

It's Not Easy Being Clean: The Legacy of Josephine Cochran

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482 Words in Process Paper

When I began my research, I wanted to learn about someone who not only made an impact in science, but also was a woman who defied gender stereotypes. After reading only a short summary about Josephine Cochran, I knew that she fit my standards perfectly, and also the NHD theme, Leadership and Legacy. Cochran, a young widow struggling with debt, invented the dishwasher and started the company that is now called KitchenAid. She was not only a scientist, but an entrepreneur.

Then I went to the University of Chicago libraries, and came home with a tall stack of books to read. It interested me how the different authors had different approaches to telling the same story. Cochran's story and impact seemed so amazing to me, and it still does. I especially loved all of the advertisements, because they showed what effect Cochran's dishwasher had in the past. I also learned that some information is hard to get, but the solution to that is to just keep searching.

I decided to make a website because I thought it would be the best way to bring Cochran's story to life, which is what History Fair is all about. A website is kind of like a virtual exhibit, which can encompass photographs, newspaper articles, patent diagrams, and advertisements – all of the materials I found in my research. For this reason, I chose a website as the way I would present my project.

After taking a lot of notes, and perfecting my website for the school fair, I realized that I was over the 1,200 word limit by hundreds of words. For the regional fair, I had to cut down at least 500 words. At the Newberry Library, I met with someone who helped with this. By now, I am really proud of all the corrections I have made. If anything, all of the editing made me love my topic even more, as I had to really focus on what I wanted to say.

What I love about my topic is that even if Josephine Cochran had just invented the dishwasher, she would have been a leader because she changed the service industry. The fact

that she also discovered how to use water pressure – the basic method that dishwashers still use today – and started KitchenAid, along with her invention that she patented three times, and traveled around the country through her 70s promoting her invention, all of which were atypical for a woman to do at the time, makes her more than a leader. Cochran is a role model, an inspiration to everyone, proving that they can do anything. Her legacy, like her leadership, reaches extraordinary limits. Alone, the dishwasher or the popular company, KitchenAid, would be enough. When you combine all of the things that she accomplished, Cochran is a kind of superhero. If anyone is a leader with a legacy, it is Josephine Cochran.