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2019

### Runner-up Reflective Essay: 2019 LHULRA Finalist Jordan Stevens

Jordan Stevens

Fort Hays State University, [jwstevens@mail.fhsu.edu](mailto:jwstevens@mail.fhsu.edu)

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#### Recommended Citation

Stevens, Jordan, "Runner-up Reflective Essay: 2019 LHULRA Finalist Jordan Stevens" (2019). *2019 Lynn Haggard Undergraduate Library Research Award*. 6.

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Jordan Stevens

## Reflective Essay

During the fall semester I was required to write a research paper for my historical methods class, and this was the first real research paper that I was assigned. At first, I did not even know what to write about, but then I got the idea to write about protest songs about the Vietnam War. For my essay I had to use several different kinds of sources, but the main sources of information had to be primary sources. At first, I only had a few ideas on where to look for the information that I needed. I had been told about research databases and the library's website, but I did not really know how to use those. I knew a few things about how to use Boolean search methods, but that was basically it. Anyway, I was able to use them enough to find a topic and start my research, but I was really having trouble finding primary sources and other relevant information for my paper. Then I went to the library and had a meeting with Brian Gribben. He was extremely helpful and helped me find several sources that could be useful and related to my topic. He suggested different examples of protest songs and provided some possible secondary sources that could compliment the source I had managed to find. While I was with Mr. Gribben, he showed me how to more effectively search for information and how to use research databases more efficiently. Some of the sources that we had found were on microfilm and it was very interesting learning how to use those to say the least. It actually took me a while before I figured out how to rotate the image on the Microfilm projector, but the microfilm was cool to use and seemed like a good source for later papers. I was able to use the sources and information that I found together with Mr. Gribben to find more sources and from there writing my paper was much easier.

Obviously, my research at the library included reading books and I found book sources in many ways. This essay was also the first time I ever used Inter-Library Loan and that was an interesting experience. The process was pretty easy, and it was something I wanted to check out because I had never even heard of libraries sharing books before. I checked several books from Forsyth library over the course of my research, and I also used information from books that I accessed online through the library's website. It is crazy how many databases and websites the library has access to and finding out about how many databases could be used to look for books on my subject made writing my paper even less stressful. I actually wrote my paper a few weeks before the due date, so I had a lot of time to revise and I did with help from the libraries databases. I used a database called Films on Demand Academic Collection and watched a show about Vietnam and used that to add background information to my paper. The library made the process of writing a research paper so much easier and way less stressful. Also, since this was the first time I was using a lot of resources at the library it was a great learning experience and will help me in the future.