

MOVE Bombing: The Day That Shook the City of Philadelphia

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## Process Paper

After the announcement of this year's National History Day theme, I knew immediately that I wanted to do research on the MOVE bombing. That previous weekend, I volunteered at the Roxy theater during the Philadelphia Film Festival while "Let the Fire Burn", a film about the feud between Philadelphia and the radical urban group, MOVE, was showing. Prior to the event, I knew nothing about the incident, despite its proximity to my home. After speaking with other volunteers and listening to others discuss the topic, I knew it was a controversial issue that many people felt strongly about. I chose this topic to raise awareness on the subject and to provide enough details for people to decide their opinion on the subject.

In the primary stages of my research, I searched through the archives of local Philadelphia newspapers like "The Inquirer" and "Daily News" to find articles that were published in the Spring of 1985 that covered the MOVE bombing. Then, I broadened my search to include media, articles, and interviews that took place outside of Philadelphia and/or after 1985. The final stage of my research was contacting Jason Osder, director of "Let the Fire Burn", Ramona Africa, sole adult survivor of the MOVE bombing, and Andrea Walls, author of "Ultraviolet Catastrophe" for interviews. I was able to conduct an interview with Walls. My interview with her added depth to my research.

I chose a website because it was the best way to incorporate text, media, and visuals that represented the complexity of the relationship between the city and MOVE in a way that is engaging and easy to understand.

This topic relates to the theme of rights and responsibilities because the bombing violated the MOVE members rights against excessive force and unreasonable search and seizure. The police had a responsibility to protect innocent bystanders, but the death of MOVE children and

the destruction of their neighbors homes due to a decision to let the fire burn demonstrate a lack of responsibility. This tragedy led to a renewal of responsibility in the police force by enacting new policies to prevent future devastation in emergency situations.