

Process Paper

Choosing a Topic

Since I have always enjoyed both traveling and trying exotic fruits, I read Daniel Stone's book *The Food Explorer*. The story was fascinating. When it was time for me to choose a topic for National History Day, I thought this was a perfect fit for the theme of breaking barriers. It also seemed fun to research this topic further.

Research

My research started in the same place I found the inspiration for this topic: *The Food Explorer*. Author Daniel Stone's research is extensive, and it gave me lots of points to start research on my own. Through the University of Wisconsin library system, I found more books to continue my research. One of these, Amanda Harris' book *Fruits of Eden: David Fairchild and America's Plant Hunters*, provided much of the same information as *The Food Explorer*, but from a slightly different angle. Harris' book covered David Fairchild's work more objectively, while Stone's book told of David Fairchild's work as more of a story, an odyssey of sorts. I still needed a visual component for my website. The National Agricultural Library had many of the pictures and videos I used on my website. The Pomological Watercolor Collection at the National Agricultural Library has watercolors of more than 7,000 different fruits and vegetables, many of them being Fairchild's introductions; these made the headers on my website. Mrs. Sara Lee of the National Agricultural Library helped me find several pictures of David Fairchild and Frank Meyer as well as many of the letters Meyer sent back from China. Newspapers and magazines were also a major component of my website. To access these articles, I used *Chronicling America* and National Geographic's archive among other archives.

Choosing a Category and Creating My Project

From the beginning, I was fairly certain I wanted to do a website. This topic has many visual elements, so being able to use pictures and videos were important when I chose my category. This year, websites are created on a new platform, so the learning curve was steep. Once I had a solid foundation of research and access to the website builder, I still needed to learn to use the website builder. I started by putting my pictures, videos, and quotes into the website. Next I created a theme for my website by choosing how I wanted to organize and what colors or website blocks I wanted to use. At the same time, I continued to find more information and sources which could contribute to my website. Finally, I added my writing.

Theme

This topic is a great fit for this year's NHD theme: Breaking Barriers. David Fairchild and his team of agricultural explorers did what no one before them could. They introduced more than 100,000 different plants from dozens of countries. In order to do this, they broke barriers of travel, danger, bureaucracy, and resistance from consumers and farmers. Because they managed to break these barriers, they profoundly changed American agriculture and kitchens.