

When we first decided to work together, it was difficult to come up with a topic. We have very different interests, and we couldn't agree on anything. After about two weeks of non-stop arguing, we decided it would probably be best for us to work separately. After about another week, we were having a conversation in which we both expressed interest in doing our projects on something mental health-related. That was when our teacher told us about Nellie Bly going undercover in 1887 to expose terrible treatment in mental health institutions. Her story piqued our interest. We decided that because we had found a topic we were both interested in that we should go back to being partners.

We used a wide variety of primary and secondary sources for this project. One of our main primary sources was Nellie Bly's book *Ten Days in a Mad-House*. This is the story of all that she went through to get into the asylum and what she experienced while there. We also found primary source images and a video through the Library of Congress online and more primary source images and newspaper articles through the New York Public Library Digital Collection. Pictures and video helped us visualize the information we found. Another helpful resource we had were our teachers, who are both very knowledgeable on the subject of Bly. They were extremely helpful in connecting us to reliable sources.

We used many different websites for our secondary sources that provided us with information on asylums, Blackwell's Island, and Bly's background. One of the most helpful was a biography about Bly which included information on both her background and her experience at the asylum. Another helpful source was a website on Blackwell's Island where we learned about its history and the way Bly's exposé affected it.

For our project, we created a website on Nellie Bly. Creating a website was something that seemed like a daunting task at first because it was difficult to get started due to our unfamiliarity with the program. One of us would work on figuring out how to use the website editor while the other one would work on writing the information we wanted to put on our website. Eventually, though, we became comfortable with the website editor and began transferring our information from google docs onto our website. This proved to be an effective method as it would allow us to both be working on important elements at the same time.

Our topic relates to the theme of breaking barriers in multiple ways. The most obvious is the breakthrough with the asylum on Blackwell's Island. Bly exposed the poor treatment of the mentally ill and helped them receive justice. Another barrier broken by Bly was that of women working in journalism. Nellie Bly helped prove that women could be just as good at journalism as men, and

inspired many people to pursue their dreams. Today, many women work as  
journalists.