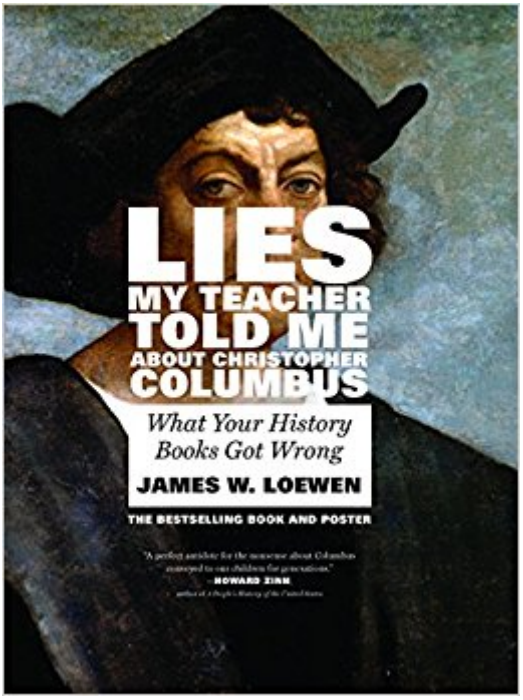
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Lies My Teacher Told Me About Christopher Columbus: What Your History Books Got Wrong



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Synopsis

Some myths donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t die, and lies are still being told about Christopher Columbus: that he Ã¢â ¬Å“discoveredÃ¢â ¬Â• the Americas (not only was the land familiar to native inhabitants, but it had also been visited before by Europeans), that the land was sparsely populated by native people (there were fourteen million inhabitants in 1492), that those people were primitive (Europeans learned a lot and gained technology and agricultural skill from Native Americans), and that they submitted to ColumbusÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Ã¢â ¬Å“God-likeÃ¢â ¬Â• authority (they submitted to the deadly smallpox and bubonic plague that ColumbusÃ¢â ¬â„¢s crew imported from Europe). Lies My Teacher Told Me About Christopher Columbus disproves the myths about Columbus still enshrined in American textbooks with quotations from primary source material that sets the record straight. The poster and accompanying 48Ã¢â ¬â œpage paperback book sum up the mistellingsÃ¢â ¬â •and reveal the real storyÃ¢â ¬â •in a graphically appealing and accessible format that shows the degree to which textbooks have Ã¢â ¬Å“liedÃ¢â ¬Â• by knowingly substituting crowd-pleasing myths for grim and gruesome historical evidence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for the previous edition of Lies My Teacher Told Me About Christopher Columbus : "A perfect antidote for the nonsense about Columbus conveyed to our children for generations."—Howard Zinn, author of A PeopleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s History of the United States "Absolutely indispensable for at least the next hundred years. This book is a real Discovery and a real Exploration."—Ariel Dorfman, Walter Hines Page Chair of Literature and Latin American Studies, Duke University "Every

teacher in America could benefit by reading this fine work."—Bill Bigelow, co-editor, Rethinking Columbus

James W. Loewen is the bestselling and award-winning author of Lies My Teacher Told Me, Lies Across America, and Sundown Towns (all available from The New Press), among many other books and articles. He won a Sydney Spivack Award from the American Sociological Association, the Oliver Cromwell Cox Award for Distinguished Anti-Racist Scholarship, and the Spirit of America Award from the National Council for the Social Studies, among many other honors. He is a regular contributor to the History ChannelÃ¢â ¬â„¢s History magazine. Loewen is a professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Vermont and lives in Washington, D.C.

Awesome book! He exposed so many distortions and omissions from American history books. It’s interesting to see that other historians who have done the research are finally coming to the same conclusions, I HIGHLY recommend not just reading the book, but using it as a guide for judging the works of others.

Slightly disappointed in this book. I thought it would be a lot thicker. It doesn’t have a ton of pages (probably less than (50) and it’s very thin. It comes with a free poster inside which has a ton of information and pictures on it, like you would see in a classroom. Wish it had more pages, the author is great! I recommend this book and all of his other books in the LIES MY TEACHER TOLD ME Series. It was packaged in clear wrap.

Kind of a "two themes in one" analysis - the brutality and impact of the Columbus voyage and its aftermath on the millions of Americans already living in the Caribbean, intertwined with a devastating critique of what our textbooks say and don’t say about that history. The reader should come away with a striking example of how important facts and events become a subjective narrative, how a story can evolve over time, and why much of the history taught in schools is nothing short of propaganda. (Plus you get this big wall poster pointing out various Columbus myths...)

Many primary sources are cited. This is a great guide that would be especially useful for teachers.

What exactly is "history"? Most people would answer, "It’s what happened in the past." Some might

be more specific and say, "It’s the study of what happened in the past." But only a fraction would accurately describe it as "the historian’s interpretation of what happened in the past." This is the central question of both James Loewen’s best-selling "Lies My Teacher Told Me", and his new book focusing on Columbus. Up until approximately 50 years ago, history was all about great men and great events. But in their zeal to present iconic figures like Washington and Jefferson as persons to emulate, historians often went too far, portraying them as infallible demi-gods, and great events such as Columbus’ discovery of America were always told in the most heroic fashion. But then in the 1960s, reflecting the attitude of the times, the pendulum began to swing back. Suddenly the great figures in American history had all become ambitious opportunists with self-serving ulterior motives. Historians began writing more and more about the long-neglected area of social history, focusing on women and minorities and the downtrodden. James Loewen is clearly a product of this new era of historical thought. As such, he never misses a chance to interpret Columbus’ actions in the worst possible light, or ascribe to him the basest of motives. I am a revisionist historian myself, and I recently wrote a novel about the American Revolution from the point of view of one of the great scoundrels in American history, in which I take a less-than-heroic look at the Founding Fathers.Ã Â Scoundrel!Ã Â But that was a novel, written with a huge dollop of cynical humor, and these were the views of the villain of the story. Every negative thing said about the revered figures of the Revolution could be true--if, like my nefarious narrator, you interpreted their actions in the most cynical way. Just as the Founders might have been the saintly wise men portrayed by earlier historians, if you choose to interpret their actions in all the best light. Of course the truth generally lies somewhere in the middle, and this is where Loewen fails as an historian. His books are based on overturning the earlier heroic, myth-ridden portrayals of figures like Columbus, and in so doing, he goes too far, giving a portrait of the man that is every bit as one-sided as the early biographies he is trying to correct. However, if the reader bears this in mind, he can learn quite a lot from Loewen’s book. It is well-written, well-researched, well-argued, and he does a thorough job of presenting Columbus’ less heroic motives, which certainly must have had some impact on his actions. As long as the reader maintains a healthy level of skepticism, and thinks of Loewen as a lawyer presenting a case rather than an impartial judge, this is a book well worth reading.

good

I found the format to be hard to navigate

The whole time I read this book, I could only think of the recent (February 2015) movement by Oklahoma lawmakers that banned certain AP history courses because they didn't teach "American' exceptionalism". If there were ever a case of needing a book in American classrooms, this is it and Oklahoma just proved it. I feel this book should most certainly be required for ALL history teachers (and probably for all Oklahoma lawmakers!). The fact that, according to the book, so many teachers of history are ignorant on this subject is frightening. As a teacher (although not of history), I know this to be true. Many teacher's programs do not focus on giving teachers relevant information so much as indoctrinating them into whatever current educational philosophy is in swing. For the past fifteen years, testing has been in vogue and true academic thought and research have gone out the window as American teachers strive to teach kids to bubble in the right answer. This book does what a book should: makes you think and question and argue and rage. And, then think some more.This is NOT a book of revisionist history, but rather a book of actual history. While many of the stories were old news to me (heinous Christopher Columbus and the genocide of American Indians, for example), many of the items in the book were new for me to read about. That scared me quite a bit. I like to think of myself as an armchair historian, but clearly I've not been getting the full story. It was so disappointing and disheartening to read about the Vietnam War, a topic I have never been taught and only know about from the news. The beauty of the book isn't that it necessarily rewrites American history; rather, it is the questioning the book causes. I had to stop at several points and go look up and read about some of these topics. Surely, some of the facts must be wrong, right? Unfortunately, no. What I found only mirrors what we see on TV everyday: the same event told in completely different versions by members of opposing political natures that eventually comes out not resembling truth in the least. It fascinates me to see how we change our version of history to make ourselves (Americans) look better. I'm still a bit perplexed by many items in the book and have added several new titles to my list of books to read later.Overall, this is probably a book most fascinating to teachers, especially teachers of history, and anyone interested in history. It isn't a book to pick up if you want inspiring stories of heroism or general knowledge, but that makes it all the more important and relevant.

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