

Working on a Dream: The American Experiment at Home and Abroad, 1936-2000

Special Series, April 23 – May 31, 2014

Presented by

**Mt. Lebanon High School
Advanced Placement U.S. History Students**

**Sponsored by
Mt. Lebanon Public Library**



Overview

We invite the public to attend sessions in this enlightening special series of American history presentations held on 13 afternoons and evenings through May 31 as Advanced Placement U.S. History Students from Mt. Lebanon High School present their research and final projects. This collaboration between Mt. Lebanon Public Library and the APUSH program at the High School crystallized last year when students presented to over 650 people in 18 sessions. Those set a standard of excellence matched by this year's projects. Students chose from a menu of options, with each requiring substantial research as well as peer and teacher reviews. Students present their research and conclusions in three different formats.

1. Team-Teaching
Each lesson lasts 90 minutes.
2. Documentary Film, with an Oral History component
Each film lasts between 20-25 minutes. Including the student introduction and post-viewing question and answer session, each film presentation lasts about 35 minutes.
3. Research Paper
In panels (usually 2 to 5 authors), students present a 10-15 minute overview of their research, followed by a question and answer session for the entire panel.

Coordinating Teacher

Pete DiNardo, Mt. Lebanon High School

Special Thanks

Mimi Ingalls and Cynthia Richey for their dedicated support of this project and commitment to offering the library as a valuable resource to all, especially students.

Michelle Kramer, Mt. Lebanon High School staff, for her insight and help to many students.

Sherri Miller, Mt. Lebanon High School Writing Clinician, for her ongoing annual assistance on research papers.

Todd DePastino and The Mt. Lebanon Historical Society.

The Senator John Heinz History Center.

Many scholars and individuals who agreed to be interviewed for various projects.

All parents for your patience and support.

Wednesday, April 23

6:45 – 8:30

Meeting Room A

"The Strip: The Yesterday of Pittsburgh's Tomorrow"

(Team Teaching)

Going as far back as colonial time, the iconic Strip District has always been a vital limb of the greater Pittsburgh area. Presented here in this one short program is the complete journey of the Strip District, portrayed by a variety of media to ensure a true immersion into its diverse culture. By its conclusion, the presentation will provoke audience members into personally deciding how the Strip District should progress in the future.

Presenters:

Lily Keener and Jordan Romah

Tuesday, April 29

6:45 – 8:30

Meeting Room A

"No Church in the Wild: What Went Wrong at Waco?"

(Team Teaching)

On April 19, 1993, in the midst of an FBI raid, the compound of a radical religious sect, the Branch Davidians, burned down outside the city of Waco, Texas. The story, however, neither begins nor ends with fire. Many debates still rage about what exactly happened at Mount Carmel Center. We examine many perspectives in order to develop a comprehensive account of what occurred and why 82 people died in a law enforcement investigation.

Presenters:

Matthew Bonidie, John Sieber, and Joseph Wilkinson

Wednesday, April 30

6:45 – 8:30

Meeting Room A

"Genocide in Cambodia: The Khmer Rouge and US Foreign Policy"

(Team Teaching)

From 1975-1979 the citizens of Cambodia were living in a constant state of fear. While the United States was invested in their war with Vietnam, the conflict spilled over into Cambodia as the Khmer Rouge rose to power attempting to transform it into a communist state. The international community, including the United States, turned their backs on Cambodia and the ensuing genocide within the country. We explore the rise and eventual fall of the Khmer Rouge along with its lasting impacts. We also analyze the United States foreign policy in the area and the effects they had on the Cambodian people.

Presenters:

Anya Vendredi and Haley Silverman

Saturday, May 3

12:00 – 4:00

Meeting Room A

“Postwar Suburbia 1946-1960: The Best of Times?”

(Team Teaching)

After WWII, suburban towns flourished as they provided American families with affordable enclaves of happiness and safety. While many found comfort in a time of peace and domesticity, some felt that the suburbs were devices of entrapment and homogeneity. We will examine both arguments, arriving to a conclusion that maybe the 1950's suburbia was not that bad after all.

Presenters:

Cassie Gilboy and Grace Simmons

“We Shall Overcome: How Music Paved the Way for Racial Equality”

(Team Teaching)

We explore the music and musicians that advanced racial justice prior to the formal Civil Rights Movement. Highlighting artists like Elvis Presley, Nat King Cole, and Lena Horne. Including the genres that were influential to the Civil Rights Movement like gospel and rock n' roll. This is the beginning of a cultural change that had never before been witnessed by America. Learn about how music brought together an entire generation and sparked a social revolution.

Presenters:

Marybeth Cocchi and Julia Maloney

Wednesday, May 7

6:45 – 8:30

Meeting Room A

“Diving Into Watergate: The Political Scandal that Changed America Forever”

(Team Teaching)

To what extent can the President of the United States use his executive powers? Join us as we give a chronological overview of the most infamous political scandal in American history. In celebration of its 40th anniversary, we will focus on President Nixon's abuse of power, his influence on later presidents, and the substantial increase in public skepticism and even distrust for the federal government.

Presenters:

Mark Vrabel and Oliver Jia

Thursday, May 8

6:45-8:30

Meeting Room A

"The Enemy on the Home Front?: Executive Order 9066 and U.S POW Camps"

(Teaching)

On February 19, 1942, Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed one of the most controversial orders in American history-- Executive Order 9066, forcing thousands of Japanese Americans into harsh internment camps. Meanwhile, European prisoners of war were transferred into camps on American soil, receiving little scrutiny from the public. The contrast between the treatment of these two groups delves into the country's underlying senses of nationalism and its tendency toward racial profiling, begging the question: who do we see as the enemy?

Presenter:

Sarah Mandelblatt

Sunday, May 18

1:30-4:00

Meeting Room A

"The Rise and Fall of The Steel Industry in Pittsburgh during the 20th Century"

(Team Teaching)

We delve into the background of the steel industry's emergence and prominence in the Pittsburgh area, bringing with it endless jobs for the working class and an economic boom for the city, but also many detrimental environmental effects. The rich economic prosperity it created was only finite, and eventually the steel industry collapsed, leaving Pittsburgh economically shaken and environmentally damaged. Yet over time, the city implemented urban redevelopment, environmental cleanups, and saw the birth of new modern industries.

Presenters:

Chloe Hoffman, Ryan Seybold, and Austin Proteau

"Victory Valley: Pittsburgh and World War II"

(Documentary Film Premier)

Everyone knows the story of World War II, but few know the story of an American town that changed its course. Known by many as "the Steel Capital of the World", Pittsburgh not only experienced the war, but contributed to the American effort. We combine personal experiences, expert information, and compelling images to tell the story of one of America's greatest home front towns.

Presenters:

John Iannotta, Jeremy Laun, and Trenten Montesino

Monday, May 19

6:45-8:30

Meeting Room A

“The Psychology Behind America’s Anti-Communist Movement From 1945-1960”

(Research Paper)

My paper covers the anti-Communist movement during its heyday, the second Red Scare. I examine various organizations that persecuted individuals as alleged Communists, analyzing their motives. I then interrogate the legality of the investigation methods, particularly those of the FBI. Finally, I examine multiple specific trials and how they impacted the movement, and end with the well-known but not fully understood Joseph McCarthy. Throughout my paper, I highlight how the psychology of mass movements applies to the Red Scare and analyze what specific facets of a movement the Red Scare maintained.

Author:

Mario Rullo

“Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs: Communism’s Influence on American Affairs”

(Team Teaching)

We examine the similarities and differences in the Alger Hiss and Rosenberg cases through the investigation of evidence and analysis of the media’s role in each case. Additionally, we discuss newfound information that both incriminates and exculpates the defendants. Each case leaves behind a unique legacy, immersed in controversy that has stimulated ceaseless debate for the last half-century.

Presenters:

Elena Marzina, Elise Petruska, Joey Stabile

Thursday, May 22

6:45-8:30

Meeting Room A

Research Paper Panel

"The US Needs to Listen: American Actions in Vietnam"

Although many remember the Gulf of Tonkin incident and Lyndon Johnson introducing ground troops into Vietnam in 1965, much happened before this to spur US military intervention. For four decades prior, the United States ignored warnings and advice. Vietnam could have been different had we actually listened and heeded the warnings.

Author:

Airen Lowenstein

"A Step Back: The Kennedy Administration and the Last Great Era of U.S. Foreign Policy"

The Cuban Missile Crisis has become legendary for its nuclear nature. However, the President and his staff pursued a solution and pushed policy unlike previous administrations. An examination of how Kennedy pushed his policy and commitment to patient analysis peace can help determine how the United States can perhaps return to a more isolated state.

Author:

Aaron Joseph (See me Aaron – 2 Qs)

"Nicaragua and El Salvador: The Factors Behind a Successful Revolution"

In the mid-1900s, much of Latin America was distressed, plagued by growing discontent with their repressive governments. Countries such as Nicaragua and El Salvador staged uprisings against their authoritarian opposition, but the amount of progress they made varied greatly. The elements that influenced the victorious Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the ill-fated rebels in El Salvador, including the involvement of the United States, can be compared to show why revolutions throughout history have had differing degrees of success.

Author:

Samantha Hoinville

"Green Economy: The Destiny of America"

Every year, Americans create 251 tons of garbage. Yet, we sit idly by as modern day society disregards the importance of the environment in preserving the American Experiment. I analyze global attempts to obtain a greener society, keying in on European successes compared to the American failures. I finish by addressing the pressing question of whether our generation shall react more proactively than past generations and act to protect the environment as a means to protect our own self-interest and future.

Author:

Mekhi Daniels

"The Rude Awakening: Campaign Financing's Abrupt Transmogrification"

Americans oft lament the dysfunction of their government and the influence that money perverts campaigns at all levels. Examining the post-Watergate debate and laws implemented sheds light onto this topic. Yet even with vast reforms intertwined with America's ascension to the twenty first century, efforts to curb rising money in politics proved ineffective as a new conservative faction rallied and enacted a radical takeover of campaign spending on all election levels, affirmed in the Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United*.

Author:

Nikola Ranick

Tuesday, May 27

6:45 -8:30

Meeting Room A

Research Paper Panel

"Murderer or Martyr?: Mumia Abu-Jamal and Political Radicals in the American Criminal Justice System"

In July 1982, radical black journalist and radio personality Mumia Abu-Jamal was convicted and sentenced to death for the killing of police officer Daniel Faulkner. Maintaining his innocence, Abu-Jamal garnered international support from individuals and organizations like Nelson Mandela and Amnesty International, who believe his trial was biased. Although repeatedly upheld, Mumia's supporters argue that he is a political prisoner whose conviction illustrates the American justice system's bias towards both minorities and political radicals.

Author: **Alex Weidenhof**

"The Subway Vigilante: Bernhard Goetz and the Stereotype of the Black Criminal"

On December 22, 1984, Bernhard Goetz fired five shots in a New York City subway car injuring four black men, catapulting Goetz to national fame. The shooting and media-fueled drama that followed serve as a microcosm of racial relations in America in the 1980s, highlighting intricate issues of economic inequality, crime, and stereotyping that remain applicable 30 years later.

Author: **Amanda Vosburgh**

"Victims of Disease, Victims of Government: Unethical Disease Research on Humans by the United States in the Twentieth Century"

Science and medicine in an America, unaccustomed to confronting societal biases, perpetrated heinous crimes on vulnerable subjects when government doctors systematically infected citizens of Guatemala with syphilis, gonorrhea, and chancroid while denying treatment to syphilitic African-Americans for forty years. The shocking revelations of these experiments, decades too late, transformed notions of scientific regulation and morality. Still cited as lessons in ethics, the Tuskegee and Guatemala studies represent the worst of the American quest for knowledge.

Author: **Charles Yuan**

"Supremacy, Scandal, and Sport: The Nazi Olympics"

The 1936 Berlin Olympics occurred amid great controversy. As the Nazi party boasted of Aryan supremacy and implemented discriminatory policies, the traditionally cultural event became a political issue. However, a movement to boycott the games and Nazi political propaganda failed to influence the spirit of fair play and sportsmanship, as Aryans and non-Aryans alike competed with pride. The Berlin Olympics tells a story cultural excellence amidst political unrest.

Author: **Joel Kirshner**

"1971 Attica Prison Riot: Invisible Souls Fight Back"

By September of 1971, inmates at Attica Prison were growing tired of the poor and oppressive conditions they lived in. Tensions reached a breaking point when guards at the San Quentin Prison shot to death black prisoner, George Jackson. When prisoners rioted, state and prison officials used arguably unnecessary violent means to take back the prison. In assessing current prison conditions, we must look to the events at Attica and listen to the voices of the too often forgotten prisoners.

Author: **Anna Grunewald**

Wednesday, May 28

6:45-8:30

Research Paper Panel

Meeting Room A

“To Boldly Go Where No Female Has Gone Before: A Woman’s Place in Science Fiction”

In my paper, I assess the extent to which the depiction of women in science fiction films adhered to the social norms of the period or presented women in a drastically different light. This paper includes a survey of literature on the topic as well as a personal analysis of select, representative films.

Author: **Jade Lu**

“Forgotten Women of the Civil Rights Movement”

The Civil Rights Movement stretched from 1955 to 1968 and it gave way to some of the most remembered people in history; Martin Luther King Jr. Malcolm X, and Thurgood Marshall. However, while history remembers these names, the names of women who organized, protested, and sacrificed themselves for the Movement are ignored and forgotten. Women are forgotten largely due to the oppression they faced and the role of media in the Movement.

Author: **Ann Matthews**

“From Sob Sisters to Chief Editors: The Journey of Female Journalists to Overcome the Sexist Inequalities of Reporting”

Though today’s world is full of successful female journalists, for many centuries women fought to emerge within the field. While the 1960’s and 70’s are known as an age that shattered barriers for women, a much earlier era, often lost in public memory, held many opportunities for female journalists to advance. Women were denied from the newsroom due to their sexuality and femininity, and yet these same setbacks have been transformed into crucial tools used by women to make names for themselves as brilliant journalists.

Author: **Evelyn Furrick**

“Title IX and the Women’s Rights Movement: A Social Revolution”

Title IX, consisting of only 37 words, is responsible for revolutionizing educational opportunities for women. The significance of Title IX, however, is its transformation of the American female image. Granted different opportunities than women of the 1950s, women today are torn between their traditional maternal duties and the pursuit of a career. An understanding of the previous phases of Title IX can help to delve into the future phase of Title IX: equity in domestic roles.

Author: **Molly Kearns**

Thursday, May 29

6:45-8:30

Meeting Room A

Film Premieres

“Broken Fences, Mended Hopes: The Renewal of Pittsburgh’s Hill District”

Once dubbed “crossroads of the world”, Pittsburgh’s Hill District was a thriving and vibrant community throughout the early 20th century. The flourishing, diverse community began to decline as suburbanization, poor housing and cramped conditions caused rampant urban blight. Promises of a “slumless future” instilled hope in Hill District residents. Instead, the Urban Redevelopment Authority ripped 95 acres out of the Hill in the 1960s. This is the story of the hopes and promises of those urban renewal efforts and the reality that followed.

Producers:

Laurel Cooper and Soleil Nagoda

“An Ongoing Battle: The Civil Rights Movement in Pittsburgh”

We examine the Civil Rights Movement in Pittsburgh during the mid-twentieth century, where people of different races joined together to fight against racial discrimination using several organizations and strategies. We demonstrate the effect the movement had on the lives of those involved and on the city of Pittsburgh as a whole.

Producers:

Laura Carskadden and Catherine Swindal

“The Plowshare Eight”

In the early 1980’s, nuclear war was a common fear amongst Americans. Within the many anti-nuclear war protests, we examine one in particular that stands out for its religious activism. In King of Prussia, PA, on September 9, 1980, a group of religious anti-nuclear activists broke into a nuclear facility, damaged nose-cones and threw their blood on documents. We examine the group, the event as a whole, and the effectiveness that they had, as they are still in effect today.

Producers:

Karen Augenstein, Taylor Dumaine, and Alexandra Tzaneva

Saturday, May 31

12:30-4:00

Meeting Room A

"Anti-War Sentiment during the War in Vietnam: How the Downfall of a Movement Built an Opposition"

(Team Teaching)

In the span of two years, the powerful movement against the Vietnam war crumbled, leaving in its wake a large opposition base and a distrust of large social movements. By focusing on the protests against the war from 1968 to 1970, along with the roots of the Movement and the interest groups involved, we assess the impacts of organized anti-war protest and opposition.

Presenters

Ellie Alex-Finley and Gabi Keane

Research Paper Panel

"Winds of Change: The Weather Underground Organization"

In 1970, The Weather Underground issue a declaration of war against the United States government. The organization persisted through violent protests against the Vietnam War and the continued racism of the decade. The legacy of the organization remains a contested debate between justifications and condemnations of terrorism.

Author:

Michael Oxenreiter

"The Noble Cause: The Berrigan Brothers and the Making of Christian Radicalism"

Pursuing direct action and deviating from the traditional Counterculturalist, student-led anti-war movements, the Berrigan Brothers became headlined in the news and a paragon of radicalism. With an acute sense of justice, the Berrigans plowed through a path against their understanding of societal wrongs. Their active engagement against government policy spanned from the beginnings of the Vietnam War to the 21st century. The Berrigans' lives tell a story of activism, determination, and radicalism that define an American era and spirit.

Author:

Zhaoliang Ma

Film Premier

"From Washington D.C. to Washington Road: Impacts of the Vietnam War in Mt. Lebanon"

In 1968, protest against the Vietnam War swept through the nation. The effects of these protests garnered attention through every community, even piercing suburban Mt. Lebanon. We focus on the changes that arose in the Mt. Lebanon community and school district during the late 60s and early 70s. Student involvement grew at home, and the effects of a war on the other side of the world had on student speech and activism at Mt. Lebanon High School.

Producers:

Laura Qi, Erin Brubaker, and Alexa Pavlick