



# For Middle and High School Students of History



Fall 2019

A Partner of HISTORY®

Issue XXXIX



History Club Advisor **John Garner** (Mason Creek Middle School, Georgia) had the honor of meeting **Sarah Collins Rudolph** two summers ago. The following is an essay on his time spent with Ms. Rudolph, and has been authorized by her and her husband. The NHC would like to sincerely thank them for allowing us to share this important story.

## The Fifth Little Girl

There are moments in history that define or shape a nation. For the residents of Birmingham, Alabama, September 15, 1963 will forever resonate as one of those moments.

For many Americans who watched the television coverage or read about the bombings of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in their daily newspapers, this attack was just another atrocity linked to the ever growing issue of race relations throughout the southern United States in the years that history books label as the Civil Rights Movement. However, for four families in the segregated streets of Birmingham, that day was far from just another event that contributed to the onslaught of violence that the African American community experienced in this struggle. In fact, this was deeply personal and is one that survivors and family members will carry with them for the rest of their lives. It is the memory of this day that has defined the last 50 years for one little girl.

Sitting in the home of one of these family members in Birmingham, you will find yourself surrounded by memories and honors collected over a half-century of reliving the domestic terrorism that would leave both physical and mental scars that are still fresh today. Hanging on the walls in the

living room are pictures of Carole Robertson, Cynthia Wesley, Denise McNair and Addie Mae Collins. Additionally, you will see the pictures of a little girl with bandages over both her eyes while lying in an intensive care unit in an Alabama hospital. A little girl who had survived as a victim of the bombings by three members of the Ku Klux Klan. A little girl who would never again share a laugh with her sister after she was taken from her while innocently getting ready for church. A little girl that has been forgotten to history, but whose story must be told. This little girl is Sarah Collins Rudolph and she is the sister of Addie Mae Collins and is herself a victim.

In hearing the retelling of this horrific event, you can not help but to feel the raw emotions that Mrs. Rudolph struggles with on a daily basis. Sitting at an angle to best facilitate her limited vision after losing an eye in the blast, she speaks of that morning as if it were yesterday as she has done time and again, ensuring the memory of her sister and friends is never forgotten. In very specific details, she explains that her and the four

*continued on page 2...*

little girls were all running late to church that day and had missed their Sunday school class, so they had decided to “freshen up” before the service began. Standing at the mirrors ensuring that each hair was in place and the seams of their dresses were neatly lined, the girls laughed and talked without a care in the world. In fact, the last memory that she has of these four little girls was watching as Addie helped her friend Denise tie a bow on her dress. As she turned back to inspect her reflection, Mrs. Rudolph’s life was changed forever with a blinding blast of debris and light.

Addie Mae Collins will never finish helping her friend get ready for church. Denise’s smile now only exists in the fading artifacts of her family’s picture albums. Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley never heard the messages of their preacher that they had walked several blocks that morning to hear. These little girls’ bright futures were extinguished by a senseless act of murder that ultimately served as a catalyst in the subsequent pieces of legislation addressing civil rights in America. However, it is the legacy of hate that took these four little girls, that inspires Mrs. Rudolph to speak today.

Hanging among the pictures and honors on her walls are recognitions from countless universities, civil rights organizations, school groups and others who have been blessed to hear the story of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing from a survivor. A survivor that lost a sister. A survivor that lost friends. A survivor that lost her eyesight, but yet one that provides us with an insight into this tragic moment in history. Mrs. Sarah Collins Rudolph’s story is one of tragedy, courage and survival that should be fully embraced as a part of the fabric of American history. To learn from the past, we must study all aspects of it to be more informed and compassionate today than we were yesterday. ■



## JOIN THE NATIONAL HISTORY CLUB

When you join the NHC, you join students and teachers from around the country learning, reading, writing, and living history. The NHC's main goal is to bring together students and teachers with a real passion for history, helping them learn from each other's ideas, experiences, and stories, which are distributed through our tri-annual Newsletter, monthly eBlast, and various award programs.

We strongly believe in a bottom-up approach, where each club is allowed to navigate its own course in choosing the activities that it pursues. This allows for a wide-range of interesting activities that are showcased in each Newsletter. Schools that join the NHC are free to decide whether their chapter will be a regular History Club (open to all) or a History Honor Society (with specific requirements for induction).

For more information on how to start a new club or enroll an existing one, please visit:  
<https://www.nationalhistoryclub.org/joiningthenhc>

Access to the NHC network, which includes chapters in 45 states and over 18,000 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!



**Bainbridge High School** (WA) was visited by two 98 year-old World War II veterans, Thomas Hart MacElwee, LTJG, D-Day and Thomas Berg, PO2, Pearl Harbor. Both shared their experiences with students, and the Club was paid a special visit by a woman who showed up during the session that was born and raised in the Netherlands during the war.



**Cincinnati Country Day School** (OH) students Neil Badlani and William Sommer spent the summer working on researching and creating a coffee table book memorializing the life of former resident, Tom Craig, for Episcopal Retirement Services. Mr. Craig, who the lobby is named after, joined the navy in 1943 and served as an aviation radioman and air gunner during World War II.



**Frankton High School** (IN) on their recent trip to the reenactment at Mississinewa 1812, which is now the largest War of 1812 reenactment in the nation, and is located just north of Marion, Indiana. The Battle of Mississinewa marked the first offensive victory for the American army during the war, in which Lt. Col. John Campbell led 600 mounted troops out of central Ohio to destroy the Indian villages on the river.



**Fusion Academy** (NJ) made a trip to a local assisted living facility in November, where they interviewed some of the residents about their experiences growing up in America. Club members left with a better understanding what it was like to live during different decades, such as the post-World War II late 1940s and the turbulent 1960s with the assassinations of the Kennedy Brothers and Martin Luther King, Jr.



**Mason Creek Middle School** (GA) is one of the newest members of the NHC and they already have close to 100 students that are part of the Club! Here they are honoring first responders from their town this past September in remembrance of 9/11.



**Rainier Junior/Senior High School** (OR) at Fort Astoria, where John Jacob Astor started the Pacific Fur Company. Built at the entrance of the Columbia River in 1811, Fort Astoria was the first American-owned settlement on the Pacific Coast, and the types of fur taken in trade included beaver, sea otter, squirrel, and red fox.



**San Joaquin Memorial High School** (CA) has 60+ members this year and has been holding "cinema nights" every month this fall with historically themed films. Movies watched so far included "Schindler's List" and "Troy".



**Sullivan High School** (IN) was busy this summer traveling to Gettysburg and Washington, DC. Here they are in front of the statue honoring the 2,200 men from Indiana who fought for the Union at Gettysburg during the Civil War.



**Manhasset High School** (NY) with St. John's Professor, Howard Ehrlrich, who spoke to them about "Protecting the President: The History of the Secret Service".



**Heritage Christian Academy** (MI) at the **Detroit Historical Museum**, learning about the city's history of cobblestone streets, auto assembly lines, toy trains, and much more.



**Western High School** (FL) celebrated the 232nd anniversary of the signing of the Constitution by selling pocket constitutions to the student body this fall!



**Williams Bay High School** (WI) celebrated the 100th year anniversary of their town by making and selling town ornaments and magnets!

# LESSONS OF LEADERSHIP CONTEST

## Profiles in Political Courage

\* Guidelines:

Elected officials have always been called upon to make critically important decisions, ones that can determine the fate of their towns, cities, states and nations. With the next election in the not-so-distant future, the NHC and The HBE Foundation are pleased to present the 7th annual “Lessons of Leadership” contest, with a focus on political courage.

We invite middle and high school students from any school in the United States to select an elected official and describe how that person risked his or her career with a decision (passing a law, making a speech, advocating for change, running for office, etc.) that was at odds with public opinion. Using descriptive examples of the risks, consequences and rewards associated with his/her act of political courage, we seek to be inspired by the vision and boldness of these leaders. We strongly encourage students to think broadly about this topic, and figures can be ancient or modern, domestic (local, state, national) or foreign. Acts of political courage can range from a representative from one’s town or city to a world leader. Contest entries can be submitted in any of the three following formats:

\* An essay of no less than 500 words and not more than 2,000 words, supplemented with a bibliography and endnotes. Entries may be submitted in either of the following forms: 1) Microsoft Word document or 2) PDF document.

\* A documentary or PowerPoint presentation that reflects your ability to communicate your figure’s importance, and also helps you develop skills in using photographs, video, graphic presentations, etc. Documentaries should not exceed more than 10 minutes, and sources used should be credited through a bibliography.

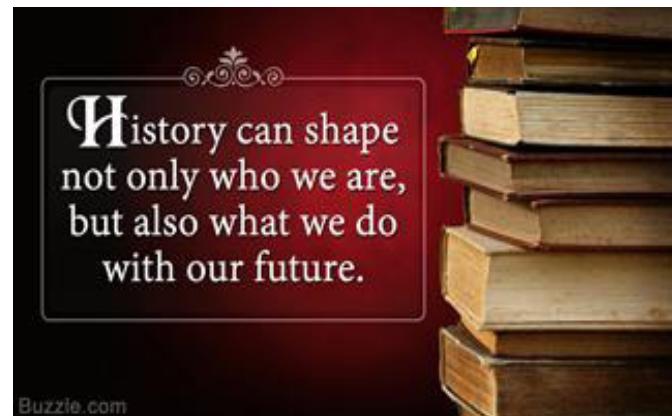
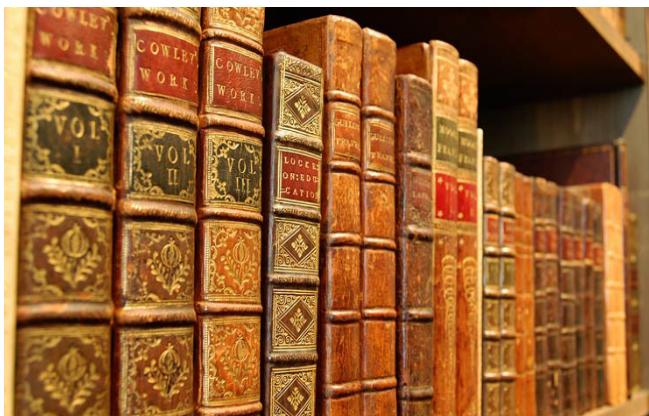
\* A website that reflects your ability to use website design software and computer technology to communicate how your historical figure influenced history. Your website should include a collection of web pages, interconnected with hyperlinks, that presents primary and secondary sources and interactive multimedia. Sources used should be credited through a bibliography.

All entries must be received by April 10, 2020 and can be emailed to Bob Nasson at [rnasson@nationalhistoryclub.org](mailto:rnasson@nationalhistoryclub.org) (please type “Lessons of Leadership” in the subject line). Submissions will be judged by the NHC Advisory Board and winners will be announced at the end of April.

### Awards:

- First Place - \$1,500 (one prize)**
- Second Place - \$750 (two prizes)**
- Third Place - \$500 (four prizes)**

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.



Baylor University	Loyola University Chicago	Union College
Boston University	Loyola University New Orleans	University of Alabama
Brandeis University	Marquette University	University of Arkansas
Brown University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University at Buffalo
Carnegie Mellon University	Northern Illinois University	University of Chicago
Coe College	Northwestern University	University of Cincinnati
DePaul University	Ohio State University	University of Colorado
Georgia Tech University	Princeton University	University of Iowa
Gettysburg College	Rhodes College	UMass Amherst
Grand Valley State University	Rice University	UMBC
Franklin & Marshall College	Rollins College	University of North Carolina
Harvard University	Santa Clara University	University of Rhode Island
Hofstra University	Southern Methodist University	University of Tulsa
Indiana University	Southwestern University	University of Utah
Ithaca College	Stanford University	University of Vermont
James Madison University	Suffolk University	University of Wyoming
Johns Hopkins University	SUNY - Oswego	Vanderbilt University
Lawrence University	Swarthmore College	Vassar College
Louisiana State University	Syracuse University	Wake Forest University
Loyola Marymount University	Temple University	Wellesley College
Loyola University Maryland	Texas Christian University	Western Carolina University

# 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	Smithsonian Institution
HISTORY®	Society of Architectural Historians
George Washington's Mount Vernon	The Concord Review
The HBE Foundation	The Churchill Centre
Agricultural History Society	The History List
American Association for State and Local History	Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
American Civil War Museum	Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum
American Historical Association	Patrick Allitt (Professor, Emory)
Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles	Peter Baldwin (Professor, UCLA)
Gilder Lehrman Institute	Rick & Barbara Berenson
HarperCollins Publishing	Radcliffe Cheston
History News Network	Will Fitzhugh
History 500	Joan & Rick Gier
Laurel Hill Cemetery	William Jordan (Professor, Princeton)
Museum of Florida History	John Lane
National Council for History Education	Frances & John Pepper
National Vietnam War Museum	Jim Schneider
National World War I Museum	Henry Seng
National World War II Museum	Gina Shannon
Omohundro Institute of Early American History	Art Snyder
Organization of American Historians	Rick Sperry
Parkview High School (GA)	Steve Wheatley
Penguin Random House	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 level please contact **Robert Nasson** ([rnasson@nationalhistoryclub.org](mailto:rasson@nationalhistoryclub.org)).