

Impact Statement

Alani Howard, Grade 11.

Jacob Valentine, 2023.

Mixed media, 13 x 16 inches.

Seckinger High School, Buford, GA

Unsung Hero: Jacob Valentine

When searching for an unsung hero I wanted to find one I that I found interesting and one that someone hadn't won with already. I would find Valentine interesting because I would see sandhill cranes. I personally find cranes beautiful and when I read that he had saved them from going extinct I thought that was amazing. I found that Valentine putting in so much effort into saving a species inspirational. Most people when they hear a species is going to go extinct we could feel bad for them but never do anything. I always saw those kinds of people very kind and courageous because it is not always guaranteed that they will be successful.

I would find that he was an older man who grew up around the time of the great depression. Him and his family would be poor for some time living on an island off Lake Michigan. Him being outdoors would build his interest in nature. Later on in life he would lose his mother and would join the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to support his siblings. In the program he would plants trees all over and his love for nature deepened. when returning from WWI he would pursue in studies in environmental biology and wildlife conservation at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He would develop an interest in preservation of nature and discovered the Mississippi sandhill cranes endangerment. He would fight in court for the end of the building of highways through their land. I would express the shutting down of I-10 construction through the breaking down of roads in the background of the art piece.

My vision for this project was show Valentine's effect on the Sandhill cranes and what he brought to them. I wanted to show him being a light to the cranes breaking down the roads the government wanted to build. I would add flowers around them to show the new life coming from his effort he put into. I also wanted the cranes and Valentine's foreheads pressed against one another the show the connection between them and the love he should through the whole process. I wanted Valentine to be seen as the hero of the story for the cranes in my piece. This project and overall learning about Valentine have shown me that our actions have a great effect on nature whether good or bad. He was able to restore an entire specie, who are still thriving today and was able to save the little few left and help them grow bigger and bigger. I want to be able to show people my artwork and show what he has down for the cranes. He would still continue is research and studying of the Sandhill cranes and watching over them even after he retired in the 1980sand resting in 2001. Overall, I like the way that the project turned out and I think I was able to show the connection between Valentine and the Sandhill Cranes. I am hoping that others will be able to see his good works through my art piece.