

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.