McCarthyism: The Story of How One Senator's Words Changed Our Nation Forever

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Let's just start at square one. I am a strange child who always likes to think

outside the box. If given a simple equation explaining a simple math concept, I would still seek a

pattern to apply toward other unrelated equations. So, when I discovered the theme for National

History Day was "Communication in History," my mind was already churning, trying to decide

what to do- then it hit me. I had learned about McCarthyism and the Cold War the year before

and I just knew that I had to do something with the fascinating and unique topic, McCarthyism,

and its relation to communication.

I researched deeply, and with a little bit of help from my enthusiastic parents, I narrowed

the scope of my project to the creation of McCarthyism under Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, its

effect on communication during that time period, and its influences upon American society

today. This topic has a powerful impact on American society due to the difficult times that this

nation has been through, including the recent storming of the White House, widespread riots

across the states, and pure discrimination seen across the country. Approximately a quarter of my

sources were found accidentally via random sites linked to my searches. Most of my primary

sources were tied to my searches for transcripts that provided informational and enlightening

speeches, such as McCarthy's speech in Wheeling, WV. The rest of the sources I used consisted

of news articles, and general secondary sources.

I chose to present this project as a website because honestly, websites are a lot more fun

to create than the other options, in my opinion. I chose to work alone because I felt like no one

would really understand how my project would work, and I also just like to work alone. I found

the actual creation of the NHD website to be so much harder than planned since I am more

familiar with applications such as Google Sites, and the official website creator NHD platform is

very different and a lot more complex. I chose to use no templates, to keep the website more

simple. After I won second place in the NHD regionals, I realized that I needed to change some things around in my project to place at the State-Level Competition. I felt like my project really emphasized the topic of modern-day Communism, but my conclusion was not as strong as the rest. I felt like I had rushed that section, so I carefully revised it. My other worry was the formatting of the project itself, and I struggled to best modify my site using the NHD Website Creator. I feel confident in my final product.

This project connects to the theme "Communication in History," because my work explains what triggered all of the paranoia about discrimination and racism from McCarthyism. Joseph McCarthy's actions and policies spread the practice of stereotyping, and usage of racial insults as Americans communicated under the guise of protecting Americans from the scourge of Communism.