

Local Teacher Helps Students Connect to Bay Area History



Bryan Shaw began working with UCBHSSP as a participant in our multi-year Teaching American History Grant in partnership with the Mount Diablo Unified School District where he has taught for several years. He teaches Social Studies and coaches football at Mt. Diablo High School in Concord, CA. This summer he not only co-directed our Implementing the Common Core Institute but also participated in our NEH Landmark Workshop: [Movement, Mobilization, and Militarization: The Bay Area Home Front in World War II](#). This week he took his students to

tour one of the sites he visited this summer. Below he describes how he was able to leverage a local landmark to help his students make greater meaning of a global event through exploration of local history.

After visiting the [Rosie the Riveter Visitor Education Center](#) in Richmond last summer as a participant in the Bay Area Home Front in World War II workshop, a week-long professional development program offered through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, I was inspired to make some changes to how I integrated local history into my high school history classes. Here was this incredible landmark, quite literally, right in my own backyard. Prior to the summer institute, I didn't know it existed and hadn't considered how I might utilize something like it to engage my students.

In September, I contacted Matt Holmes, who had served as our guide this summer, and scheduled a tour for my 11th grade U.S. history students. Their focus question -- a teaching strategy I learned from my years of working with UCBHSSP -- for the trip was: *How did World War II impact Richmond, CA?*



To prepare for our visit, Matt, who is an education specialist with the National Park Service, was gracious enough to send along some activities for my students to complete before they arrived at the site. This did a great job of contextualizing the experience for students. What began as an idea for a tour evolved into a Common Core-aligned lesson that included group presentations by students. At first, my students were a tad apprehensive about the presentations. But Matt gave each group an area to focus on and a set of questions to help them develop their presentations. He also went first, modeling a presentation for the students prior to their own.

My students left the visitor center with a new appreciation for previously unexplored points of significance of World War II. Some students appreciated knowing about Richmond's contributions to the war effort. Others mentioned the sacrifices children made. Others were impressed by the role of women during the war, and a few really enjoyed learning about the racial interactions during wartime and made parallels to racial conflict they see in the country today. As their teacher, I was particularly excited that they were able to understand the multi-faceted impacts of WWII to the California home front, and feel connected and, perhaps even, proud of how different groups influenced American success in the war. My participation and affiliation with the UCBHSSP and the opportunity I was given to take part in the NEH institute helped me pass the learnings I gained this summer onto my students! **Bryan Shaw, Concord High School**

