

**CHICAGO METRO HISTORY FAIR
2014 SUMMARY STATEMENT FORM**
Please TYPE on sheet or use word processing

ALL PROJECTS: Attach an annotated bibliography. Please divide primary and secondary sources from each other.
Two copies of SSF & Annotated Bibliography are required for competitions.

Title: Using Everything Except the Squeal: Conditions in the Chicago Meat-Packing Industry

Student name(s) Daniel Josefchak_____

Project Category:

Group Individual **and** Exhibit Performance Documentary Website

Check if applicable (and respond to the 3rd question):

This project uses the 2014 National History Day theme, "Rights and Responsibilities"

1. THESIS STATEMENT

Present the project's argument or interpretation in two sentences. If you are using the NHD theme, you might want to make it evident in your thesis statement.

During the early 1900s, Chicago's growth was fueled by its unsanitary, but thriving, meat-packing industry, which exported tainted meat to most of the nation. After an inspection of a Chicago meat-packing facility, President Theodore Roosevelt's fears of contaminated meat and poor working conditions were confirmed. He submitted the information to U.S. Congress which led to legislation that gave Americans the right to clean meat, and provided more sanitary working conditions in packinghouses.

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Briefly explain your project and its conclusion. Include: How and why did change happen and what was the impact? Why is it historically significant? What historical meaning or importance can we learn from your findings?

My project is about how the poor working conditions in meat-packing facilities led to the writing of *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, which caused a major uproar. President Theodore Roosevelt, after hearing of these poor conditions, ordered an inspection of the Chicago packinghouses to be done. The inspectors returned with a report that confirmed most of Sinclair's findings. Roosevelt, taking responsibility for his country's well-being, submitted the report to U.S. Congress, who later passed both the Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Act, which allowed government inspections. Those laws led to improved working conditions for the packinghouse employees, as meat-packing companies had to keep their facilities clean to pass the inspections. Those laws also gave the public the right to know what they were eating, as companies could no longer sell misbranded meat.

3. Required for projects using the National History Day theme only.

Explain how this project integrates the NHD theme “Rights and Responsibilities” into its argument.

In my project, I discuss the ways President Theodore Roosevelt took responsibility for his country’s citizens and submitted information to Congress, the way that information led to the Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Act, and how those laws gave the public the right to know what they were eating.

4. PROCESS

- A. What historical question did you start off with—and how did it change once you began doing your research?

The question I started off with was “How did the Meat Inspection Act lead to the unionization of packinghouse workers?” After some research, I discovered that it didn’t, and then my question changed to “how did the Meat Inspection Act lead to improved working conditions for packinghouse workers and cleaner meat for America?”

- B. What kinds of sources did you use as evidence to develop your argument (for example, letters, photographs, government documents, interviews, etc.)?

I used letters, government documents, photographs, articles, interviews, and books.

- C. Select one piece of evidence that you used and explain how it influenced your argument.

I think the source that most influenced my argument was my email conversation with James Barrett. Prior to emailing him, I thought that the Meat Inspection Act led to the unionization of packinghouse workers, but he told me that they weren’t, in fact, related. That really changed my thesis, and gave me a more solid argument.

- D. List libraries (other than school), museums, and other institutions that you visited to do your research.

I visited the Naperville Public Library and the Chicago History Museum. I also got digital information from the National Archives, the Encyclopedia of Chicago, the Chicago Tribune Archives, the New York Times Archives, and the Newberry Library.