FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy

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Group Website

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FDR today is recognized as one of our nation’s most prominent presidents, being our nation’s only president to serve more than two full terms. During his presidency, he not only played a quintessential role in helping the American people regain faith in themselves, but also showed indomitable courage in staying strong despite contracting poliomyelitis. But what was his importance in changing the course of the United States, especially during the 1930s?

We were intrigued by FDR’s unique policy, also known as the Good Neighbor Policy, and the unique courage with which he encapsulated all three components of the theme: exploration, encounter, and exchange. The Good Neighbor Policy broadened diplomatic relations with Latin American countries, promoting an exchange between the two countries of trade and culture.

Even more importantly, our research showed that this policy did not simply touch on each of the three points of the theme, but synthesized them together to highlight a greater idea of the U.S. transition from interventionism to neutrality. Moreover, we can learn a great deal by examining FDR’s policy in light of present day issues.

Each of our four members conducted research through a variety of ways. In addition to hours of research on the internet, we went to local libraries as well as the Library of Congress for research, and also interviewed experts with a thorough understanding of the policy, such as our U.S. history teachers. Ultimately, we would spend 3-4 hours on research and the creation of our website every week. Research at the Library of Congress yielded new ideas, in addition to its unique video archive containing a vast repertoire of FDR’s policy and his legacy, such as videos of the State of the Union Address. In addition to researching, we would meet together at lunch or even at each of our houses.

Another significant aspect of our process was interviewing, which we conducted after we got in touch with a professor at American University who also specialized in Latin America History as well as with our school US History teacher. We felt these interviews really enriched our knowledge and allowed us to look at the subject matter from a different angle.

All four members of our group have always been fascinated and interested in history, and Kyle had the original idea for participating in NHD. After we came together, we composed a schedule consisting of deadlines and roles set out for each member. For example, Isabelle and Emily both researched policy history of the Good Neighbor Policy; Kyle researched background history; Tadhg researched impact and present-day connections. We placed all of our research condensed in a document and discussed our findings together.

The reason we decided to make a website was because of the versatility of this medium as we can have both visuals and text in one cohesive, accessible form. Each of our members has an interest in web design and we all wanted to have the experience of designing a website that was custom suited for our topic.