

Sam Derfus

- How did you begin your research? Explain how you came up with your research topic.

I came up with my topic after Prof. Kooistra's lecture on the civil war. She mentioned a few revolts that seemed very interesting to me. Revolutionary politics and the fallout of insurrections have always interested me, and doubly so since the events of the past year, both in the murder of George Floyd and the insurrection at the capitol. I began my actual research by just reading a wikipedia article on the topic to make sure that it was what I wanted to do. After that, I attended the library help session in class and began to compile resources using the Bethel library sources and a particularly helpful reference work.

- How did you discover your sources? Which library databases or other information sources did you use? Explain particular techniques or strategies that you used while searching and discovering information. Did you need to use CLICsearch or ILLiad to get materials from other libraries?

I began using the library's humanities database to find a good reference work. I picked the volume on African American history as it would be more likely to have helpful material. After finding a helpful chapter on John Brown, I used the resources listed in the reference work to branch out. This led me to W.E.B. DuBois' work, which was the most influential to my project. I also used the JSTOR database a lot, and it contained several useful resources as well. All the sources that I needed for this project were found in the Bethel library and in ebook form, so I had no need to request books from other libraries. I prefer to use ebooks as they make searching for particular information easier.

- Did you seek research assistance from a librarian, a professor, or someone else? If so, how did this interaction impact your research process?

The person that I consulted the most through my research was my older brother. He graduated from Bethel just a few days ago, and has been through the library research process many times. He helped guide me to specific places where I was able to find more good sources and helped me talk through the central thesis of my project as well.

- How did you select and evaluate the sources you found? Explain which criteria you used for selecting sources.

The primary criteria that I used in selecting works was if it made sense to use in my project or not. There were thousands of sources on John Brown on JSTOR, and I only needed one to help me understand his upbringing, so the rest of that kind weren't needed. After that, I chose works by reputable authors. Dr. Zalanga taught me all about W.E.B. DuBois in Sociology, which led me to pick his book. Russo was the author of one of my sources that I found to be helpful, so I picked another of her works on the topic as well.

- What did you learn during the research process that will help further your academic or professional career?

The most important thing I learned from this project was how to effectively use reference works. In all of my past projects I used them simply because I had to, but this time I saw how truly helpful they can be. I also learned how to navigate the library system even better, assuring that my next research project will be even better researched.