Welcome to History 8, where American History will come to life! History is, after all, the story of the people who lived before us, and their voices can still be heard through thoughtful historical inquiry. To start us off on the right track, every 8th Grader will spend some of their summer reading at least one non-fiction book. The evidence is clear - reading during the summer helps all students retain academic gains from the year before and prevents the dreaded summer brain drain.

Parents interested in learning more about the positive effects of summer reading should read “Summer Reading Programs Boost Student Achievement,” by Carole Fiore and Susan Roman at the School Library Journal.

Assignment: History 8 will cover non-fiction literature that centers on the theme American Identity. We will explore the following essential questions:

- Is America the land of opportunity?
- How do you define the American Dream?
- Should Americans be optimistic about the future?
- Has Puritanism shaped American values?
- Is there one American identity?
- Does the United States have a mission to expand freedom and democracy?
- Is America exceptional?
- How do race, gender, and economic status affect one’s social standing in America?
- What impact does war have on a nation’s social, political, economic, and emotional growth?

As you read, annotate or make notes in the margins of the book. If you borrowed the book from the library or if you are using digital reader, keep a reader’s journal. The annotations/journal will not be graded; however, you will need to use them for an oral presentation (book talk) and an essential question essay at the beginning of the Fall Semester. Please make your text choice by June 10th and email me with the details of your selection - lbeard@episcopalcollegiate.org.
Non-Fiction Book List

Choose a book from the list below:

1. **Imprisoned: The Betrayal of Japanese Americans During World War II** written by Martin W. Sandler, published by Walker Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, Inc. After the Japanese military bombed Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, forcing the internment of over 100,000 Japanese-Americans. This detailed and compassionate chronicle of the internment years incorporates many first-hand accounts and photographs. Sandler skillfully provides context for the internment and also examines its lasting legacy by examining anti-Japanese sentiment in America before World War II and then the redress movement, which advocated for compensation and formal apologies for internees after the war.

2. **Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickles, America's First Black Paratroopers** written by Tanya Lee Stone, published by Candlewick Press. “What is it like to jump out of an airplane? Imagine.” From these opening sentences, Stone chronicles the courage and persistence that were the hallmarks of the Triple Nickles, the African Americans who pushed through military barriers to become the first black paratroopers. Their individual efforts, the eventual recognition of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, and the broader issues of segregation during the war period are illustrated with a with a rich collection of interviews, letters, and photos. Stone’s afterword, the timeline, and the detailed source notes offer valuable insights into her research methods. Ashley Bryan’s foreword and artwork add personal insight and extend the power of this skillfully told story.

3. **The President Has Been Shot! The Assassination of John F. Kennedy** written by James L. Swanson, published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc. James Swanson takes readers back in time with a thoroughly researched and tightly written narrative of John F. Kennedy’s assassination. Beginning with a succinct introduction to Kennedy’s early life and presidential administration, Swanson sets the scene for a detailed and engaging examination of the events before, during, and after November 22, 1963, when JFK and Lee Harvey Oswald crossed paths in Dallas with tragic results. The book brings events to life with extensive photographs, diagrams, and primary documents, and illuminates Swanson’s research and writing process with detailed source notes, an extensive bibliography, suggestions for further reading, and a comprehensive index.

4. **An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 (Newbery Honor Book)** by Jim Murphy. 1793, Philadelphia. The nation’s capital and the largest city in North America is devastated by an apparently incurable disease, cause unknown . . . In a powerful, dramatic narrative, critically acclaimed author Jim Murphy describes the illness known as yellow fever and the toll it took on the city’s residents, relating the epidemic to the major social and political events of the day and to 18th-century medical beliefs and practices. Drawing on first-hand accounts, Murphy spotlights the heroic role of Philadelphia’s free blacks in combating the disease, and the Constitutional crisis that President Washington faced when he was forced to leave the city--and all his papers--while escaping the deadly contagion. The search for the fever's causes and cure, not found for more than a century afterward, provides a suspenseful counterpoint to this riveting true story of a city under siege.

5. **Bomb: The Race To Build - And Steal - the World's Most Dangerous Weapon**, by Steve Sheinkin, 2012. Recounts the scientific discoveries that enabled atom splitting, the military intelligence operations that occurred in rival countries, and the work of brilliant scientists hidden at Los Alamos. (920L)

7. **Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice**, by Phillip Hoose, 2009. In March 1955, 15-year-old Claudette, refused to give her seat to a white woman on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Instead of being celebrated as Rosa Parks would be 9 months later, Claudette was shunned. Undaunted, a year later she challenged segregation again as a key plaintiff in Browder v. Gayle, the landmark case that struck down the segregation laws of Montgomery and swept away the legal underpinnings of the Jim Crow South. (1000L)


10. **The Mayflower and the Pilgrims’ New World** by Nathaniel Philbrick, 2008. Offers the true story of the pioneers who crossed the Atlantic to establish a new world in Massachusetts, the challenges they faced upon their arrival, and their relationship with the local Native Americans. (1170L)


12. **The Life and Death of Crazy Horse**, by Russell Freedman; with drawings by Amos Bad Heart Bull, 1996. A biography of the Oglala leader who relentlessly resisted the white man's attempt to take over Indian lands. (1100L)


14. **Written In Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland**, by Sally M. Walker. Reports on the work of forensic scientists who are excavating grave sites in James Fort, in Jamestown, Virginia, to understand who lived in the Chesapeake Bay area in the 1600s and 1700s; and uncovers the lives of a teenage boy, a ship’s captain, a colonial officer, an African slave girl, and others.

15. **Flesh & Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and Its Legacy** by Albert Marrin. In 1911, 146 people, mostly young women, died in the worst factory fire in New York city history. This book describes the fire itself, but also the individuals, events, and circumstances that led to the disaster and explains its impact on the labor movement and on society.

16. **Years of Dust: The Story of the Dust Bowl** by Albert Marrin. Before global warming, there was dust. In the 1930s, dangerous black storms swept through the Great Plains. Created by drought and reckless farming, these lethal storms were part of an environmental, economic, and human catastrophe that changed the course of American history.

17. **Witches!: The Absolutely True Tale of Disaster in Salem** by Rosalyn Schanzer, 2011. Tells the story of the victims, the accused witches, and the scheming officials that turned a mysterious illness into a witch hunt.
Preparing for a Book Talk

- Bring a copy of the book with you so that you can show it to your classmates and pass it around for them to hold in their hands and see up close. If you read a digital copy, please bring an image (power point slide, PDF) that displays the title of the book and other details.
- State the title and the author and why you chose the book.
- Provide your classmates with information about the author – who he or she is, what kinds of books the author writes, what themes, characters, settings the author leans toward, and any other books he/she has written. (This information can be researched with assistance from a librarian or a bookstore sales representative. You can also go to an online search engine like answers.com to find information.)
- Briefly summarize the book.
- Make a connection to another book, place, event, experience, or memory.
- Discuss whether or not you would recommend the book to others and why.
- Answer any questions your teacher or classmates have about the book.
- Make sure that you speak clearly and purposefully, and maintain eye to eye contact with your audience.