

Process Paper

When I decided to start this project, I was becoming increasingly involved in my school's Food Ark, a service club that works to end local food insecurity, and I started to feel that understanding the people and events leading up to the current state of US food infrastructure was crucial to fight for reform in the present. I also was interested in learning more about historical issues related to the environment, labor, and marginalized groups, and the farmworkers movement met at the intersection of those issues. With these curiosities, I was drawn immediately to creating a project about the US farmworkers' rights movement in the 1960-70s. Through my preliminary research, I learned more about Dolores Huerta and her groundbreaking yet unsung role in the fight for farmworkers' rights, and I chose to focus my research project on her as an underappreciated figure who left a lasting impression on US labor, women's rights, and Mexican American identity.

My research was primarily conducted online and I initially read through secondary sources to gain a general understanding of the movement before delving into primary and secondary sources specifically about Huerta and her journey as a labor activist. During my research, the UC San Diego Farmworker Movement Documentation Project was an amazing and invaluable collection of primary and secondary sources with news archives, art, essays, books, and photographs. Although there was less material on Huerta than some of her contemporaries like Cesar Chavez, there were several books and journal articles devoted to lifting up her story and highlighting her role in the movement that were helpful.

I chose to create a website because I loved the visual and interactive aspect of it. For the farmworkers movement, visuals and sounds were instrumental to generate public support around the country, and I felt it was important for viewers to immerse themselves in the era with what they would've seen and heard and to see the types of people involved and to listen to Huerta's rallying voice themselves. I initially designed the interface in Figma before implementing everything in NHD's website platform. I also revised the content of my site after receiving feedback from regional and state contests about improving clarity and website readability.

Huerta made many significant yet often overlooked contributions in the struggle to gain farmworkers' rights to unionization and inspired a generation of activists fighting for Mexican

American causes across the US in the Chicano civil rights movement. Although she faced a multitude of obstacles, from criticism of her willingness to prioritize the cause over her family to violent resistance from growers and police, Huerta fought tirelessly and successfully to improve the lives of US farmworkers. She is relevant to the NHD theme, “Debate and Diplomacy,” because her advocacy and the movement as a whole relied on nonviolence and negotiation to reach their goals. As UFW’s chief negotiator and lobbyist, Huerta’s role especially required skill and strategy to successfully gain union contracts and policy reform through debates and negotiation with growers and politicians.