

Introduction to US History Uncensored: What Your High School Textbook Didn't Tell You,

By [Carolyn Baker](#)

Region: [USA](#)

Global Research, November 07, 2006

7 November 2006

American inventor and entrepreneur, Henry Ford, is famous not only for his astounding success in making the automobile available to nearly every American family in the 1920s, but also for his famous quote: "History is bunk." Many historians, offended by Ford's abrupt dismissal of the subject, defensively retort that history is *not* bunk and set out to prove their "case" regarding the relevance and significance of the study of history.

The reader may be surprised to learn that on one level, I agree with Ford. A few years ago while browsing the titles in the history section of my local bookstore, my eyes fell upon James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. Instantaneously, I snatched the book from the shelf and began frantically shuffling through its pages. Presently, I realized that Loewen had elucidated the exasperation of countless teachers of American history, and I could barely wait to get the book home where I could pore over his words without interruption. A sociologist by trade, Loewen articulates brilliantly the effects upon a society when its citizens are ignorant of their history and shines an almost blinding light on some of the most sacrosanct American historical legends.

By and large, Americans do not consider themselves ignorant of their history. Yet, most are still under the influence of grammar-school indoctrination in the "discovery" of America by Columbus and the myth of George Washington's confession to his father that he, indeed, could not tell a lie and did, in fact, cut down the cherry tree. Sadly, in the technologically-obsessed twenty-first century, any knowledge of history beyond these mythical snippets is considered "onerous" or simply "extraneous" to the "real" world.

Overwhelmingly, what I hear from my college history students is that high school history was boring, irrelevant, and largely taught to them by teachers who had little or no passion for the subject. The classic situation is the high school coach who is hired to supervise athletic programs on the condition that he/she teaches a designated number of social studies courses of which history usually comprises the majority.

In my own experience, high school history was taught by male coaches who authoritatively lectured about U.S. history as a parent would a child, then barked commands, like: "All right, everybody be quiet and write the answers to the questions on Page 29." While we submissively complied, the coach sat at his desk, clipboard and pencil in hand, diagramming football plays, resentfully offering obligatory answers to any questions we might ask.

Nevertheless, some of us, thanks to stimulating college instructors, learned to love history. We studied the subject in the context of the social upheaval and cultural transformation of the 1960s and 70s. Moreover, in awe-stricken wonder at the relevance of history to our lives

and our world, we vowed that our teaching of it would be passionate, vital, and illuminating. We could not wait to incite a similar voracity for historical knowledge in our students.

So upon all of the above I reflect when I hear Henry Ford's proclamation that history is bunk. I believe that rather than simply defending against Ford's comment, the diligent historian must analyze it more deeply. First, we must ask ourselves what would cause someone to proclaim that history is bunk? What more should we know about Ford that might shed light on his dismissal of history? Is it not extraordinarily relevant to understand that Ford was passionately anti-semitic and an ardent admirer of Hitler? In fact, when Hitler penned his infamous *Mein Kampf*, a portrait of Ford rested on his writing desk.

What might happen if this detail *were* included in conventional history texts? Might it not lead to discussion of the reality that Ford was only one of hundreds of corporate tycoons during the 1930s who admired Hitler and helped finance his rise to power? And if Ford was only one, who were the others? Why did they support Hitler? How did they become admirers of the most treacherous butcher in modern history? And what happened to their support for Hitler during World War II and after? Does their identification with his cause have anything to do with the turn of events following World War II or even the unfolding of events in the early twenty-first century? Are there implications that connect with current events such as the fact that at this writing, the sitting American president's grandfather, Prescott Bush, a contemporary of Ford, was one of those numerous corporate financiers of Hitler?

These are questions that historians are obligated to ask, and I do, and in *History Uncensored*, I offer answers to those questions—or at least plausible explanations which may not be “right” in the conventional sense, but which provide an alternative not found in “official” versions of American history. This work is unequivocally controversial, and it is meant to be, but as one of my students remarked after a lively discussion of its contents: “We may not agree with you or this curriculum, but we will never forget this course.” For me, the impact of the questions raised is far more momentous than my students' or readers' agreement with my answers.

At the opposite end of the spectrum from Henry Ford is the philosopher, George Santayana, whose famous quote is ubiquitous in history books and holocaust museums: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Unfortunately, some students use this quote to attempt to validate the irrelevance of studying history. The logic goes something like: “Well, the only thing I learn from history is that people learn nothing from history.” At that point, I am quick to challenge the student to tell me what he/she personally has learned from history. Almost always, the student discloses that she has learned a great deal from history but also confesses that it feels meaningless if the rest of society does not also learn similar lessons. At that point, I hasten to remind the student that one cannot compel society to learn from history, but one can learn one's own lessons from history, and since society is comprised of individuals, what each person learns from history has the potential to make an enormous difference in society.

I personally feel great empathy with the student who argues in this manner because he is articulating frustration with a society that does not value historical knowledge. College and university budgets incessantly decrease funds for humanities and social sciences while increasing them for engineering and technological programs. Academia appears to be screaming loudly that only the present and future matter. Whenever a tragic event occurs nationally, one of the most telling and frequently-repeated mantras is “we want to put this behind us” thereby revealing our collective belief in the irrelevance of the past—a place

where dark, painful events are buried, never to be unearthed and examined for their meaning and relevance.

In my opinion, the relegating of history to an antiquated closet of insignificance is not only intellectually unsound but fundamentally dangerous. A people ignorant of their own history are easily deceived and exploited. For example, our Founding Fathers wrote and spoke profusely of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment concept of *inalienable rights*. It permeates our Declaration of Independence and Constitution. For them, the term was synonymous with human rights held by each individual by virtue of nothing more than his/her existence. That is, one possesses inalienable rights because one breathes air and walks on the earth. Currently, however, members of the Bush Administration, including former Homeland Security Chief, Tom Ridge, and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Antonin Scalia, argue that government *bestows* the rights guaranteed in the Constitution upon its citizens.

In almost every history class I teach, I ask students to explain the origin of their rights as American citizens. Typically, most assume that their rights are “given” to them by their government. It is a rare student who has ever considered that if the government can “give” these rights, the government can also take them away. Few traditional history textbooks clarify the concept of inalienable rights which has contributed, in my opinion, to several generations of Americans who assume that the rights they daily enjoy and take for granted are somehow bestowed by their nation’s leaders.

It is important to understand that history textbooks are the products of corporate media, and corporate media, whether it be CNN, the *New York Times*, or Bedford St. Martins Publishers is much more concerned with selling a product than agonizing over accuracy. This is why hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of Americans, no longer acquire their daily news from mainstream sources but rely on alternative sources on the internet to inform them of local, national, and world events.

Moreover, as Loewen explains in *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, public school systems are not interested in making waves in terms of questioning the accuracy of history textbooks. Particularly in an era of backlash against the teaching of the theory of evolution or sex education, educators are loath to scrutinize American history textbooks which teach, as virtually all traditional ones do, that the United States of America is the most tolerant, moral, non-aggressive, and benevolent nation on earth. Insufficient detail, if any, is offered regarding Native American genocide by European settlers or the rabid racism that motivated them from the moment they set foot on the continent. Few textbooks analyze the persecution of labor and social justice movements by the wealthy and powerful in America, or American imperialism which came to fruition in the Spanish-American War, steadily burgeoning throughout the twentieth century and which in the current moment, constitutes the fundamental lynchpin of international relations.

To analyze these issues in depth, which most certainly results in learning that the history of the United States contains a very dark, as well as lighter past, is now considered disloyal, unpatriotic, and earns the analyst the label of “terrorist” or “enemy combatant.” In response to these accusations, the dedicated historian must always ask: How did this happen? How did we arrive at such a state of affairs in our history? How is it that we are increasingly kept ignorant of the dark side of American history and even discouraged from studying our history at all?

History Uncensored asks these questions and offers responses to them evoked by historical facts. Repeatedly, it presents historical events which are rarely discussed in traditional textbooks and asks the reader to think critically about them. I have taken great pains to document the information presented in it so that the reader may investigate the information in order to validate its historical accuracy and also research it further if inclined to do so.

Unquestionably, what is presented is unsettling, if not blatantly disturbing, and that is my direct intent. I have been and will continue to be accused of hating America and lacking gratitude for the benefits of being born in this nation. To this accusation I can only call on the wisdom of the great American writer Mark Twain who stated that “We should be loyal to our country at all times and to our government when it deserves it.” As I adamantly declare to my students of U.S. history, I love my country dearly, but I am now certain that my government has been and is in the process of destroying it. Americans who genuinely revere their national heritage do not blindly deify it, but rather, in the words of another great American, the former slave, Frederick Douglass, realize that “We should be lovers of our country who rebuke and do not excuse its sins.

Numerous former officials of the U.S. government have resoundingly criticized it within the past five years, not the least of whom was former Supreme Court Justice, Sandra Day O’Connor, who in March, 2006 stated that the United States is edging ever closer to becoming a dictatorship. She pointed to the incessant attacks on the U.S. judiciary by the right wing of the Republican Party which appointed her to the high court in the 1980s. “Statutes and constitutions do not protect judicial independence—people do,” O’Connor emphasized in her scathing Georgetown University speech.¹

Founding Father and second President of the United States, John Adams, wrote that “the historian must have no country”. Adams meant that we must be so committed to discovering the truth that history reveals, painful as it may be, that we put aside nationalistic prejudice and apply the scalpel of historical research. By doing so, we help heal, not harm, the nation we revere. If we insist on “having a country” when studying history, such healing cannot occur.

Perhaps the most momentous historical event of the twenty-first century thus far was the fraudulent selection of George W. Bush, Jr. as President of the United States in 2000. This abstract addresses the event and offers overwhelming evidence of fraud and criminal behavior in the 2000 election. The reader may immediately wonder why I choose to label the 2000 election more momentous than the attacks of September 11, 2001. My answer is that I do not consider the two events to be unrelated. The connection is explained more fully near the end of the book, but the significance of both events is that, taken together, they launched a *coup d’etat* in the United States which dramatically accelerated America’s trajectory toward empire, diverging with dizzying velocity away from its Founders’ original intent, a democratic republic whose purpose was to provide for the general welfare of its citizens. What could be more despicable?

For the analytical historian, the only appropriate response is to diligently explore the process of the nation’s demise from the signing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787 to the termination of that experiment in November, 2000. Beginning with the year 1865, that is precisely what *History Uncensored* intends to do.

I emphasize that the devolution from republic to empire has been a process and not an event. Throughout recent American history, particularly the history of the twentieth century,

certain markers or “tipping points” have signaled the collapse of the Founding Fathers’ experiment. One date in particular looms larger than life for the attentive student of history. That is 1947 when the National Security Act was signed into law creating the Central Intelligence Agency and a black budget, which absolved the Agency from all accountability to Congress or the American people regarding its activities and expenditures. During the Reagan Administration of the 1980s, other government agencies were allowed to create black budgets which opened the door for unprecedented corruption in the federal government. Yet another marker—the assassinations of John F. and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. And then the consummation of empire: the 2000 elections and September 11, 2001.

I contend that if one does not understand that the United States of America in 2006 is an empire, one can understand neither its history nor its future. To meticulously analyze its history, which traditional textbooks do not do, is to witness that empire taking shape. In fact, like the correct placing of scattered fragments of a puzzle, *History Uncensored* endeavors to put the puzzle together and construct a “map” which not only connects past and present events, but causes them to make perfect sense.

One imperative I offer the reader before beginning the journey through the book is: Please remove rose-colored glasses. Be willing to entertain new definitions of loyalty, patriotism, and national pride. What you will learn there is not pleasant, nor is it unparalleled. My intention is not to portray the United States as uniquely evil. Nor do I wish to portray other modern regimes as exclusively honorable. Unquestionably, Stalin of the Soviet Union and Chairman Mao of China behaved despicably and murdered millions of people in the name of the communist cause. Have other nations behaved as badly or worse than the United States? Absolutely. But I do not live in those nations; I live in the United States. My obligation, indeed my duty as an American citizen, according to the Constitution, is to dissent when I see its principles of liberty violated. For as Jefferson wrote, “Dissent is the highest form of patriotism.” More recently a similar maxim has become prominent among activists in American society: “Dissent *protects* democracy.”

Perhaps what Americans most need to understand is that their nation is not “special.” We have been taught to mouth platitudes such as “America is the greatest country in the world” or “people all over the world sacrifice everything they have, including their lives to come here.” From the days of the Puritans who viewed the New World as “a city set on a hill” or “a new Jerusalem” or “a light unto the world,” Americans have been enculturated to believe that other countries have dictatorships, but we don’t; that other countries are imperialistic, but we aren’t; that other countries have corrupt elections, but we don’t; that other countries torture and maim prisoners of war or their own citizens, but we don’t; that other countries perform lethal scientific experiments on their own citizens, but we don’t; that other countries would incite and conduct wars for natural resources or commercial markets abroad, but we don’t.

In my own personal history, I have ancestors who fought in the American Revolution, some who were conductors for the Underground Railroad, and others who were members of the Ku Klux Klan. I wish that I could eliminate the reality of the latter, but I cannot. History, like the individuals who make it, is remarkably complicated. It contains the good, the bad, the ugly, the indifferent, and everything in between. I passionately contend that as Americans we must revere that in our history which is extraordinary, honorable, praiseworthy, and yes, unique, yet at the same time, we must be willing to comprehend the long and tragic journey away from those incipient virtues to the depraved ground on which we now stand.

Some readers will undoubtedly label this work “conspiracy theory”—an accusation which I no longer take seriously given the fact that conspiracies do happen every day of our lives and that the “conspiracy theory” allegation is so unremittingly utilized as an attempt to marginalize arguments which question or confront “official history.” As investigative journalist, Mike Ruppert is fond of saying, “I don’t deal in conspiracy *theory*; I deal in conspiracy *fact*.” A former Los Angeles Police Department Narcotics Investigator, Ruppert has become known to many as an “information cop”, a term which refers to law enforcement investigative procedures, where pieces of evidence are gathered and configured, so that when the configuration is sufficiently indicative of who might have committed the crime, the evidence is presented to a district attorney or a grand jury. An information cop relates similarly to information. I encourage the reader of *History Uncensored* to become his/her own information cop and carefully examine the pieces of evidence there, configure them, or as we say, “connect the dots”, and draw one’s own conclusions.

Indeed, I have selectively included certain historical events and omitted others. I have done so because like any other historian, I have an opinion, and unlike some historians, I see history “going somewhere”, and where it appears to be going is more than a little disturbing to me. Present, past, and future are inextricably connected and, in my world view, constantly influence each other. I firmly believe that we cannot understand current issues of global climate change, the end of the age of hydrocarbon energy, the events of September 11, 2001, the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the globalist economy which is in the process of obliterating national economies, including our own, the draconian evisceration of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States, the proliferation of poverty, prisons, and people without health care, to mention only a few national and planetary perils, unless we incisively examine the history of our nation, particular from the end of the Civil War to the present moment.

History Uncensored is meant to supplement, not replace, any textbooks or readings required by the institutions in which it is being utilized. The reader may be astonished at what is omitted in this work, but please bear in mind that my intention was not to write a history textbook covering every historical event from 1865 to the present, but to insert events that are typically excluded from traditional textbooks. For example, I have written little about the actual events of World War II, but I offer details regarding the Pearl Harbor attacks, the triggering event of America’s involvement in the war, and the role of the United States in the world in the aftermath of the war and the war’s effect on the U.S. domestically. For this reason, I have chosen to refer to the work as a *curriculum abstract*.

Whether one is a student in a formal class of U.S. history from 1865 to the present, whether one is a history teacher, a lover of history, or an activist, *U.S. History Uncensored* is a fascinating and provocative story of how America became the nation it is today, told from a perspective one is almost guaranteed not to find in traditional history textbooks. In other words, this is a history class the reader will not fall asleep in.

Carolyn Baker, adjunct professor of history and Managing Editor of From The Wilderness Publications, hosts her own website at www.carolynbaker.org where the book can be purchased and where she can be contacted.

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Carolyn Baker](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca