

The Partnership for History Education presents

**Kids Learning History
A Conference on Elementary and
Middle School History Education**

Date: April 17-18, 1998

Location: The National Museum of American History
12th and Constitution, NW
Washington, DC

OBJECTIVE:

To show that elementary and middle school students can and should learn history, and to highlight some of the content, methods, materials, and teachers who are right now helping kids learn history.

WHO ATTENDED:

Elementary and Middle School Teachers; Curriculum Coordinators; Principals and Superintendents; Parents; Professors of History; Professors of Education; Museum and Historical Society Educators and Curators; anyone who believes that children should catch the fire of learning the stories of other people in other times and other places.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

Two hundred fifteen participants attended the Conference April 17-18 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, DC. The Conference focused on teaching history in the elementary and middle school grades.

Participants heard from Kieran Egan, from Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, who told them about the elements of storytelling and how young children are capable of understanding and being enthralled by the real stories of people from other times and places as well as appreciating fairy tales and legends.

Claudia Hoone, 4th grade teacher from Indianapolis IN, spoke on the many ways she uses literature in her history classes. She gets double duty from the pieces; not only do students learn history, they also work on their reading skills.

Dennis Denenberg, professor of education at Millersville University of PA, gave a rousing and inspiring talk encouraging teachers to use real heroes in their classroom activities and displays rather than promoting cartoon characters. He stressed the importance that people like Thomas Jefferson, Harriet Tubman, Jonas Salk, or Lewis and Clark can and should have for children and that he believes we short-change students if we continually bombard them with Bugs, Mickey, or Daffy. "After all," said Denenberg, "Michelangelo was a great person...not a turtle!"

Participants were able to choose from many sessions including: first person reenactors from Colonial Williamsburg; special gallery tours of exhibits at the National Museum of American History; using primary source materials in elementary classrooms; computer and World Wide Web resources for teaching about families in Civil War times; using the resources of the National Archives to help teach history in elementary and middle school classes, how National History Day can spark the middle school classroom, and others we haven't the space to list.

The Conference Program follows on this Web-site and many of the presenters have provided abstracts of their talks for those who were not able to attend.

Participants gave the program high marks in their evaluations and the co-sponsors: NCHE, the National Museum of American History, Colonial Williamsburg, and National History Day, are already talking about the KIDS LEARNING HISTORY Conference becoming an annual or bi-annual event at the National Museum. Details will be published in History Matters! and posted on this Web-site as soon as they are firm.

Special thanks goes to financial contributors: The Susan and Elihu Rose Foundation, The Loundsbury Foundation, BANKFIRST Corp. and The History Channel.

SPONSORED BY:

This conference is a program of The Partnership for History Education, an alliance of the National Council for History Education, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, and National History Day. Co-sponsor is the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History.

Elaine Wrisley Reed,
Conference Director
National Council for History Education
26915 Westwood Rd., Ste. B-2
Westlake, OH 44145
ph: 440-835-1776 * FAX: 440-835-1295
email: nche19@mail.idt.net -- www: www.history.org/nche

Conference Program

April 17-18, 1998

Friday

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Registration, Continental Breakfast

10:00 - 10:15 a.m. Carmichael Auditorium, Opening Remarks: Spencer R. Crew, Director, The National Museum of American History

10:15 - 11:15 Carmichael Auditorium

Claudia J. Hoone, Teacher Gr. 4/5, Public School #58, Indianapolis, IN; Member of the Bradley Commission on History in Schools, *Spinning History: Literature Turns Straw Into Gold*. To see an abstract [click here](#).

11:15 - 11:30 Break, Move to Concurrent Session Rooms

11:30 - 12:30 Concurrent Sessions

A. Peter Pitard, Colonial Williamsburg, *Writing in History: You Don't Really Understand It Until You Write It* (focus on Grades 4-8)

B. Nancy McCoy, Tim Grove, Heather Paisley-Jones, *Getting in Touch With History: The Stories of the Past Through Hands-on Learning*, NMAH Hands-on History Room. To see an abstract [click here](#).

C. Nancy Taylor, Grade Four Teacher, St. Michael School, Worthington, OH *Touching the Past: History and Language Arts*. To see an abstract [click here](#).

D. Rex Ellis, Director, The Center for Museum Studies, The Smithsonian Institution, *Interpreting Primary Documents*. To see an abstract [click here](#).

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30 - 2:00 Carmichael Auditorium

Presentation by Middle School Students, National History Day Program

2:00 - 3:00 Carmichael Auditorium

Joy Hakim, Author, *A History of US*, *Telling the Good Stories of History and Science*. To see an abstract [click here](#).

3:00 - 3:15 Break

3:15 - 4:15 Carmichael Auditorium

William Thomas, University of Virginia Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, *Learning About Communities Through Primary Sources* (communities around the time of the Civil War) To see an abstract [click here](#).

4:15 - 4:30 Break, Move to Concurrent Sessions

4:30 - 5:30 Concurrent Sessions

A. Panel Presentations:

Jodi Vandenberg-Daves, Asst. Dir., NHD; focus on Gr. 6-8), Skill Building Through Participation in National History Day.; How History Day Revolutionizes History Teaching
Spencer Crew, The National Museum of American History, Migration in History: The National History Day Theme and Its Learning Opportunities for Students
Cynthia Mostoller, Teacher at Alice Deal Jr. H.S. (Wash., DC), You Do Have Time to Sponsor History Fair Projects; and
B. Theresa Esterlund, Director, NMAH Hands-on Science Ctr., Water Wonderworks: Investigating History Through Hands-on Science. To see an abstract click here.
C. William Thomas, The Valley Project on CD-ROM/World Wide Web (in the NMAH Computer Ctr; follow-up to his 3:15 talk). To see an abstract click here.
D. Mary Beth Klee, Teacher (Crossroads Academy, Hanover, NH) History in K-4: What Can We Really Do?
E. Lonn Taylor, Special Gallery Tour, American Encounters. To see an abstract click here.

5:30 pm Adjournment

5:45 - 7:00 pm Reception for Participants and Presenters in the Palm Court area of the National Museum.

Saturday, April 18th

9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Coffee, Continental Breakfast, Lower Level Cafeteria

9:30 - 10:30 Carmichael Auditorium, Address
Greeting: Harold A. Closter, National Museum of American History
Introduction: Byron Hollinshead, President, American Historical Publications and National History Day
Speaker: Kieran Egan, Professor of Education, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia. Author, *The Educated Mind, Teaching as Storytelling, and Imagination in Teaching and Learning*. He will speak on *Developing Historical Understanding*. To see an abstract click here.

10:30 - 10:50 Break, Move to Concurrent Sessions

10:50 - Noon Concurrent Sessions
A. Marlene Buechel, Teacher (WI), *History Through A Child's Eyes: A Workshop Incorporating The American Girls Series* (focus on Grades 3,4). To see an abstract click here.
B. Kieran Egan, follow-up conversations
C. Wynell Schamel and Lee Ann Potter, Education Specialists, National Archives and Records Administration : *An On-line Demo of The Digital Classroom* (in the Information-Age Theater, focus on upper elem and middle school. To see an abstract click here.
D. Special Gallery Tour, *From Field To Factory: Afro-American Migration, 1915-1940*

E. Michael Judd and Sondra Berger, National Museum of American History's Lemelson Center, Teaching Invention, Hall of Musical Instruments. To see an abstract click here.

Noon - 1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 Concurrent Sessions

A. Paul Gagnon and Susan Secor Goldsmith, Boston University, Building a History Curriculum K-8, U. S. and World (session for curriculum makers, administrators, social studies coordinators, dept. chairs). To see an abstract click here.

B. Linda Houchell and Teresa Baker, of the U.S. Postal Service "Celebrate the Century" Program, Put Your Stamp on History To see an abstract click here.

C. Janet Harris, Gr. 8 Teacher (Phifer Middle School, Pennsauken, NJ), and Judy Berger, Teacher, (Thomas Middle School, Hillsboro, OR) Teaching Middle School American History in the Real World: A Tribute to Joy Hakim; Reception Suite.

1:00 p.m. - 4:45 Concurrent Session

Joint Meeting of NCHE Board of Trustees and State Liaisons

Bill Ross, III, Chair

Current Status of Elementary and Middle School History in the States

2:30 - 2:45 Break, Move to Auditorium

2:45 - 3:30 Carmichael Auditorium

Costumed Colonial Williamsburg Interpreters, Kristen Spivey and Art Johnson

Panel Discussion: Bringing History to Life in Your Classroom

Presiding: D. Stephen Elliott, Vice President, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Panelists: Nancy Taylor and Peter Pitard

3:30 - 4:45 Carmichael Auditorium

Dennis Denenberg, Professor of Education, Millersville University, Heroes in History To see an abstract click here.

4:45 Carmichael Auditorium, Closing Remarks

Theodore Rabb, Professor of History, Princeton University, and Chair, National Council for History Education

5:00 p.m. Door Prizes and Adjournment

Continuing Education Certificates will be available for those desiring credits.