Capone Museum,

<https://www.mylcaponemuseum.com/id91.htm> . | This was used to learn more about Fred

“Killer” Burke

“The Purple Gang.” *Wikipedia,*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Purple_Gang#St._Valentine's_Day_Massacre. | We used this to figure out what the Purple Gang did and their ethnicity.

Schoenberg, Robert J. "Saint Valentine's Day Massacre." Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Valentine%27s_Day_Massacre. | This source was used at the beginning of our project to find out more about the rivalry between Bugs Moran and Al Capone, as well as the Moran Gang's attempted purchase of Canadian Whiskey from Detroit's Purple Gang. All Wikipedia information was confirmed by the book cited below.

Chronicling America « Library of Congress, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>. | This was used for information on the Wickersham Commission

"Wickersham Commission." Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wickersham_Commission | This was used for images of George W. Wickersham and for information about the new crime commission started by Herbert Hoover.

Helmer, William J., and Arthur J. Bilek. *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre: The Untold Story of the Gangland Bloodbath That Brought Down Al Capone*. Cumberland House Publishing, 2006. | This book was extremely helpful for information and first-hand pictures relating to the massacre, and it helped us with a better understanding of Capone and Moran's rivalry.

Secondary Sources: Images

Rumore, Kori, and Marianne Mather. "Vintage Chicago Tribune: St. Valentine's Day Massacre." Chicago Tribune, 8 February 2024, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2024/02/08/vintage-chicago-tribune-st-valentines-day-massacre>

| This was a vital source in our documentary, as it provided a vast majority of the pictures used throughout the documentary, specifically when discussing the gruesome murder of the 7 members of the Moran gang.

“Prohibition: US activists fight for temperance 100 years on.” BBC, 16 January 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-51090163>. | This was used for an image of women protesting for prohibition before the 18th Amendment was passed.

Lawrence, Mark. “Opinion | Why Americans Supported Prohibition 100 Years Ago.” *The New York Times*, 17 January 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/17/opinion/prohibition-anniversary-100.html>. | This was used as a picture for the effects of prohibition.

“Then: LAW SCHOOL LAB ADVANCED STUDY OF BALLISTICS : Northwestern Magazine.” *Northwestern University*, <https://www.northwestern.edu/magazine/winter2016/campuslife/then-law-school-lab-advanced-study-of-ballistics-calvin-goodard-forensic-ballistics.html>. | Used for an image of Calvin Goddard, the "Father of Ballistics".

Prohibition is ratified by the states | January 16, 1919 | HISTORY, 24 November 2009, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/prohibition-ratified>. | This was used for newspaper images relating to the passage of the 18th Amendment, as well as for an image relating to protests for the repeal of that amendment.

Burns, David. "Radio in the Early 1900s." Fasttrack Teaching Materials home page, https://www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap/Unit_8_Early_1900s/U8_Radio_Pics.html. | Used as a picture of a 1930's family listening to the radio.

"100 Years Ago Today U.S. Votes Itself Dry – 18th Amendment Ratified into Law January 16, 1919." Distillery Trail, 16 January 2019, <https://www.distillerytrail.com/blog/100-years-ago-today-u-s-votes-itself-dry-18th-amendment-ratified-into-law-january-16-1919/>. | Used as a picture referencing Prohibition - barrels and bottles of alcohol being dumped into the drain.

Hylton, Gordon. "Wisconsin and the Repeal of Prohibition – Marquette University Law School Faculty Blog." Marquette University Law School, 8 December 2013, <https://law.marquette.edu/facultyblog/2013/12/wisconsin-and-the-repeal-of-prohibition/>. | Used for a newspaper article about the passage of the 18th Amendment.

Bettmann/Bettmann Archive. "Bettmann/Bettmann Archive." Google, https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/licensed-image?q=tbn:ANd9GcQ9RSakKJNga1r4zh62lLfHgfqvyX7lWcTeV-ujnxEFFzJtMlrfOMhxyoey2e0IA_LOqX-uWTVe45r8k. | Used for a picture of FBI director John Edgar Hoover.

Music Sources:

Mussorgsky, Modest, "Night on Bald Mountain".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCEDfZgDPS8> | Intro Opening Song.

Suno Artificial Intelligence. *Bloody Valentine's Blues*. Created with AI by Logan Skowronski.

Suno AI, suno.com.

The Soundlings. "Keys to Unravel." YouTube Studio Audio Library,

<https://studio.youtube.com/channel/UCDUDKM-1b3eT5DjhhOnLOXQ/music>.