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“History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tidings of antiquity.” These words of Cicero epitomize the importance of history in our lives.

The study of history is imperative for understanding our present world and how it has come to be in the state it is in today. If we are not aware of the events of the past, it is impossible for us to understand the world in which we live in. Learning from the past is necessary if there is any hope of living a better present and improving the prospects of our future.

By examining how horrendous events such as the institution of slavery in America, the Holocaust, or the Tiananmen Square massacre have occurred, we can prevent ourselves from repeating these injustices in the future. Likewise, the study of people and events that have left a positive impact, such as the lives of Cincinnatus, George Washington, Gandhi, or Helen Keller, or the fall of the Berlin Wall, will inspire us to promote an equal and just community.

What would our world be without history’s influence? As Cicero said, “To be ignorant of what happened before you were born is to be ever a child. For what is man’s lifetime unless the memory of past events is woven with those of earlier times?” Without history, we would have no identity. There would be no pride in one’s nation or heritage because we would not have a common history to share and praise. There would be no wisdom gained from the knowledge of the past, nor stories, traditions, or culture passed down among generations.

We would not be able to draw inspiration, as I have, from the words of ancient orators and writers, Renaissance humanists, Enlightenment philosophers, the Founding Fathers, nineteenth and twentieth century activists for liberty and equality, or our American presidents. We would not be awed by the discoveries of scientists and inventors or the creations of artists. We would not be affected by the actions of Harriet Tubman, Marie Curie, the Wright brothers, or Mother Theresa. If we could not look back upon the achievements and failures in history, we would not be moved to progress. There would be no technological advancements in medicine and science to improve our quality of life.

I enjoy history because looking into the past gives me a better understanding of the world. The purpose of history is not rote memorization of facts and dates, it is learning from the lives,

stories, and experiences of our ancestors. I relish the opportunity to discover fascinating stories about the lives of others and events from the past. The more I learn, the more my passion for history grows.

This passion has driven me to share history's importance, and help foster a love of history in the hearts of others. I want to show everyone that history is interesting and can be fun! History is alive and thriving, and the best way to learn history is to live it. This is why I have become involved in historical interpretation.

Through museum volunteer work, Civil War re-enacting, and membership in the National History Club, I have the opportunity to experience and share history firsthand. As a volunteer at the Cincinnati Museum Center and as a Youth Docent at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, I am able to share my knowledge of and appreciation for history with others. I am an interpreter at Heritage Village Museum, a living history village set in the 19th century, where I dress in period attire, giving tours and demonstrations. I am also a member of the Young Ladies Living History Society of Greater Cincinnati, a group of costumed interpreters who educate the public at Civil War re-enactments and other events. I am devoted to this pastime because I have the chance to encounter history from a 'hands-on' perspective, as it was lived, and I love to learn and teach others about the past.

I enjoy being a member of the McAuley High School History Club chapter as it gives me the opportunity to join in the excitement of history with fellow students through various activities, meetings, guest speakers and field trips. As a member of the history club I am able to swap historic anecdotes with peers who share my interests.

In my opinion, the importance of the study of history is summarized in the words of David McCullough: "History is a guide to navigation in perilous times. History is who we are and why we are the way we are." History has truly become a part of who I am, and I am eager to share it with others.