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**Learning History Helps Every
Graduate Become a Leader**

As secondary school students, you are now faced with the daunting task of preparing for a time where many of the careers in the future do not even exist today. It is not just the rate of change of technology that is causing new jobs to appear and old ones to disappear at a stunning rate; as we are increasingly connected with the world and with each other, those networks spawn new relationships, create new opportunities across the globe and relegate others to extinction.

Moreover, the speed at which these changes occur means that there will be little or no time to prepare for those new careers; in many cases you will have to invent those new jobs even as you enter them. Whether you are in a large multi-national corporation, a medium-sized business or create your own start-up, you will be expected to hit the ground running, begin new projects and take on tasks at the head of a team, all without a lot of hand-holding. The fact is, many of these new technologies have driven companies and organizations to be so thinly staffed in any one project area, that they will not have the luxury of bringing you up to speed before you are

placed in charge. In other words, you often will be expected to be a leader almost before you have learned where the bathrooms are.

How do you prepare for leadership in such an uncertain future, where even the technology you are using at this very moment may be obsolete by the time you graduate university, college or an apprenticeship program? You might be surprised to learn that history, the study and analysis of the past, is the most powerful tool that leaders have to help them understand the future.

Yes, the philosopher George Santayana said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”, and Mark Twain should have said (but didn’t) that “history never repeats itself, but it rhymes”. But those are rather simple observations. The more sophisticated reason that leaders study history is because even though technologies or governments or businesses may change over time, the way people and societies interact with them and with each other has changed very little. This is why we can read Homer (2,500 years old), Shakespeare (400 years) and the

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Declaration of Independence (250 years) and still instantly recognize the emotions, desires, conflicts, dreams and hopes in those distant eras as if they were written yesterday. And we can use that knowledge of how people and societies have reacted to, learned from and adapted to events that occurred in the past, to inform us of how they will do so in the future.

Military leaders have known this for a long time, which is why Army sergeants flying drones still study the Battle of Gettysburg, and Navy officers commanding stealthy, laser-equipped warships learn about Horatio Nelson and the Age of Sail; the weapons may have evolved but the underlying political goals, strategies and even psychology of warfare have not changed. Hi-tech moguls have consciously modeled their companies, campuses and corporate cultures after Bell Laboratories, which from the 1920s until the 1970s was a major source of technology innovation, from television to transistors to digital cameras. Even community leaders today who want to extend high-speed internet to underserved rural areas are taking a leaf from the 1930s Rural Electrification Program, when the government created low-interest loans and rural electric cooperatives to bring electricity to the farms and hamlets that were overlooked by the big power companies.

You are entering a world where economic, social and political changes just now visible on the horizon will be soon rushing towards you at blinding speed. Automation is replacing once-secure jobs; your car will drive itself; the unchallenged supremacy of the United States on the world stage is being replaced by competition with rivals like China and Russia. How will you and your peers successfully adapt to these upheavals? The study of the past provides signposts to the future. The Industrial Revolution of the 19th century created technologies like mechanized factories which caused workers to lose jobs; but these new technologies also created new businesses and opened new sectors of the economy which actually raised the overall standard of living. The 20th century saw a shift from the horse-drawn carriage to the automobile, and both urban and rural societies found mechanisms to successfully deal with these new modes of transportation. The multipolar world we are now entering bears a striking resemblance to the balance-of-power political environment of the 18th century, which gave rise to the American Revolution and the birth of the United States. In each of these examples, understanding how people and societies adapted to these changes provides a window to see what will come.

If you are reading this essay, you are already interested in history. Stay with it. The knowledge you glean from the past will help you lead this nation into the future. ■



2018 NCHE National Conference

The National Council for History Education is bringing their 2018 Conference “Myth, Memory, and Monuments” to San Antonio, Texas in April. Gather with teachers, historians, and lovers of history for three days of exemplary History instruction. Attend NCHE’s national conference and join others who are passionate about historical thinking in a setting that inspires reflection on the past.

[Click here to find out more about the conference!](#)

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS



Bergman Middle School (AR) students got to hear a talk and then meet, Dr. Irene Butter, a survivor of the Holocaust, at the **Clinton Presidential Center** in Little Rock at the end of January.



Booker T. Washington Magnet High School (AL) members with Montgomery Mayor Todd Strange, alongside the C-SPAN bus, where they participated in the revealing of a World War I commemorative statue to the Rainbow Brigade, a group of 3,000 soldiers from Alabama who distinguished themselves in pivotal battles in Europe.



Brown County High School (IN) held a recent fundraiser where they raised over \$1,100 for the local VFW Post. By asking faculty and staff to donate money to wear jeans to school for a week, they nearly doubled what they raised last year. Featured in the picture from left to right, Alecia Adams (Advisor), Emily Lewellen (Advisor), Emma Snyder, Tanner Bowman, and VFW Commander, Don Birden.



East Bladen High School (NC) has been active supporting their local historic site, **Harmony Hall Plantation Village**. They decorated the 250 year old home and helped to host the annual Christmas Open House, serving wassail and demonstrating period-appropriate tasks. They also hosted over 100 2nd graders for a day long field trip, where the children learned to write with quills and ink, toured the historic home, and got to play Colonial Era games.



Malden High School (MA) members were part of a group of students who were invited as guests of the German Consulate to Boston City Hall Plaza, where they visited the **New England Holocaust Memorial** and met with Holocaust survivors, the German Consul, and Mayor Marty Walsh.



Richlands High School (VA) took an overnight trip to Western Pennsylvania, where they got to tour Frank Lloyd Wright's residential masterpiece, **Fallingwater**. The group of 36 student members plus chaperones were also able to visit the **Flight 93 Memorial** in Shanksville, PA. Here they are pictured outside the national memorial.



S.C. Governor's School (SC) organized a “find the map” activity, where Club members placed sticky markers all over a huge wall map. They then invited children from the local community to come in and learn more about the continents, countries, islands, seas, and oceans that were represented.



Mineral Ridge High School (OH) visited the **National Museum of the US Air Force** in Dayton, Ohio, the oldest and largest military aviation museum in the world. The group got to see more than 360 aerospace vehicles and missiles, along with thousands of historical items and powerful sensory exhibits.

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT - FRANKTON HIGH SCHOOL

In the midst of a fall semester filled with various activities, the Frankton History Club (IN) also had the incredible opportunity to participate in the Hamilton Education Program, which is sponsored by the **Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History**. This program was created to allow students, especially those who might not otherwise have the chance, to see the hit Broadway show “Hamilton”, which was written by the renowned Lin-Manuel Miranda and details the life of Alexander Hamilton, one of America’s Founding Fathers.

The Hamilton Education Program is a partnership between the play itself, the Gilder Lehrman Institute, and The Rockefeller Foundation, who has generously given a grant that allows for students in Title I schools to see the show for a minimal cost. This program, which originated in New York City and focused on city students, has since expanded all across the country. Schools interested in applying should check out the **Gilder Lehrman site** for further information.

Frankton traveled to Chicago to see the show in November, but in preparation for “our shot”, students were asked to complete research into the life of Alexander Hamilton and the Founding Era. This included a study of primary sources associated with Hamilton, all of which

were provided by Gilder Lehrman, which boasts an archive of over 65,000 primary sources, including a love letter from Hamilton to his fiancée, Elizabeth Schuyler. Our club met several times after school to discuss these sources, and how they contributed to our understanding of Hamilton’s impact on the founding of our country.

Students were also challenged to use these sources to create an original performance piece.

Students, in small groups or as individuals, created poems, songs, raps, and skits which discussed topics ranging from the Boston Tea Party, to Hamilton’s infamous affair with Mariah Reynolds, to Hamilton’s duel with Aaron Burr, which we performed in front of our group.



The work of the program culminated in our incredible opportunity to see the play in person at the CIBC Theater in Chicago. The day began with the chance to see selected student performances from all of the schools present and a Q & A with members of the cast, and ended with the performance itself, which was AMAZING! The Frankton History Club is truly grateful to the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History for this program and the opportunity to see this show!

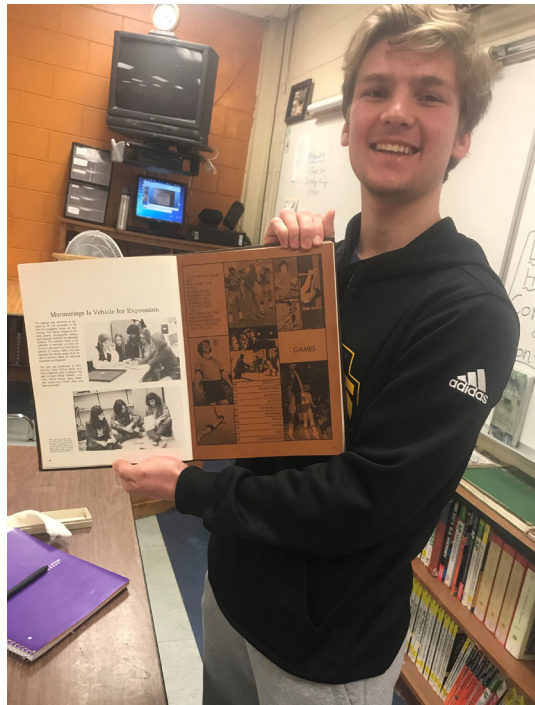
CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT - HENRY CLAY HIGH SCHOOL

The Henry Clay History Lab was created in 2005 by social studies teacher Chris Snow and a small group of members from the Henry Clay History Club (KY). The idea of a hands on-lab came from an experience in a history class at Eastern Kentucky University. The professor teaching a course on Native American History brought in reproductions of native artifacts for students to examine.

The lesson went so well that Mr. Snow decided to replicate the experience in his own classroom. The lesson was very successful and soon Mr. Snow began looking for more items to use so that every era of history could be covered. Through the tireless efforts of the History Club, community outreach and endless scouring of local antique malls, a small but workable collection was created.

T o d a y , over 7000 artifacts reside in the Henry Clay History Lab. Teachers throughout the school use items and primary sources from the lab to give students a hands on historical experience of American and European

history. Recently, the lab created a religious database which includes religious artifacts, books and clothing associated with a dozen different religions across the globe.



History lab lessons generally begin with an image based lecture and discussion of the period being covered. Once the introduction is concluded students are put into groups of four and each is given a particular artifact. Each group answers four critical thinking questions regarding their item; what is it made of and what does this say about the time period it is from, if the item is still used in the modern period (why or why not), and what the item was used for and if it is obsolete today. After student groups have covered at least three artifacts, Mr. Snow discusses each item, revealing its use, its history and its overall relevancy.



The Club is constantly looking to expand their growing collection to include even more artifacts and historical objects, and encourages other Clubs throughout the country to consider creating their own History Labs in their schools!

LESSONS OF LEADERSHIP CONTEST

Hometown Heroes

* **Guidelines:** While we often recognize and honor figures of national prominence, there are many individuals in our local communities who may not get the spotlight they deserve, people who have had a sizable influence on our towns, cities, and states. These people are from all different eras and backgrounds: It's the educator who your school is named after who opened it back in the 1800s. It's the World War II veteran who fought for our country and has resided in your town for the past 50 years. It's the past mayor of your city or governor of your state who was the driving force behind modernizing where you live. It's the nurse or doctor who has had a hospital dedicated to them for the life-saving work they did in their field. Hometown Heroes are all around us—even if sometimes we don't realize it—and it's time to honor their legacies.

With the generous support of The HBE Foundation, the NHC encourages student members to select a figure (local or state-wide) and examine how that person's actions helped make a lasting, positive impact on history. Contest entries can be submitted in any three of the following formats:

* An essay of not more than 2,000 words, supplemented with a thorough 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 in an annotated 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 in an annotated bibliography.

All entries must be received by April 1, 2018 and can be emailed to Bob Nasson at **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:

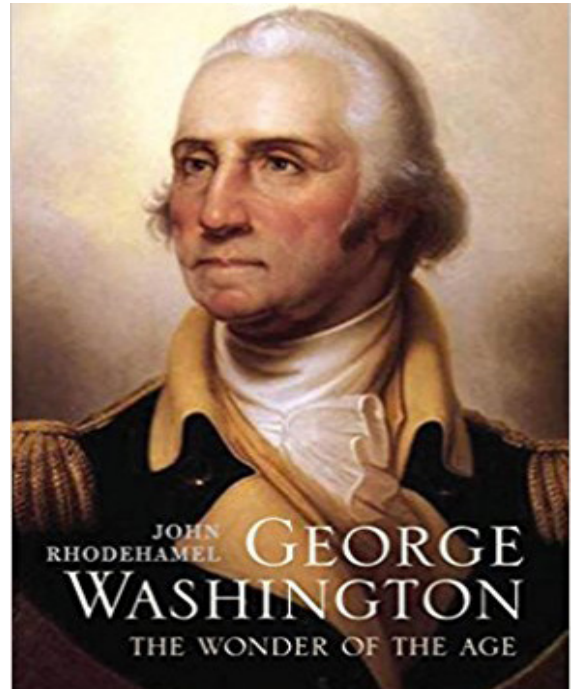
First Place - \$2,000
Second Place - \$1,000 (two prizes)
Third Place - \$500 (two prizes)

HISTORY STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

This Spring the NHC and George Washington's Mount Vernon will again co-sponsor the "History Student of the Year" prize. Each chapter will choose a recipient for this award, and s/he will receive an autographed copy of a history book. This is the 14th year of the partnership between Mount Vernon and the NHC to sponsor this prestigious award.

The book prize this year will be an autographed hardcover copy of *George Washington: The Wonder of the Age* by John Rhodehamel.

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.



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NATIONAL HISTORY CLUB

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| HISTORY® | Penguin Random House |
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| National World War II Museum | Art Snyder |
| Omohundro Institute of Early American History | Rick Sperry |
| 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).