

Elizabeth Freeman: On God's Earth a Free Woman

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Group Website

Process Paper: 500 words

Elizabeth Freeman Process Paper

When deciding to compete in this year's National History Day, we aimed to do research on someone we knew very little about prior to our research. Our hope in doing this was to increase our understanding of the many people who go unsung in their effects on the world we know today. While researching various people, Riley recalled the quote by on our homepage, but not the person. After finding that Elizabeth Freeman had said this, we read about her story. It became clear to us that her stand to win her freedom was monumental in the ending of slavery in many northern states. As such, we continued with research about this unknown woman.

The research done was difficult and broad. Factors of the time period and the unexplored nature of her story made it tedious to find in-depth information. As such, we had to sift through photo galleries, documentation, websites, videos, and books to find tidbits of her story and slavery in the north at this time. Additionally, we interviewed our history teacher about the background involved with her court case, notably outside factors from the time and location this occurred. We also met with a local Commissioner in the Davis county court system, T.R. Morgan, to further understand the proceedings of court hearings and the research involved. From these meetings we learned directly how her stand had the proper social ingredients to spark a change nationwide, as well as conclude that her court would likely be used as a precedent in similar trials to come. With the background knowledge to present, the next step was deciding our category.

Both of us are skilled in writing papers for our English and history classes, but were unable to compete as a group for the historical paper category. Subsequently, we hoped to find a medium in which we could still present our findings through writing, while learning a new form

of conveying a message. Our teacher recommended the website format, as it would allow us to write while also venturing into a new aspect of presentation. Additionally, a website was not as dependent on many visuals as was the case with other categories. This medium would be an easy-to-use method of spreading Freeman's story even after the competition. We also hoped that our website would make the research of Freeman easier for future students, as many of the websites we found information on were hard to navigate and difficult to follow.

The goal of this project was to shed light on a woman who dared to stand up and state that unalienable rights should be denied to no person. Her stand was the catalyst which led to the spread of ideas that slavery was inherently against the values fought for in the revolution. Her impact would cause an ideological shift in the northern states, and would encourage slaves, whites, and anyone who saw an injustice to stand up and fight for equality, regardless of challenge or consequence.