

## Process Paper

We chose Uncle Tom's Cabin because of its clear relationship to this year's theme and its tremendous international impact. This classic book exposed the reality of slavery and was one of the sparks for the Civil War in 1861. As an instant bestseller, this book described scenes which provoked strong reactions from readers, contributing to the rising tensions between the North and South in the years leading to the Civil War.

To begin our research, we read books, newspapers, and magazine articles from the main library. Bibliographies in books led us to other primary and secondary sources. Our most useful source, a multi-media website from the University of Virginia, provided primary sources representing views from abolitionists, Northerners, and Southerners. One of us traveled to the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center in Hartford, Connecticut to peruse their collection of information and interview a historical interpreter on Stowe. After the district competition, we contacted other historians for interviews and received several responses graciously allowing us to interview them. We appreciated the time they took out of their busy schedules to help strengthen our thesis. These interviews helped strongly connect our project back to the theme.

We chose the website category for our topic mostly because we both have designed websites and edited videos and audios previously. We deemed it the best medium to display our information with content, audios, videos, and pictures to emphasize the point. We chose a dark brown design to give the feeling of antiquity as our topic dated back to the mid-1800s. We rearranged our content in multiple ways, deciding on the best format. We added videos and audios from interviews into relevant pages, and we spaced our information to look less cluttered and more organized. By taking into account the numerous opinions of the different professors and interviewees, we were able to form a succinct thesis statement in our introduction.

Our topic fits the theme because Uncle Tom's Cabin not only exposed the cruelties of slavery and slaves' total lack of rights but also spurred formerly indifferent Northerners to realize that it was their responsibility to help abolish slavery. Stowe displayed the cruelties of slavery — slave families torn apart, blacks sold like livestock, slaves whipped to death. Through Stowe's words, readers viewed how slaves lived and sympathized with them. The book revealed that blacks were still men and that Southerners blatantly continued the inhumanity of slavery. By confronting the problem sentimentally, Stowe emotionally swayed Northerners toward the abolition of slavery. Her book heightened feelings in the North against slavery and increased Southerners' determination to defend it. Uncle Tom's Cabin was clearly a contributing factor, leading up to the Civil War.