

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

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**PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WINS THIRD PRIZE
IN 2008 CIVIL WAR ESSAY CONTEST**

NEW YORK, NY (May 29, 2008) – Michael Comnesso, a student at Patchogue-Medford High School, has been awarded third prize in the 2008 Civil War Essay Contest, sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and the Civil War Round Table of New York. Comnesso won recognition for his essay, “Cotton in the Civil War.”

The contest, now in its tenth year, is open only to students in Gilder Lehrman schools. It is designed to enhance knowledge of the Civil War era and reward outstanding research and writing. Winners were selected by a panel of jurors from both organizations based on use of primary sources; clearness and originality of thesis; organization of the essay; correct documentation of sources; and quality of writing. One hundred forty-five high school students and thirty-seven middle school students, representing the top essays submitted from thirty high schools and seven middle schools, participated in the contest.

“It is a pleasure to see that critical thinking is flourishing at high schools and middle schools around the country,” said Martin Smith of the Civil War Round Table of New York.

“These students have shown their passion and skill as researchers and writers of American history,” said Lesley Herrmann, Executive Director of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

The prizes will be awarded at a ceremony in New York City on June 11.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History sponsors over forty history schools nationwide. Gilder Lehrman history schools are rigorous, college-preparatory schools centered on American history. They have a track record of raising test scores and sending more than ninety percent of graduating seniors to college. At the core of these schools is a four-year sequence of courses in American history.

Founded in 1994, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History promotes the study and love of American history. The Institute serves teachers, students, scholars, and the general public. It helps create history-centered schools, organizes seminars and programs for educators, produces print and electronic publications and traveling exhibitions, sponsors lectures by eminent historians, and administers a History Teacher of the Year Award in every state through its partnership with Preserve America. The Institute also awards the Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, and George Washington Book Prizes, and offers fellowships for scholars to work in the Gilder Lehrman Collection. The Institute maintains two websites, www.gilderlehrman.org and the quarterly online journal www.historynow.org.

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