

The Fight For Consumer Safety

The Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906

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The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) plays a substantial role in how our nation functions today. However, 117 years ago, people had little knowledge about the food they were consuming. For the past couple of years, I have become increasingly interested in the health side of our world. While I was aware of the FDA's existence, I wanted to learn more about how they were created and more importantly, why.

I found all of my research sources on the internet. The sources I found most useful were a JSTOR article written by Jillian London, the article on the Pure Food and Drug Act created by the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, and a PBS documentary directed by John Maggio dealing with Harvey Wiley's contributions. In the JSTOR article, London goes over the entire history of adulteration and how mountains of research led to the passing of the Pure Food and Drug Act. From her article, I learned about Harvey Wiley and the scientifically based research he produced. The article provided by the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center gave me a substantial amount of evidence and resources I have scattered around my website. The work they have on the Act included many photos that I could extract information from as primary sources. Lastly, the PBS documentary gave me a significant amount of valuable evidence, ranging from quotes to photos. Although the documentary covered only a piece of my topic, it contributed greatly to my overall understanding of the historical subject.

Initially, I planned to make an exhibit board for my project. However, after reconsidering the website-option, I opted for the extra challenge that comes along with making one. I have always had an interest in technology ever since my father taught me about its global importance. Additionally, I wanted my research to be easily accessible for years to come, and the timeless aspect of a website gave me that opportunity. Although arduous at many points, overall, I enjoyed teaching myself how to format and assemble my website.

Throughout my project, I argue that the Pure Food and Drug Act was a crucial turning point in U.S. history. However, it took decades for the bill to finally be passed. Additionally, it took many great minds to help fight for the protection of consumers. One of those minds was Harvey Wiley, who led the way toward the passing of the bill through numerous attempts to alert the public of the danger they faced when they ate. Yet, The Pure Food and Drug Act could not have been possible without the help of another significant role player: Upton Sinclair and his horrific novel *The Jungle*. During a dire time in the U.S., the public, once informed, united as a whole to rally against big corporations that were jeopardizing people's safety for pocketing profit. We now know at all times what we are eating before we put it into our mouths thanks to The Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906.