

When I started this project, I was very interested in 20th century American history. There were several topics I thought of doing for this year's National History Day project. Initially, I thought of the Marshall Plan and the Civil Rights movement. However, I became very interested in the Great Depression. When I learned that the Tariff Act of 1930 was one of the numerous disasters during the Great Depression, I quickly learned more about it. Because I wanted to implement both debate and diplomacy into the topic, Smoot-Hawley was a perfect choice because I quickly found that there was a large debate between those who advocated for protection and those who advocated for free trade. Smoot-Hawley was also about the bill and its diplomacy with other nations, making me choose the topic fast.

I began my research by first getting all the basic facts of the bill. I used Wikipedia and YouTube to get a brief overview of the Smoot-Hawley Act, but as I learned more about the act, I began to question many things about the law. Through the usage of scholarly websites such as JSTOR and Google Scholar, I was able to find in-depth analysis and obscure facts about Smoot-Hawley. I was also able to find sources at the Harold B. Lee library at Brigham Young University, by finding analytical books about economics and trade with charts that show the severity of Smoot-Hawley.

Looking at the categories, the two that appealed to me was the exhibit category and the website category. I was interested in both categories as I have used exhibits the most to present my information and I also wanted to try building a website. In the end, I opted for the website category. I used the NHD web central with basic blocks, but also some code. I learned a little about HTML code as I wanted to implement a variety of features on the website.

My historical argument was Smoot-Hawley was overall a failed diplomacy. During my research, I learned that many historians have a negative opinion about the Tariff Act, due to the tariffs leading to less global trade, worsening the Great Depression, and helping the rise of Hitler. Because of its failures, tariffs should not be reduced, and free trade should be promoted, as we saw that increasing tariffs just lead to other countries being affected and lead to retaliatory tariffs.

The Tariff Act of 1930 is one of the most controversial bills, but its legacy still exists today. While protectionism has decreased over the decades, the topic of tariffs resurfaced after United States President Donald Trump implemented the Trump Tariffs. Again, many economists protested this, warning about Smoot-Hawley and its disastrous consequences. With globalization, international trade is more important than ever due to countries and their people having access to foreign objects than ever before. With Smoot-Hawley, governments around the world can learn the terrible effects of tariffs when placed at the wrong time.