

Is There Hope for the Future of America? The Power of a Story



by Kimberly Fletcher

"The stories we tell literally make the world," asserted Michael Margolis. "If you want to change the world, you need to change your story."

During World War I, the French bravely fought back the invading Germans for four brutal years. Twenty years later, in World War II, France fell to Nazi Germany in six just weeks. What changed?

Much of the blame was placed squarely on the shoulders of the teachers' unions who, in a spirit of pacifism and internationalism, had purged all of the schoolbooks of stories of the courage and self-sacrifice of their fallen heroes. Instead, the children were bombarded with stories of the horrors of war and the suffering of French and German alike.

How has our story changed?

C. Bradley Thompson, a Professor of History and Political Science at Ashland University has spent several years studying the history textbooks used in America's schools. He summarizes his research in his 1995 book, "The Strange Career of American History," stating, "The American pageant was a grand story of epic scale and heroic accomplishment. In short, the history of America was the

history of freedom. Today, however, American history is something very different."

He went on to state that today our children are being taught, "the colonization of North America represents the greatest act of genocide in world history; that the Founding Fathers were racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, phallogogo-Eurocentric bigots; that the winning of the American West was an act of capitalist pillage; that the so-called "Robber Barons" forced widows and orphans into the streets; that the greatest consequence of World War II was the liberation of the American housewife; that the greatest threat to American freedom was Senator Joseph McCarthy; (and) that hidden in the closets of most white Americans is a robe and hood."

I have read the textbooks and I assure you, as heartbreaking as it is, he is not exaggerating. Feminism has played a major role in the changing of our story. After all, who else would think the liberation of American housewives was the greatest achievement of WWII?

A 2018 study found that two-thirds of millennials don't know what Auschwitz is and 4 in 10 millennials don't know 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust. I'm sure, howev-

er, they are very familiar with Rosie the Riveter. Do you see how our story has changed? If we don't know the past of our story then we are destined to repeat the mistakes from it.

Professor Thompson concluded, "By debunking the principles and great deeds of the American past and by dethroning our most cherished heroes, today's college professors are destroying in our youth the natural reverence and patriotic attachment that is vital to the civic health of any regime...A nation that hates itself cannot last."

So, what is our story?

Two decades ago, I found a piece of our story. It was a book written by Mara Pratt in 1891. One of my favorite stories from the book is "The Capture of Fort Ticonderoga." The story tells of Colonel Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys. The courage and fortitude of Ethan Allen inspired me so much that I named my youngest son Ethan. The story goes as such:

In Vermont, called... the "Green Mountain state," the men had formed themselves into a company under their colonel, Ethan Allen, and called themselves the "Green Mountain Boys." On the morning of the very day of the meeting of Congress which made George Washington Commander in Chief, Ethan Allen, with a detachment of these volunteers, set out to surprise Fort Ticonderoga...

Allen, in a voice like thunder, so his followers say, demanded the instant surrender of the fort. The commander, frightened, and only half dressed, threw open his door, saying, "By whose authority do you"—But

Allen broke in upon him with, "In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress do I command you to surrender."

No resistance was attempted; and so a large quantity of cannon and ammunition which the English had stored there, and which just then was so much needed by the troops at Boston, fell into the hands of the Americans, without the loss of a single man.

This is what our children were learning in school in the 1880s. One hundred years later, in the 1970s, I was learning about the great American melting pot. In 2001 my daughter was learning how to use tarot cards in her history class and my son was learning the importance of accepting alternate lifestyles in science. And we wonder why our society has degenerated into a culture of spoiled, selfish, confused adults with no motivation? It is because they've been told a different story.

The story is the most powerful motivator on the planet. Every war, every conflict, every action can be traced to the belief in a story—for good or for evil. Even Jesus understood the power of stories. He had only three short years to fulfill his mission on earth, and how did he spend those three years? Serving people and telling stories! And now those stories live on in the hearts and minds of our children—and in us. Even those who don't read the Bible or believe in God know and subscribe to the Golden Rule.

2020 has been an odd year to say the least. We wake up every morning to more news of coronavirus shutdowns, violence, looting, American statues being ripped down and defaced and we wonder, how did we get here? How can American citizens destroy

their country like this? It seems like it happened overnight. The truth is the groundwork was laid decades ago as our story has been rewritten in the classroom, the media, and every facet of our society. Our changing story has led to a cultural revolution, initiated by politicians and perpetrated by our own youth.

This isn't the first time children have been used to overthrow a government. Hitler realized the power of capturing young hearts and minds with his Hitler Youth program declaring, "He alone who owns the youth owns the future."

Lenin, too, realized the power of indoctrinating youth. "Give me four years to teach the children," he contended, "and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted."

Mao Zedong was extremely successful in compelling youth to overthrow their government, using media propaganda to ignite a cultural revolution. The parallels of the Chinese cultural revolution and what's happening in America today is astonishing.

Mao Zedong rose to power as a communist revolutionary in China following WWII. Known as Chairman Mao, he became the founding father of the People's Republic of China which he ruled from 1949 until his death in 1976.

As the communist party grew, Mao began to feel his power threatened from within. To protect his position, Mao launched a scheme to consolidate his power and ensure control of the Chinese government. In 1966, Mao shut down China's schools and then rallied the nation's youth in a campaign to bring back the communist revolutionary

spirit. Students throughout China began to revolt against their government leaders. They held mass demonstrations in the capital holding giant portraits of Mao, beating drums and shouting slogans at their perceived enemies—mainly the older generation.

Mao purposely created chaos and disorder to steer the direction of the movement. His "organic chaos" mobilized student-led riots on a path to destroy everything "old." He incited the youth to purge the "Four Olds"—old customs, old culture, old habits, old ideas. Mao's famous "Little Red Book" full of his own quotations, was printed and millions of copies were distributed to youth like scripture for the revolution. Within months Mao created his own cult with millions of young followers.

He had completely changed China's story.

In a few short months, students formed a paramilitary unit called the Red Guard. They roamed China's cities attacking the older generation, who they determined weren't communist enough or were deemed dangerous to the movement. As part of their purge the Chinese youth destroyed historical sites and tore down statues. There were massive book and artifact burnings. The Chinese Cultural Revolution gutted the arts as well. A purge of the arts, led by Mao's wife, ensured all western influences were purged from Chinese society—western music, literature, movies and theater were all forbidden. If a piece of art had a hint of foreign influence, it was destroyed.

In the end their purge killed an estimated 1.5 million people and as many as 20 million were tortured, put in prison and had their

property stolen. In 1967, within the first year of China's cultural revolution, different factions of China's Red Guard started fighting with each other for dominance. With all the violent chaos, several Chinese cities were on the verge of anarchy. Mao flooded the cities with his army troops to restore order. It was a total meltdown of society. Ultimately, after a decade of death and destruction, and at least 1.5 million dead, Mao got the complete reboot of China that he wanted.

For the last four decades our American heritage has been systematically replaced with socialist propaganda. The "purge" we are seeing in our country today is the result of our story being changed. Our children have been stripped of their very identity—their heritage, their history, their foundation. We can't even count on the fact that we, as parents, know the truth of our story. How many of us have heard of the Great American Melting Pot, the Capture of Fort Ticonderoga, the courage of Hannah Hendee, the conviction of Patrick Henry? What else have we been denied? What else have we forgotten?

Facts and information just feed the brain, but stories, they go directly to the heart, and it is our heart not our brain that inspires our thoughts and directs our actions. Reviving the American story is vital to our national survival. Remember the words of Professor Thompson, "A nation that hates itself cannot last."

Imagine, if we spent a little time reading stories like Ethan Allen to our children what a difference it would make. We may tell our children to have courage, but the concept of courage will mean nothing until we show them what it looks like. We may teach our

children to pledge to the flag, but it is just rote repetition unless they understand the story behind it. If we read stories that teach them why we stand for the flag, they will never question whether or not they should.

America's future will be determined by the stories we love and believe in. If we have failed to tell our children the stories of what made America the light and hope of the world, then the battle for our freedom will be lost and the story we'll be telling our children is what it was once like in America when we used to be free.

Discussion Questions

- ★ *How do you believe our story has changed?*
- ★ *How can sharing the true story of America heal our nation and sustain a free society?*
- ★ *What can we teach our children that will protect them from being susceptible to the pitfalls of the youth in history, as described in the article?*
- ★ *Are there ways we could become involved (or more involved) with the local school board to ensure proper decisions regarding education are being made in our area? (Local school boards typically have decision making power over curriculum.)*
- ★ *What are your thoughts on teaching children about inspiring leaders in a way that both emphasizes their valor and acknowledges and is compassionate towards their flaws?*