

My research process was broken into three main phases, through which I learned about the role and impact of a professional historian. The first phase began when I decided to focus on early twentieth century female mountaineers. I found sources relating to this era in the Pacific Northwest, both secondary analyses of the impact of mountaineering in the region and primary coverage of initial ascents in personal journals and newspaper articles. I initially focused on female mountaineers as a catalyst of a developing Pacific Northwest regional identity, though, after discussing with my advisor, realized that there were limited primary sources related to female mountaineers in general, and specifically on this topic. However, I was also interested in the relationship between mountaineering and changing societal expectations. Women's suffrage stood out as a momentous social evolution unique to this time period, so I chose this progressive movement to analyze in comparison to the rise of women in mountaineering.

Therefore, the second phase of my research began with my prospectus, for which I studied secondary sources discussing a variety of topics: the frontier in American identity, masculinity in the frontier, women in the frontier, the woman's suffrage movement, and feminist theory. I found these sources from recommendations from my advisor and the history librarian, general library searches of key phrases, and referencing bibliographies of other sources to find new material. The majority of these sources were written in the mid- and late-twentieth century, so while they contained topically relevant academic material, it was important to study how these theories have changed over time with the advent of gender studies and deemphasis of colonial lenses common at the time of authorship. These theories gave me a more comprehensive understanding of the contemporary society and its changing values.

At that point, my most significant primary sources were newspaper articles written by and discussing female mountaineers, though I knew I still had other resources to study in the

University of Washington's Special Collections. Over Winter Break, I dove into the archives in Special Collections' Pacific Northwest Collection. I started using Zotero as a central digital bibliography to organize articles, poetry, and travel journals written by women. While these female-authored sources were invaluable, they were limited in quantity which left some of my arguments with weak evidence. I ended up working a great deal with the Mountaineers archives as well as the Special Collections files from Edmond Meany who, as President of the Mountaineers, kept travel journals in which he commented on the abilities of the women around him. Though I wanted to use primarily sources written by women, I adapted to use larger collections from men to substantiate my arguments. One of Meany's greatest contributions to my work was his repeated mentioning of "Lulie"; Meany held Lulie in high regard for her work in the backcountry, so I wanted to learn more about her and her role in the mountains. I searched further to find out she was Lulie Nettleton, the Mountaineers' Historian and a local teacher, and she authored her own articles for the organization and outside publications as well. This path led me to her articles rich in recollections and personal insights, which in turn, with the support of Special Collections archivists, introduced me to the artistic work of Mabel Furry. Furry's photograph collection was significant in corroborating my primary evidence and arguments for women's participation in mountaineering. In retrospect, it would have been helpful to study and collect these photos earlier in my research process in order to utilize the unique opportunity to have visual evidence of the day-to-day activities of female mountaineers.

These sources gave rise to the third phase and my ultimate thesis, comparing the motives and experiences of women in mountaineering and progressive movements, especially women's suffrage, in the Pacific Northwest. Since I wanted the emphasis of my work to be about mountaineers, not suffragists, I gathered a collection of secondary sources and primary census

data that surveyed the western suffrage movement. I then compared these findings with the experiences of female mountaineers, largely in their own words, to draw similarities and differences between their activities. One similarity that I did not expect, especially in the backcountry, was the presence of racist and elitist trends among female mountaineers. The sources I found repeatedly insinuated these thoughts, and in the space and time I had, I could only recognize them and move on with my argument. As a historian, I made this decision to acknowledge the problematic qualities of my subject but remain focused on my principal argument.

As the themes of personal accomplishment, creative inspiration, camaraderie, leadership, and strong stances against gender inequality arose from the sources themselves, I gained a two-fold better understanding of history: context is vitally important to understanding the reasons for and impacts of historical events, and the role of a historian is to provide an interpretation of these contexts, reasons, and impacts. I hope to continue this inquiry in the future, as interpretations of history are always changing and my deepening research will shed light on the evolution and projection of women's rights, in and out of the backcountry.