Olek

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Period 5 History 11

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US History Fall Research Project

Paper Topic Proposal

My topic for this project is the history of the construction of railroads in the United States in relation to immigration. I chose this topic in a trivial manner. I was thinking about immigration and how the immigrants of the 20th century have changed our society, and then BOOM! I found a book about railroads. So I decided to back up a bit, from the early 20th to the mid 19th century. This is a time where so much cool stuff happens I really don't want to list all of it. But, I recently discovered that my great great grandfather was a railroad engineer, so I figured, why not? Trains are cool. But aside from that, it's just the first and best thing I could think of. In order to keep a good heading, I am going to be thinking about some essential questions and dictums in the course of my research that have presented themselves in many of my other classes this year: What is the American Dream? How does westward expansionism relate to immigration and vice versa? Why do people migrate to America?

The only sources I have used so far are several books. They mostly give a general overview of the construction of railroads and the mass immigration of Irish to America. This is not enough to write a paper. I need primary sources and more a specific topic, which will come in time. What is important now, is to do more research on immigration and the different reasons different people came to America. These sources haven't guided me directly in any direction, but they have given me several ideas on what to narrow down on.

My next step is to get more primary sources, more specific topics, and finding a common theme. Primary sources are essential to understanding a time period, so I will need to find those. I am hoping to find more explicit details and opinions so as to further guide my research.

Sources:

Dolan, Jay P., *The Irish Americans: A History*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010.

Bain, David Haward, *Empire Express: Building the First Transcontinental Railroad*. New York: Penguin, 1999.

Ambrose, Stephen E., *Nothing Like it in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863-1869*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.