

Dr. Lindsay M. Chervinsky is a presidential historian and the Executive Director of the George Washington Presidential Library. She is the author of the award-winning book, *The Cabinet: George Washington and the Creation of an American Institution*, co-editor of *Mourning the Presidents: Loss and Legacy in American Culture*, and her most recent book is *Making the Presidency*.

In 2002, I traveled to Washington, D.C. for the first time on my eighth-grade school trip. That week, we visited Gettysburg, we drove down to Jamestown and Williamsburg, we walked through

the monuments on the DC Mall at night, we saw the famous cherry blossoms, and we spent a morning at Mount Vernon.


The trip was life-defining for me. I fell in love with Washington, D.C. I believe the trip is one of the reasons I picked the city for college and made the area my adopted home as an adult. Eighth grade was a pretty important year too. Eighth grade curriculum includes a deep dive into American history, especially the Revolutionary War. Early America was always a favorite subject and I remember happily completing a project on women in the Revolution. The year is burned in my memory because we weren't just learning about history, we were living it. Just a few weeks into the school year, the 9/11 terrorist attacks fundamentally changed the world. It was the first time I can remember connecting history with current events in a real, tangible way. None of those experiences—the good and the scary—would have been possible without my eighth-grade history teacher, Victoria Shegoian. She

taught United States history, and she led the D.C. school trip.

I had always loved history and began devouring historical fiction as soon as I could read, thanks largely to my mom's family rule. She insisted that we do one history or cultural activity any time we took a family trip. Sometimes it was a museum, sometimes it was an experience. Often it was visiting what we call a "living history" site, which was a house or place that had been preserved to reflect what life looked like at a moment in the past. Mount Vernon is one example, but so are places like The Alamo, the Whitney Plantation, and Mission San Francisco de Asís in San Francisco.

When I was seven, we visited Jamestown and Williamsburg in Virginia. I vividly remember stepping into the tents, blinking my eyes against the dark, and smelling the pervasive fire smoke. I can still feel the weight of the chainmail as they lowered it over my shoulders.

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Sometimes our trips ended up being a little more ridiculous. In high school, we visited Boston and we planned to walk the Freedom Trail, stopping along the way at Paul Revere's house, the USS Constitution, and the Granary Burial Ground. We were from California, and it was our spring break, so we packed shorts and warm weather clothes. Evidently, we forgot to check the weather and the snow was quite a surprise. But it didn't matter, that was our cultural activity and my mom insisted we do it anyway. She did take pity on us and buy my sister and me sweatshirts and hats, but we still tease her about it.

No amount of reading, even for voracious, imaginative readers like I was, can make up for that visceral experience. They were my most memorable trips, but also helped history come alive. I could visualize how people lived in the past—where they slept, what they wore, how they prepared food, and how they grappled with the changing seasons—in a way that wasn't always possible without the physical space.

That interest in history would not have survived, however, if I had bad teachers that crushed my passion for the subject. Thankfully, I had a couple of amazing history teachers who encouraged, pushed, and never gave up on me. That support proved critical when my career took a turn I never expected.

This spring, twenty-three years after I visited Mount Vernon as an eighth grader, Mrs. Shegoian led her twenty-fifth trip to Washington, D.C. I was there when they stopped at Mount Vernon, this time as the Executive Director of the George Washington Presidential Library. It was such a treat to spend time with my beloved teacher, meet with the group, and share with them how life can take you places you can't even imagine.

I was going to be a lawyer. I come from a family of lawyers and fully intended to join the profession. I competed intensely on my Mock Trial team in high school and college. I took pre-law classes, I studied for the LSAT exam (the law school entrance examination), I applied to law schools, and I was accepted. There had been several red flags along the way, which I ignored, but at the last moment I realized I would be miserable.

More importantly, I realized that history, which I had always dismissed as a fun hobby, could be a career. I changed gears and applied for a Ph.D. in history instead. Without those history teachers, graduate school, my books, and my current job would not have been possible. When I speak to students today, including students from my former middle school this spring, I encourage them to follow their passions and pursue them in whatever format brings them joy. You never know where it might lead. ■

Access to the NHC network, which includes chapters in 46 states and over 19,000 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 explore new opportunities! To explore specific sites click on the bolded text to be redirected!



Bethlehem Catholic High School (PA) in Hyde Park, NY at the **Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library and Museum**. In addition to visiting FDR's birthplace, they were also able to visit the **Vanderbilt Mansion**.



Brown County High School (IN) hosted "Appeals on Wheels," where the Indiana Court of Appeals traveled to their high school and heard an oral argument from students. After the hearing, their students were able to ask questions of the justices, and also were able to eat lunch with them.



Houston County High School (GA) participated in a number of activities this year, ranging from visiting the **Jimmy Carter National Historic Park** to a Renaissance Faire to creating historical Valentine's in February. Here they are as a group participating in National History Day.



The Lake County History Club (SD) hosted Holocaust survivor Ben Lesser via Zoom for a community event in February. The local university offered up use of their auditorium classroom and all of the local newspaper reporters were in attendance. More than 130 attended—people of all ages, students (elementary through college), and also folks from outside the town.



Richlands High School (VA) took a trip to both **Green Bank Observatory** as well as the underground bunkers at **The Greenbrier** to get some first hand knowledge of Cold War history.



Rainier Jr/Sr High School (OR) held their 13th annual Rainier Revisited day this past April, for community members to get a look at life in 1853 in their town. Students dressed up in period era attire, presented period era crafts, and even held a hands-on blacksmith demonstration.



Durand High School (IL) visited Ulysses S. Grant's home in Galena, Illinois.



Plainview High School's (AL) newest members of the National History Scholars Society.



Humphreys High School (DoD School - South Korea) with their Club banner.

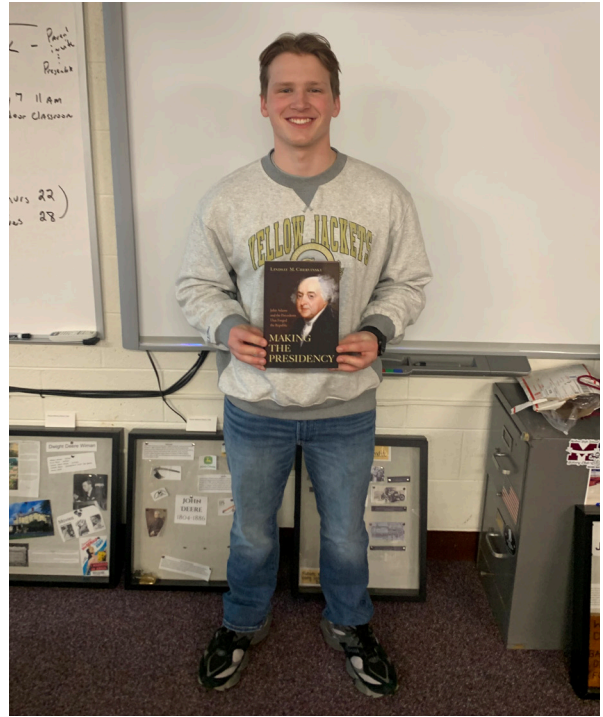


Newnan High School (GA) planted 1,500 flags in front of their school for Veterans Day.

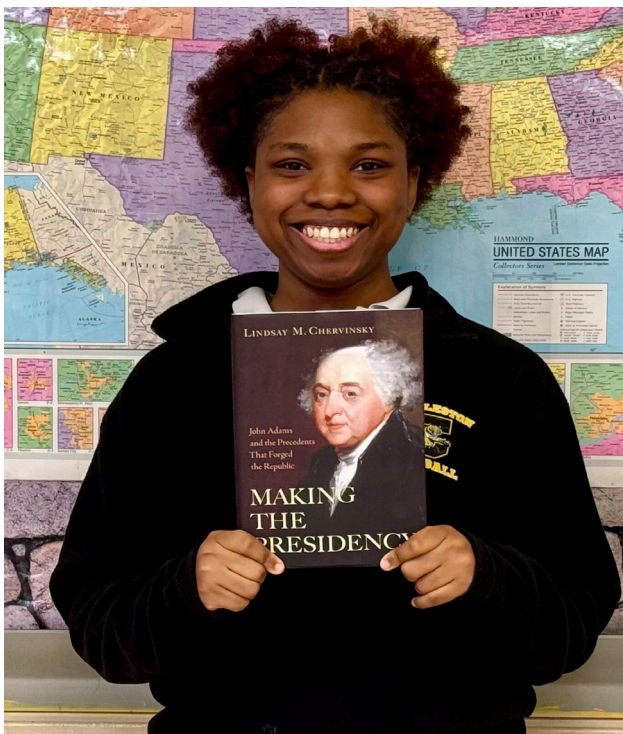
HISTORY STUDENT OF THE YEAR

This Spring the National History Club 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 the student received a copy of *Making The Presidency* by Dr. Lindsay Chervinsky. This is the 21st year of the partnership between Mount Vernon and the NHC to sponsor this prestigious award. To view recipients please visit this [page](#) on our website.

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, and 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 over 1,000,000 visitors each year.



Moline High School (IL) recipient Andrew Grau.



Charleston High School (MS) recipient Makaila Griffin.



Camden Central High School (TN) recipient Matthew Arnold.

NATIONAL HISTORY SCHOLARS SOCIETY

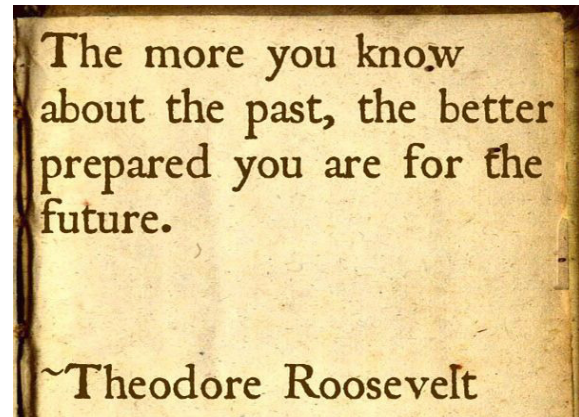
The NHSS was created in Spring 2009 to recognize outstanding members in each Club. Nominees are required to have a B grade or higher in at least one Honors/AP history class, have been a member of their History Club for 2+ years, and be nominated by their Club Advisor.



There were 787 student members inducted into the NHSS this spring (4.7% of total NHC student membership), and they will proudly wear burgundy honor cords at graduation as a symbol of their academic excellence. To view the entire list of inductees please visit our **NHSS page** on our website.



The NHC is proud to have the support of over 60 college history departments! We hope that any of our members who are interested in majoring in history in college will visit a college's website listed down below to find out more about the history department and its offerings.



American University	Loyola University Maryland	Texas Christian University
Barnard College	Loyola University Chicago	University of Alabama
Baylor University	Marquette University	University of Alabama Birmingham
Boston College	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Chicago
Boston University	Mount Holyoke College	University of Colorado
Brandeis University	New York University	University of Georgia
Carnegie Mellon University	North Carolina State University	University of Iowa
Dartmouth College	Northwestern University	UMass Amherst
Drew University	Ohio State University	UMass Lowell
Duke University	Princeton University	University of Michigan
Centre College	Rhodes College	University of Mississippi
Georgia Tech University	Rice University	University of North Carolina
Gonzaga University	Rochester Institute of Technology	University of Pennsylvania
Fordham University	Santa Clara University	University of Richmond
Franklin & Marshall College	Skidmore College	University of Rhode Island
Harvard University	Southern Methodist University	University of Texas at Austin
James Madison University	Southwestern University	University of Utah
Johns Hopkins University	Stanford University	University of Vermont
Kenyon College	Stony Brook University	Vassar College
Louisiana State University	Suffolk University	Wake Forest University
Loyola Marymount University	Swarthmore College	Wellesley College

NATIONAL HISTORY CLUB

The NHC would like to express our gratitude to the following people and organizations who make our important work possible...

John Abele	Penguin Random House
HISTORY®	Smithsonian Institution
George Washington's Mount Vernon	Society of Architectural Historians
The HBE Foundation	The Concord Review
Alexander Dreyfoos School of the Arts	The History List
American Association for State and Local History	Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
American Civil War Museum	Patrick Allitt (Professor, Emory)
American Historical Association	Jim Belcher
Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles	Joan & Rick Gier
Gilder Lehrman Institute	Elizabeth Jones
HarperCollins Publishing	William Jordan (Professor, Princeton)
History 500	John Lane
Laurel Hill Cemetery	Howard Loken
Museum of Florida History	Beth & Bob Nasson
National Council for History Education	Lee Pollock
National Vietnam War Museum	Guy Rogers (Professor, Wellesley)
National World War I Museum	Henry Seng
National World War II Museum	Art Snyder
Omohundro Institute of Early American History	Rick Sperry
Organization of American Historians	Lisa Wingate

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 school level please contact **Robert Nasson** (rnasson@nationalhistoryclub.org).

www.nationalhistoryclub.org