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Analysis of Nonfiction Narrative/Special Interest Piece

When deciding on the topic of this assignment, I considered a few things. Since the assignment was specifically called a Nonfiction Narrative/Special Interest Piece, I knew that my topic would need to be something true, of personal importance, and told more like a story than an argumentative essay. Because many chose a physical area or location, as was suggested, I initially chose the property on which I was raised. But as I researched the land, I realized that writing about my code talker ancestor, Ben Hampton, might be more interesting and educational. And as I understood the assignment to be more wide ranging than simply writing about locations, I chose Ben as my final topic because of my special interest in his history. Since his story includes substantial information about the location of my upbringing, and since I included a video of said property, I hoped that would satisfy the requirements of the assignment.

In my rough draft I incorporated an insightful paper by Dr. William C. Meadows, who has also written some other work on Native American code talking. I included this to fill in any historical elements of which I was unaware and to provide a sense of the historical importance of my topic. I used a family photo of Ben to help the reader see him as more than just a name in some old documents, and I took a picture of the Choctaw Code Talker memorial to show the reader that Ben's name actually appears on a memorial, which highlights his historical significance to myself, Choctaws, Native Americans, and all Americans. I interviewed my grandmother to find personal information about Ben, which would add to the narrative aspect and perhaps allow the reader to understand Ben's personality to an extent.

The rough draft was a bit unfocused, so I tried to revise the work and the title to make clear that the focus is on Ben's life, not just his code talking. Code talking is what America should know him for, but I wanted the reader to also know him a bit more intimately, which was hard since I could not interview Ben himself. Some of my citations were initially unclear, and some organization was awkward. All of these issues have been dealt with in the final draft.

The final work might still have some issues. Perhaps the topic is not a perfect fit for the assignment, though I would argue it satisfies the requirements and discusses an underappreciated and seldom discussed topic, albeit with a personal angle. The work may seem to require more article reference and more of a sense of Ben's personality. Both of these things might improve the work, but prejudicial views against honoring Native Americans' military service has resulted in most official and scholarly reference to code talkers and Ben Hampton being covered up or lost, while the majority of existing sources are tribal and familial in nature. For example, Ben would not have been interviewed by any papers when he returned from war because very few people cared that he had served, and his white superior officers took most, if not all, of the credit. The Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-420), which was signed by President Bush, helped to rectify much of this historical discrimination and dishonor to an important demographic of war heroes and veterans, but many of the details of the lives of these men may be forever lost.