

Process Paper

As we were thinking of options for NHD this year we thought about our own personal interests. We didn't want to do a project on a topic we didn't find interesting. So we came up with the idea of women empowerment. As two young girls, we felt we should learn about a strong, hardworking woman who overcame gender barriers. As we are living in today's society, celebrities are all the rage and there are many women we look up to for contributions to society. Yet, we came across actress and inventor, Hedy Lamarr, and we were hooked. Lamarr was brave, bright, and indeed a beautiful actress by day and scientist by night. Hearing about Lamarr and how she in the 1940s proved women could be so much more than just a pretty face, we knew that this was going to be our NHD topic.

We conducted our research by reading articles from our school's library databases. We started off by learning about Lamarr's family and early life. Our librarian and teacher were helpful in locating primary sources. Most importantly, we had a great interview with author Richard Rhodes of Hedy's Folly: The Life and Breakthrough Inventions of Hedy Lamarr, the Most Beautiful Woman in the World. We learned so much about his writings on Lamarr and it was definitely a privilege to hear the words of a great researcher and historian. His research is found throughout many aspects of our website, using his past interviews and quotes. The Smithsonian and PBS websites helped us with her interviews and primary source videos. We looked at films she starred in and we watched the movie "Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story". Moreover, the book Hedy Lamarr's Double Life: Hollywood Legend and Brilliant Inventor helped us understand how Lamarr was a famous actress and hidden genius.

We chose the website category because we felt all of our information and words needed more space, not to be narrowed down onto a 500-word exhibit board. We wanted to showcase the many pictures of Lamarr and her brilliant breakthroughs visually with images and video clips. The various pages of the website helped us build Lamarr's impact on America and the world. The new NHD website was difficult at first to figure out, but by the end of the project, we felt better about the whole visual appearance.

The Hedy Lamarr story fits into the Unsung Hero project, as Hedy the most beautiful actress in Hollywood was unrecognized during most of her life for her invention that has impacted the world of technology and communication. Lamarr had extraordinary courage to help invent military technology to help fight against Hitler during WWII. Her frequency-hopping invention helped overcome the military barriers of the German U-boats torpedoing the Allied ships. It wasn't until Hedy was inducted into the National Inventors of Hall of Fame in 2014 did her amazing story become well known. Even though Lamarr never profited from her invention, she served her new American country well.