

The Hallie Q. Brown Community Center:
Taking Responsibility for Rondo Residents' Rights

Laurie Bohn
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Since I enjoy studying urban geography, my initial topic idea was to focus on the roots of the present day battle over housing teardowns and rebuilds in Edina. However, my early searches led to dead ends and I decided I needed a topic that was a little further in the past. Walking through the Then, Now, Wow exhibit at the History Center inspired my overall topic choice, which is the Rondo neighborhood of St. Paul. The fascinating and personal accounts that former Rondo residents shared in that exhibit touched me and I knew I wanted to learn more about them. After a quick search, I found that there were many sources available relating to Rondo, so I felt comfortable committing to the topic..

Most of my research was done at the Gale Library at the History Center. One of the first steps in my research was reading *Days of Rondo* by Evelyn Fairbanks. Reading this book immersed me in Rondo of the '40s, '50s, and '60s. The book is what led me to the Hallie Q Brown Communtiy Center and its two boxes of records which included all kinds of documents, from flyers for events, to minutes from meetings, to photographs, to budgets. Another extremely helpful source was the the Voices of Rondo oral histories. I love listening to life stories, so it was particularly enjoyable research.

I decided early on to make a website so I will be more familiar with Weebly to then help my students. My topic, Rondo and the Hallie Q. Brown Center, is well-suited for a website because of the many audio and visual materials that I came across in my research. I foresee the website category being a popular one again this year amongst my students and I now feel much more prepared to support them. Top plan out my website, I cut apart and sorted all of my notes. From there, deciding on web pages

within my website happened naturally and logically. I think this was an essential step to creating a project that was organized. I did not incorporate any audio or video in my website and I am disappointed about that. However I am pleased that I am comfortable with the basics of Weebly.

“The Hallie Q. Brown Community Center: Taking Responsibility for Rondo Residents’ Rights” relates to the 2014 National History Day theme “Rights and Responsibilities” because it explores the lack of rights of African Americans in Minnesota from the early 1900s through the 1960s and the responsibility felt by community groups, like the Hallie Q Brown Center, to step up and advocate for the people in the neighborhood they served.