

For Middle and High School Students of History

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Born in Burbank, CA, **Gary Powers** is the son of Francis Gary and Claudia “Sue” Powers. Gary is the Founder and Chairman Emeritus of The Cold War Museum, which he created in 1996 to honor Cold War veterans, including his father. Gary is the author of *Letters from a Soviet Prison* (2017) and *Spy Pilot* (2019), which both help to dispel the misinformation surrounding the U-2 Incident. He lectures internationally and appears regularly on C-SPAN, HISTORY®, Discovery, and A&E Channels.

It was a cold, dark, and foggy morning in Potsdam, Germany on the day of the exchange. Two prisoners and an

entourage of KGB and CIA officials were on either side of the bridge in their respective delegations. Once the agents’ identities were confirmed, the signal was given and the prisoners walked across the Glienicker Bridge to their respective freedom. This exchange was the center of Steven Spielberg’s Cold War thriller aptly named “The Bridge of Spies”, which was released in the United States on October 16, 2015.

Rudolph Abel was welcomed home as a hero to the Soviet Union. But U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers returned home to controversy surrounding the U-2 Incident because of inaccurate articles and commentaries in the media. Many questioned the role Powers played in the intrigue between the two superpowers.

The U-2 Incident, which occurred on May 1, 1960, was one of the most pivotal events in the history of the Cold War. It was perhaps the first time in U.S. history that a president had been caught lying to the American people. The event caused such a strain on U.S.-Soviet relations that Soviet leader

Nikita Khrushchev canceled an invitation for President Dwight Eisenhower to visit the Soviet Union later that year. In addition, the Paris Summit Conference that was planned for May 16, 1960, collapsed when Eisenhower refused to apologize to Khrushchev for authorizing the U-2 flights over the Soviet Union and Khrushchev ended up banging his shoe during his next visit to the United Nations.

The controversy that surrounded the U-2 Incident was magnified in the annals of Cold War history because Powers was captured alive and because of the dramatic show trial that followed. The event was controversial because the United States was caught spying on the Soviets by flying over their territory—a practice that continues to this day with drones flying over Iran and other countries hostile to the United States. In addition, some people thought Powers did not follow orders upon capture and that the CIA had intentionally sabotaged the flight to ruin the Paris Summit.

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Rumors, speculation, misinformation, and some outright lies circulated in the press during Powers' captivity about his conduct, loyalty, and the cause of his capture. After going through three months of Soviet interrogations, he was subjected to a highly publicized show trial designed to further embarrass the United States. Eighteen months after the trial, Powers returned to the United States where the CIA, the U.S. Air Force and the designer of the U-2 debriefed him for three weeks at a safe house in Maryland. During this time, he confirmed that there was no flame out or sabotage and that he was at his assigned altitude of 70,500 feet when shot down by a Soviet SA-2 (S-75 Dvina) surface-to-air missile that exploded below and behind the tail section of Powers' airplane. This caused structural failure to the frame and brought down the plane.

On March 6, 1962, Powers appeared in an open hearing before the Senate Committee on Armed Services. The committee exonerated him of any wrongdoing and called him "a fine young man performing well under dangerous circumstances." After his testimony, the audience gave him a standing ovation. But at the time the U.S. government didn't clear up many of the false stories that had been circulated, and the CIA wouldn't permit him to write his account of the incident until many years later.

As a result of the end of the Cold War, Powers' reputation started to transform from one that was infamous to that of a U.S. hero who was caught up in the global political environment of the time. Over the past 55 years, additional evidence has surfaced from both sides that his U-2 plane was, in fact, shot down while flying at an altitude of 70,500 feet over Sverdlovsk and he did not collaborate with the Soviets.

As a result of declassified documents pertaining to the U-2 Incident, the U.S. Air Force determined that throughout his captivity, Powers exhibited steadfast loyalty and resistance to exploitation despite all Soviet efforts through insults and threats of death to obtain classified information. In May 2000, the Air Force presented Powers with the POW Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross and the CIA presented him with the Director's Medal for extreme fidelity and courage in the line of duty. In June 2012, the Air Force presented Powers a posthumous Silver Star decoration for the valor he exhibited in carrying out his mission. This shows that it is never too late to set the record straight. ■



For those students working on history research papers this spring, please consider submitting your work to *The Concord Review* for possible publication. TCR remains the only quarterly history journal in the world to publish the academic work of secondary school students. Papers may be submitted on any historical topic, ancient or modern, domestic or foreign.

TCR has published more than 1,200 exemplary history papers by secondary students from 45 states and 40 other countries in 119 quarterly issues since 1987. To find more information, and a submission form, visit TCR's website at: <http://www.tcr.org/submit>

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!



Enochs High School (CA) traveled to San Francisco for their spring trip where they learned more about the history of the city. The highlight of the visit was a night trip to **Alcatraz**, where they got to see the cell blocks (including the military prison barracks and the Dungeon) as well as listen to a former inmate who spent 20 years in San Quentin discuss life behind bars.



Frankton High School (IN) traveled to Indianapolis to see a performance of "The Diary of Anne Frank" at the Indiana Repertory Theatre. Students were able to see a human face applied to genocide, but more than that the irrepressible hope that came from a young teenage girl convinced that "...in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart."



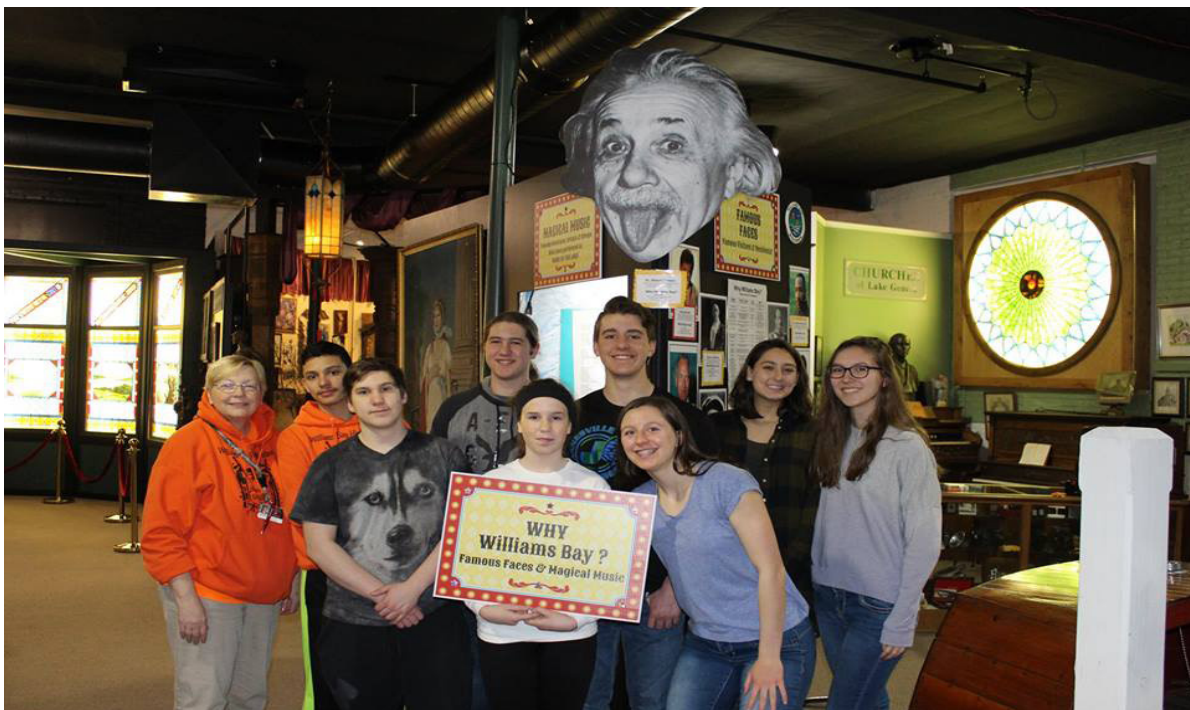
Maggie L. Walker Governor's School (VA) hosted political commentator Bill Kristol, who spoke to the students on the theme of political change and how it has accelerated over recent years.



Starr's Mill High School's (GA) Club has grown from 12 students in 2017 to 58 students this year! Here they are on their first annual winter field trip to **Medieval Times** in Atlanta. Students got to watch a jousting tournament and feast on food that made them feel like they were in Queen Isabella's court back in Medieval Spain in the 11th century



West Milford Township High School (NJ) braved an ice and snowstorm this past January to participate in the regional **History Bowl** competition. The Club has worked hard since the beginning of the year, meeting every other Thursday, to practice answering questions similar to those asked at the Bowl. Congrats to the West Milford B Team who totaled a whopping 890 points and qualified for the National Bowl in DC!



Williams Bay High School (WI) has been working at the nearby **Geneva Lake History Museum** helping to create three exhibits. This project is being spearheaded with the help of History Club Officer Braiya Nolan, who was recently named one of the **National World War II Museum's** student ambassadors. These ambassadors are helping to collect the oral histories of WWII veterans and Holocaust survivors.

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT



Moline History Club (IL) students in their newly designed History Lab at their school! The room is a classroom that is being filled with artifacts and primary sources from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Industrial Revolution, and more. The function of the lab is for all students to experience history, or what they call "hands on history". A grand opening will be hosted later this month to celebrate the accomplishment!

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT



Cincinnati Country Day School (OH) visited the **Freedom Center** to view the exhibit celebrating Nelson Mandela's life and legacy. They got to see artifacts such as photos from Mandela's childhood, a signed copy of his autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*, and the prison visitor's permit that detailed his visitations and contacts with the outside world while he was imprisoned.



American History
June 16-22

Political Economy
July 22-24

The Ashbrook Academies are summer programs designed for rising high school juniors and seniors who share a deep interest in American history, politics, and economics. Unlike other courses or programs that tend to erode young Americans' proper pride in their country by emphasizing its historical failures, the Academy invites students to consider the American experiment as a historical triumph, a victory for reason and the human spirit that warrants grateful celebration but also demands serious study.

The Academy on American History meets for seven days (June 16-22, 2019), while the Academy on Political Economy meets for three days (July 22-24, 2019). Both convene at the Ashbrook Center on the campus of Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio immersing participants in a deep study of the biggest challenges that have faced our Republic.

The Ashbrook Academies take history, politics, and economics out of textbooks and into your life. By the end of the program, you will have acquired a deep understanding of the fundamental principles that define and unite us as Americans.



**For more info or to apply, visit our website:
www.AshbrookAcademy.org**



LESSONS OF LEADERSHIP CONTEST

Courage and Conviction

* Guidelines:

World War II General Douglas MacArthur once said, “Last, but by no means least, courage of one’s convictions, the courage to see things through. The world is in a constant conspiracy against the brave. It’s the age-old struggle—the roar of the crowd on one side and voice of your conscience on the other.” Throughout mankind, historical figures and leaders have constantly faced the struggle of doing what is easy versus doing what is right. From ancient Rome to colonial America to modern day U.S. politics, we are often reminded of the challenges that come from standing up for what one believes is right and just.

For the 5th consecutive year, the National History Club and The HBE Foundation are proud to co-sponsor the “Lessons of Leadership” Contest. We encourage middle and high school students from across the country to select a historical figure (domestic or foreign, ancient or modern) and examine how that person displayed courage and conviction with a decision they made or throughout his/her life. Contest entries can be submitted in any three of the 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, 2019 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)

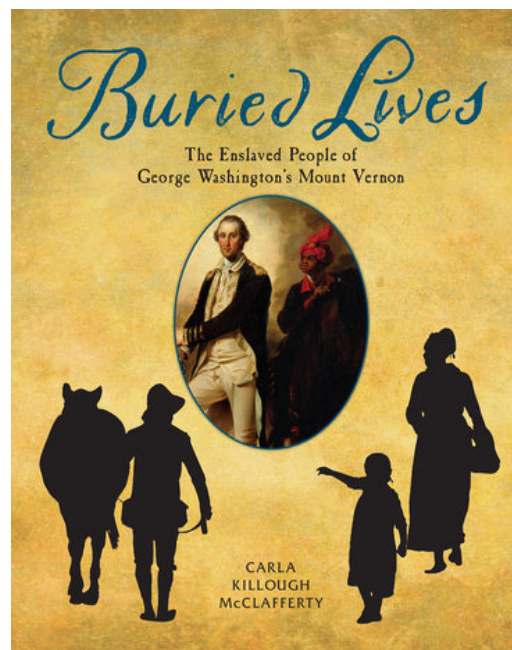
Third Place - \$500 (two prizes)

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 15th 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 *Buried Lives* by Carla McClafferty.

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.



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 History List
ACLS Humanities E-Book	Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
Agricultural History Society	Patrick Allitt (Professor, Emory)
American Association for State and Local History	Peter Baldwin (Professor, UCLA)
Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles	Rick & Barbara Berenson
Centre for International Governance Innovation	Radcliffe Cheston
Gilder Lehrman Institute	Will Fitzhugh
HarperCollins Publishing	Joan & Rick Gier
History 500	Elizabeth Jones
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	Gary Rowe
National World War I Museum	Jim Schneider
National World War II Museum	Henry Seng
Omohundro Institute of Early American History	Gina Shannon
Organization of American Historians	Art Snyder
Parkview High School (GA)	Rick Sperry
Penguin Random House	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).