

Carrier Pigeons; A Frontier in
Communication

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Documentary

NHD Process Paper

(412 words)

Why I chose my topic-

I chose to do my project on carrier pigeons because I have always been fascinated with pigeons. Since that day in 3rd grade when my grandparents bought me a book about animals helping in the military, I have been obsessed with the birds who roam our cities. I was amazed by the navigational ability pigeons possessed, how they were one of the most important methods of communication during times of war, how they are still used today for racing (which is exploitative and I don't support) and how many keep them as pets.

How I did my research-

I began my research by searching about Cher Ami, a famous carrier pigeon from World War 1 that saved the "Lost Battalion" of the 77th Infantry Division. From there, I checked out a book called "Pigeons" by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent with photographs from William Muñoz. I found images from WW1 picturing pigeons, as well as finding plenty of sources online. I used these sources and images to create my documentary.

Why I chose my category and how I created my project-

I chose my category because I already have some experience with video production and editing. I used to make videos editing random things I found online, so I knew the controls of the video editing software. Creating a documentary is a good representation of my project because I can include more images and sounds. It also allows me the opportunity to include an interview with a professional. After I had enough sources and planning and felt good about my project, I started by selecting some music to play in the background. I filmed, and edited until I had finished my project.

How my topic relates to the theme-

My project relates to this year's topic of "Frontiers in History: People, Places, and Ideas" because of the idea of using pigeons to deliver messages. During both world wars, telephone and telegraph lines proved unreliable. Communication was everything in these times, and could mean the difference between life and death. This led the commanders of Europe to turn to the carrier pigeon to deliver messages. Pigeons were part of the Frontier of Communication and Frontiers in Science. B.F. Skinner thought they were capable of guiding missiles. They were proven to be able to tell the difference between artwork from impressionists and cubists, as well as pass a mirror test, something very few animals can do.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Work Cited

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National Archives Catalog. ".

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kw0wLLVEMaA>.

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Traveling, and Youtube, directors. *Pigeons flying in circles*. *Youtube*,

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<https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/carrier-pigeon-war.html?sortBy=relevant>. Accessed 13 February 2023.

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<https://www.spymuseum.org/exhibition-experiences/about-the-collection/collection-highlights/pigeon-camera/>. Accessed 13 February 2023.

This primary source shows pigeons with cameras. This shows how they could be used for espionage.

Neises, Janelle, and Central Intelligence Agency, directors. *The Debrief: Behind the Artifact - Spy Pigeon*.

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This primary source is an interview with Deputy Director of the CIA Museum Janelle Neises. It explains how pigeons spied in the cold war.

Lewis, Sam M., et al. *Youtube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duVHnUJTAX0>.

This primary source is a ragtime jazz song about pigeons.

Secondary Sources

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Kratz, Jessie. "Unsung heroes of World War I: the carrier pigeons." *Pieces of History*, 8 January 2018, <https://prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2018/01/08/unsung-heroes-of-world-war-i-the-carrier-pigeons/>. Accessed 6 February 2023.

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Blume, Mary. "The hallowed history of the carrier pigeon." *The New York Times*, 30 January 2004, <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/30/style/the-hallowed-history-of-the-carrier-pigeon.html?login=smartlock&auth=login-smartlock&login=smartlock&auth=login-smartlock®ister=email&auth=register-email>. Accessed 7 February 2023.

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Rafi, Yousuf. "From Pigeons to Instant Messages: Ancient Communication Methods and what we can learn from them." *TaskQue Blog*, 30 April 2019, <https://blog.taskque.com/instant-messages-ancient-communication/>. Accessed 7 February 2023.

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