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NHD 2014 process paper

*The Feminine Mystique*: Effects on American Society

We both wanted to focus on women's rights during the mid-twentieth century especially during World War Two, but that topic was way too broad for a research project. We then focused on women’s roles: before, during, and after WW2, Betty Friedan and *The Feminine Mystique.* We’ve always had an interest in the Second World War and women’s roles in the 1950s through the 1960s. It was interesting to learn new facts about women and how they were expected to act and shocking to find out how much women struggled to make a happy home while dealing with the “problem that has no name”, which can now be called depression. We have also learned what a huge impact that the *Feminine Mystique* had on society and women in general. We also learned that after reading the book, many women passed it down to their daughters, who took part in the second wave of feminism.

We began our research by individually creating a casebook with fifteen annotated sources. Before we began to work on our website, we gathered information about our topic. Because we had different topics at the time, we focused on different parts of the second wave. Most of our information came from the internet. We used scholarly journals, web pages and books. Some of the books that that helped the most was *The* *Feminine Mystiqu*e by Betty Friedan, and *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s* by Stephanie Coontz. We rented these books from the library, so we had them in print. Coontz’s book helped us understand the huge impact that Friedan’s *The* *Feminine Mystiqu*e had on American society. In the book Coontz described different stories of American women who have read *The Feminine Mystique* and how it affected them.

We decided to make a website because we thought it would be the best choice to display our information. With a website, you can easily organize the information into sections that fit our topic. We wanted the information on the website to go in an order which made sense to us: chronologically. We began with what life was like for women before *The Feminine Mystique* in the 1950s and during the Second World War.Then we continued to explain Betty Friedan's history and her inspiration to write her book, then the impact on society that *The Feminine Mystique* had. Because we have two people working on the website, we split the work up evenly. We each focused on what our casebooks were about.

We focused on the rights part of the theme, specifically women's rights. In our thesis, we claim that *The Feminine Mystique* inspired the second wave of feminism, and inspired women to achieve the rights they deserve. During the second wave, American women fought for their rights, and for a change in the way society views them.

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