

For Secondary Students of History

Spring 2016

A Partner of HISTORY®

Issue XXX



Estelle Laughlin was born in Warsaw, Poland and came to the United States in 1948. She is a former 6th grade teacher and is the author of *“Transcending Darkness: A Girl’s Journey Out of the Holocaust”*.

History illuminates the way out of ethical darkness. I learned this fact as a young person in the Warsaw Ghetto, in the extermination camp Majdanek, and in two slave labor camps. Of course, when I was ten through fourteen years of age, I did not yet understand that when you lose everything, your memories and the collective memories of your people become your possessions and guides.

I had just turned ten when Germany invaded Poland. Four weeks of heavy air raids set my city in flames and reduced blocks in my street to desolate holes of rubble. The marching thunder of invaders’ boots against cobble stones, the clang of rifles, soldiers’ arms swinging in unison as if pulled by one fanatical thread still haunt my dreams.

My once peaceful streets were soon patrolled by foreign soldiers. They shouted hatred and contempt; snapped whips in our streets and houses; they slapped, kicked, and ripped beards off the faces of my neighbors. They cut off electricity, rationed all food and water, closed our schools, and made books illegal.

To make life more unbearable, they built a thick wall to isolate us in a ghetto and packed the area with Jews driven out of surrounding communities. The number of refugees far exceeded the available housing and food. Most died in the streets of cold and starvation. Corpses, tragic heaps of corpses, littered our streets.

Yet, in this hell we found inspiration to not surrender our will to live, to mobilize our resolve to resist tyrannical laws, and to live according to the dictates of our conscience. Our inspiration came from history and tradition—the universal link to eternal values.

Just as our ancestors who were imprisoned in ghettos continued to create their own culture, so did we. Immediately, people in my community marshaled forces and instituted a far reaching Self-Aid Center to help the needy and to preserve quality of life.

Like the Maccabees in ancient times, we resisted barbaric ordinances. To own a book—a capital crime—was an act of defiance, and many defied. During night—windows blackened to keep our existence secret—in a small room illuminated by flickering carbide light, my father read to us his favorite stories about ancient Pharaohs, about Haman and Nebuchadnezzar, and life in old shtetls. The distant stories became real and immediate, the heroes as familiar as my best friends.

Memory of historical precedents and principals of morality gave us courage to carry on our traditions. In protest to strict bans, we celebrated holidays publicly. On Passover, the courtyard committee made sure there was matzo in every house.

We had no food, our lives teetered on a sword’s edge, yet people sat at tables in dark rooms writing. For some, the pen was a weapon of

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resistance. Some wrote to mobilize spiritual strength. Others felt compelled to leave records for history to remember. Twenty years after the Warsaw Ghetto was annihilated, Chaim Kaplan's brilliant historical diary was found carefully preserved in a kerosene can. We cannot help but feel awed by the price these heroes paid to remind us what can happen to the conscience of a nation, what can happen to love and trust.

The voices of ordinary people who struggle to hold on to traditional values, to love, and to kindness, too, must be preserved for history to inspire us. Even in barbed-wire isolation in concentration camps—where no one could hear us, and we had no paper or pencils to record our thoughts—the women in our barracks gathered on bare bunk planks to tell stories and compose songs. Our words sanctified simple moments when life was good; they cried out against injustice and kept our souls and hope from dying.

The impulse to imprint human experiences for posterity is instinctive and essential for survival. It is passed down by word of mouth, expressed in poetry and prose, music and art, and inscribed upon the face of the earth by ancient traces and fossils. We must observe and listen thoughtfully and compassionately, if civilization is to progress.

In gratitude to the victimized people who paid the supreme price to live by their values, and for the inspiration they gave me to survive the Holocaust whole—with love, compassion, and joy of life—I volunteer at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in the Visitors Services and the Speakers Bureau. I am honored to make my humble contribution to an institution dedicated to keeping truth alive and visible, so that we can find our way out of ethical darkness.

History always remembers. ■



The Concord Review would like to receive outstanding history research papers by high school students, on any historical topic, ancient or modern, domestic or foreign.

TCR has published exemplary history papers (around 6,000 words with endnotes and bibliography) by 1,187 secondary students from 44 states and 40 other countries in 107 quarterly issues since 1987. TCR publishes about 7% of the papers received.

Find more information, and a submission form, on their website at: <http://www.tcr.org/submit>

Please direct any inquiries to: Will Fitzhugh, Founder, at: fitzhugh@tcr.org

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Access to the NHC network, which includes chapters in 44 states and over 15,000 members, is a great benefit of joining the NHC. We encourage you to read about other chapters in your state or across the country, and to contact a fellow Advisor to swap ideas or explore new opportunities! We have provided the e-mail addresses for Advisors at the chapters featured. Also, to explore specific sites click on the bolded text to be redirected to the website.

The Gayarre History Club of **C.E. Byrd High School** (LA) hosted their 4th Annual Gayarre Conference on March 22, 2016. This year's theme was "Heroes & Villains." More than 125 students and guests gathered at the R.W. Norton Art Gallery to hear the presentation of 50 student papers divided in to 12 panels revolving around particular aspects of the theme ranging from Heroes & Villains in War, to Economics, to Science-Fiction, and the Arts. To see an album of photos from the day please click **here**...Contact: **John Lary**

L a k e Central High School (IN) recently took a weekend trip to both Indianapolis and Dayton. There they visited a few Indiana state monuments, which their Advisor Tom Clark has contributed to, and traveled to the **U.S. Air Force Museum** in Dayton. They also went on another field trip last month to the **Museum of Science and Industry** in Chicago to see the German U-boat. Finally, they are in the process of organizing a community Open-House at the Tri-Town Safety Village, which is scheduled to immediately follow an "Honoring Veterans" 3K, 5K and 10K the morning of May 21...Contact: **Sarah Bredar**

McKeel Academy's (FL) History Guild traveled to downtown Lakeland, FL and went on a mission to find three geocaches. There was a struggle to locate the first geocache, which was hidden underneath a silk plant

outside of a local antique shop. The second geocache was found in a magnetic key container beneath an electrical box. The third one was located on a local highway bridge. Although the cars were flying by, they found the small geocache stuck in the rail of the bridge. All three geocaches had something to do with Lakeland's local history, giving the group new insight on where they live. Afterwards, they ate pizza and visited with a owner of some of the geocaches that they found earlier that day. They report that the experience was amazing and the

Club was able to use skills learned in their Social Science classes to make real world connections... Contact: **Melissa Robertson**



Fort Collins High School (CO) hosted the National History Bee and Bowl at their high school in February, with 20 teams and over 120 students present. They recently returned from DC where they participated in the National Competition.

Steinbrenner High School (FL) has teamed up with **Paws for Patriots** to provide guide dogs, service dogs, facility therapy dogs, and emotional support dogs to disabled veterans at no cost. In order to help serve this program, the Club raised money for and participated in the annual 5k walk fundraiser for Southeastern Guides Dogs, and had the program volunteers come out to the high school to educate them on ways they could be more helpful in the future... Contact: **Gina Shannon**



Hopewell Middle School (TX) attending the **TSHA's Jr. Historians Annual Meeting and History Fair** in Dallas, Texas on April 2nd to compete with their chapter project about the first successful prosecution of the Ku Klux Klan as well as several individual papers and projects.



Richlands High School (VA) students and chaperones visiting the **Biltmore Estate** in North Carolina on Saturday, April 2!



St. Rose High School (NJ) went on a trip to New York City with select members of the Club and international students from China for a cultural exchange of food, facts, and fun. They visited Chinatown, a Mahayana Buddhist Temple, the NYC Public Library, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and Rockefeller Center.



Congratulations to Williams Bay High School's (WI) Varsity and Junior Varsity teams that swept the state National History Bowl Championship and recently competed at the National Level in Washington, DC.



Rainier Jr/Sr High School (OR) students David Placido and Sarah Westlund portraying farmers in the Rainier area in 1853 for the 7th Annual Rainier Revisited.



New Braunfels High School (TX) working on the mural in their "History Hallway" that will focus on the amendments to the U.S. Constitution.



United Nations International School (NY) last project for the school year at Fort Montgomery where they removed the cannon covers for summer storage, did trail maintenance, cleaned out the Revolutionary War spring, replaced old trail signs with brand new ones, and worked on the drainage ditches for better water flow. They also presented the Fort with a check for over \$400 to help with new signage and to rebuild the trail system.

This Spring the NHC and George Washington's Mount Vernon again co-sponsored the "**History Student of the Year**" prize. Each chapter chose a recipient for this award, and s/he received an autographed copy of a history book. This is the 12th year of the partnership between Mount Vernon and the NHC to sponsor this prestigious award. The book prize this year was *George Washington's Journey: The President Forges a New Nation* by T.H. Breen.

Mount Vernon is the most popular historic estate in America. The estate, gardens and farm of Mount Vernon totaled some 8,000 acres in the 18th century. Today, roughly 500 acres have been preserved 16 miles south of Washington, DC, on the banks of the Potomac River. Visitors can see 20 structures and 50 acres of gardens as they existed in 1799, as well as the tombs of George and Martha Washington. Mount Vernon welcomes an average of 1,000,000 visitors each year.

To view a complete list of the recipients please visit our "**History Student of the Year**" page on our website.



Lowndes High School (GA) recipient Emma Emery with Advisor Mike White



NATIONAL HISTORY SCHOLARS SOCIETY

The NHSS was created in Spring 2009 to recognize the truly outstanding members in each Club. Nominees are expected to hold a 3.5 GPA in honors history classes, have been a member of their History Club for 2+ years, and be nominated by their Club Advisor. There were 702 student members inducted into the NHSS this spring (4.6% of total NHC student membership), and they proudly wore burgundy honor cords at graduation as a symbol of their academic excellence in the study of history. To view the entire list of inductees please visit our *NHSS page* on our website.



St. Francis Preparatory School (NY) inducting 30 members into the National History Scholars Society.



Frankton High School (IN) inducting a new round of students into the NHSS this spring.

LESSONS OF LEADERSHIP CONTEST

This third-year contest co-sponsored by the National History Club and **The HBE Foundation** invited student members of the NHC to select an elected official and describe how this person risked his or her career making a decision that was at odds with public opinion. Students were encouraged to think broadly for this contest (ancient or modern, domestic or foreign) and detail how this person's act of political courage can continue to guide and inspire us today.

First Prize (\$2,000):



Elias Abboud, Jackson High School, Massillon, OH --- “Yitzhak Rabin’s Decision to Fight for Peace”

Second Prize (\$1,000):



Brielle Januszewski, Xavier College Preparatory, Phoenix, AZ --- “**William Murray, 1st Earl of Mansfield: The Unwitting Abolitionist**”



Saharsh Agrawal, Keshav Shah, Jay Talati, Shivam Shukla, and Aren Saini, C. Leon King High School, Tampa, FL --- “**The United Nations: A Paragon of Global Leadership**”

Third Prize (\$500):

*** **Ariana Lopez**, Mankato West High School (MN), Website on Allan H. Spear

*** **Julie Sanders**, Newnan High School (GA), Essay on Abraham Lincoln

NATIONAL ADVISOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

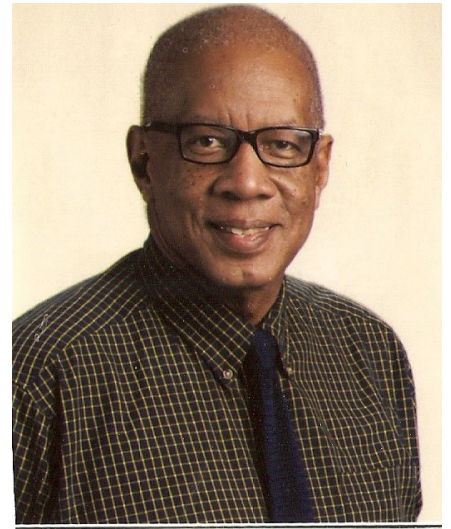
The NHC and The Churchill Centre are recognizing the following Advisors for their exceptional commitment to history education and the mission of the NHC. Advisors received a plaque, as well as a copy of *Churchill The Life: An Authorized Pictorial Biography*, a volume of Churchill's writings compiled by Max Arthur.



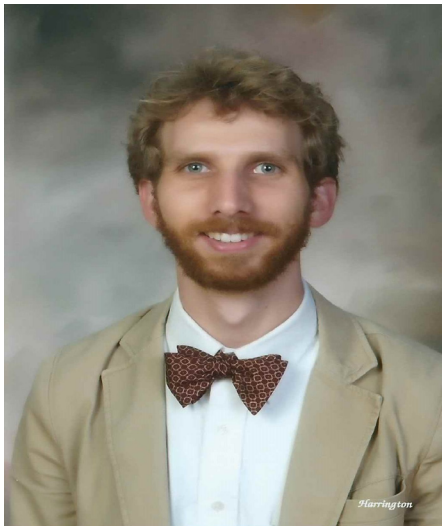
Jim Schneider, McAuley High School (OH)



Tom Siefring, United Nations School (NY)



John Lane, Covington Latin School (KY)



John Lary, C.E. Byrd High School (LA)



Deb Soplanda, Williams Bay High School (WI)



Helen Bradley, Nimitz High School (TX)



The Churchill Centre was founded in 1968 to educate new generations on the leadership, statesmanship, vision and courage through the thoughts, words, works and deeds of Winston Spencer Churchill. Global membership numbers over 3000, including affiliated societies in many nations. The Churchill Centre is devoted to scholarship and welcomes both critics and admirers of Winston Churchill. The Centre publishes a quarterly journal, *Finest Hour*, which offers proceedings from annual conferences, and a monthly e-newsletter, the Chartwell Bulletin. Editors and staff of the Centre's website answer email research queries from students and scholars worldwide, guiding them to sources they need in quests for knowledge of Winston Churchill's life and times. Visit their **WEBSITE**, especially the section for Educators.

NATIONAL CHAPTERS OF THE YEAR

The following ten Chapters are being recognized by the NHC for exemplary activities, community service, and overall commitment during this school year. Each Club received a plaque to hang in their school and a year's subscription to *The Concord Review*. To view a picture of select Clubs please visit the **Chapters of the Year** section on our website.

*** Abington Junior High School, Abington, Pennsylvania ***

*** Cannon School, Concord, North Carolina ***

*** Frankton High School, Frankton, Indiana ***

*** Heritage Christian Academy, Kalamazoo, Michigan ***

*** Newnan High School, Newnan, Georgia ***

*** Rainier Jr/Sr High School, Rainier, Oregon ***

*** Richard Montgomery High School, Rockville, Maryland ***

*** Sayville High School, West Sayville, New York ***

*** Shorecrest Preparatory School, St. Petersburg, Florida ***

*** Spanish River Community High School, Boca Raton, Florida ***

The NHC would like to recognize the following colleges and universities as supporters of our organization. We strongly encourage students who are considering majoring in history in college, and may be applying to one of these schools, to visit the school's website listed down below to find out more about the history department.



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|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| American University | Ohio University | University of Florida |
| Amherst College | Penn State University | UMass Amherst |
| Barnard College | Princeton University | University of Michigan |
| Carnegie Mellon University | Rice University | University of Mississippi |
| Cornell University | Rollins College | University of Notre Dame |
| DePaul University | St. John's University (NY) | University of Oklahoma |
| Georgia Tech University | Stanford University | University of the Pacific |
| Grand Valley State University | Suffolk University | University of Pennsylvania |
| Fordham University | Syracuse University | University of Rhode Island |
| Florida State University | Temple University | University of Tennessee |
| Franklin & Marshall College | Texas Christian University | University of Texas at Austin |
| Harvard University | Tulane University | Villanova University |
| Johns Hopkins University | University of Alabama | Virginia Tech University |
| Loyola University New Orleans | University of Arkansas | Washington University in St. Louis |
| Marquette University | University of Chicago | Wellesley College |
| New York University | University of Cincinnati | West Virginia University |
| Northwestern University | University of Colorado | Wright State University |

NATIONAL HISTORY CLUB

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National World War II Museum	Henry Seng
Ohio Historical Society	Gina Shannon
Omohundro Institute of Early American History	Jay Stout
Organization of American Historians	Steve Wheatley

The National History Club is a 501(c)(3) organization that relies on grants and donations to support efforts. If you are passionate about history and would like to contribute to our mission of promoting history at the secondary level please contact **Robert Nasson** (rnasson@nationalhistoryclub.org).