

Chapter 1 : Top 10 Common Historical Myths - Listverse

The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality is a book by German historian Wolfram Wette which dealt with the issue of Wehrmacht's criminality during World War II and the legend of its "clean hands".

You will find an historical survey of the history of mythology, the study and analysis of myth. By the end of this chapter, you should understand the following: The last essay showed that the writings of Xenophanes , Heraclitus , and Plato featured both newly minted, rational myths and discussion of traditional, poetic myths. In fact, since the time of Xenophanes, two parallel streams have flowed from their headwaters in the so-called Greek Renaissance c. The first is the mythic tradition itself: The second is the ongoing conversation about the value and meaning of those stories. While the words myth and mythology are frequently used interchangeably, we will distinguish between them in this class. Therefore, myth will be used when referring to the stories themselves while mythology will be used when referring to the study and analysis of those stories. This essay will demonstrate that questions about the truth value and cultural importance of myths have generated ingenious interpretations and heated disputes ever since the time of Xenophanes and Heraclitus. For two and a half millennia, competition among various schools of mythology has been a struggle over matters of ultimate truth, religious belief, political theory, cultural identity, verifiable history, and social custom. The history of mythology begins here, with the first critical examinations of the methods and truth-value of myth. Both myth-telling and philosophy are preoccupied with fundamental metaphysical questions about the origin and ultimate nature of the universe and being, but philosophy is also intensely interested in logically consistent, rational methods for arriving at answers to such questions. Thus, the reason that Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and Plato rejected the myths of Homer and Hesiod as lies and silly stories for the simple-minded is that one cannot rationally and logically examine their truth-claims. Rational inquiry faces the same problem when it attempts to weigh in on any matter of faith. People, including philosophers, believe all kinds of things that cannot be directly observed, measured in a laboratory, or even fully articulated. Does this lack of empirical evidence necessarily prove that true love, life on other planets, or a loving God do not exist? Instead, we can only construct arguments based on what any person can observe for him- or herself. And discovering what constitutes a reasonable argument and a logical proof was an important part of what preoccupied the early Greek philosophers.

Allegorical Mythologies A second development that arose with the birth of Greek rationalism in the latter 6th century BCE is something that many have called allegorical mythology. Allegory is a form of extended metaphor by which objects, persons, and events refer symbolically to meanings outside the narrative itself. From the time of the earliest philosophers until the 17th century CE, philosophers and Church scholars interpreted myths allegorically, looking beneath their literal surfaces to find hidden references to natural phenomena, historical events, or philosophical or religious truth. Yet, he was enough of a rationalist to have been bothered by their supernatural elements. His solution was to develop a system for reading myths allegorically in order to convert nonrational and supernatural mythic material into rational and natural terms. Thus fire is at war with water, heat with cold, heavy elements with airy elements, and so on. He further associated various Olympian gods with the elements. So, for example, Apollo , Helios , and Hephaestus represent the element fire, while Poseidon and Skamander represent water. Such abstract qualities as wisdom and desire were represented by Athena and Aphrodite , respectively. Probably, he would have seen this episode as an allegory of some kind of ongoing struggle between air Hera and water Poseidon against Zeus the thunderstorm? His particular contribution to mythology has been called historical allegory. Therefore, he reasoned, the ancients exaggerated the historical facts of actual persons and events and, because they did not have access to better forms of knowledge, accepted these embellished stories as truth. In his Sacred History, Euhemerus claimed to have discovered on the island of Panchia somewhere off the coast of Arabia Felix inscriptions which indicated that Kronos and Zeus were at one time living, earthly kings. In short, Euhemerus argued that myths were not true, per se, but fanciful tales that preserved traces of historical truth. His approach to myth is rational mythology at its most pungent. It is unknown how Euhemerus himself might have applied historical allegory to, say, the Iliad or the Theogony. Modern euhemerists, like their namesake, have tended to

rewrite the myths they study in strictly rational terms. Founded by Zeno of Citium, Cyprus c. While the Stoics continued, as Theagenes had done, to interpret myth in terms of physical phenomena, they also became interested in reading the Iliad, Odyssey, and other ancient literature as encoded moral treatises. Thus, their allegorical readings of myth frequently described the heroes and gods of myth as embodying their own moral ideals and as resisting the vices and weaknesses that they themselves wished to avoid. For example, by the first century of the Common Era, Heraclitus the Stoic had written the Homeric Allegories in which he sought to defend Homer from the charge of immorality first laid against him by Xenophanes more than five centuries previously. Similarly, Heraclitus the Stoic identifies the gods with a variety of abstract qualities: But Heraclitus also argues that the Odyssey is a moral allegory from start to finish, declaring that Odysseus is the embodiment of all virtues and that Homer uses him to teach wisdom by depicting him as hating the vices which destroy human life. In fact, the Stoic takes his moral allegory so far that he completely discounts the literal, surface meaning of the Iliad and Odyssey and presumably of all mythic literature, by assuming that its only value is its allegorical meaning. Most of these etymologies are based on accidental similarities in the sound and spelling of words and result in little more than clever puns and word games. Over time, these more elaborate allegorical interpretations became more important than the myths themselves. More than a century later, the neo-Platonic philosopher Porphyry CE, also employed a form of allegorical mythology in his *The Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey*. In this work he declares that what is obviously absurd in myth positively cries out to be read allegorically so that absurdity will be transformed into that which is meaningful. Thus, the Homeric cave mentioned in the title of his work is said to be based on an actual Ithacan cave sacred to the nymphs. But, Porphyry added, even if the cave where Odysseus hid his treasure upon his return to Ithaca were not an actual place, its symbolism remains intact. Because the cave is a material phenomenon, Porphyry argued, it represents the material universe. Nevertheless, the early Church fathers could not help being impressed by the allegorical mythology of the Stoics and neo-Platonists. Its intense focus on minute textual details and correct interpretation obviously held great promise for Biblical scholarship and the development of sound doctrine. Clement of Alexandria is credited with being the first to use allegorical interpretation on the Hebrew scriptures and the writings that eventually became the New Testament. He declared that God had hidden his pearls of wisdom from the swine that despise them, intending that the true believer would search for these hidden, Christian meanings. The psychic soulish level is less literal, embodying the moral and ethical lessons that scriptural stories impart. The spiritual level is the least literal, most mystical most allegorical level of Scripture. Indeed, Origen believed that the entire body of Hebrew scriptures prophesied Christ, who in turn is the key for correctly understanding what Christians eventually called the Old Testament. Citing, for example, I Corinthians 10, Origen pointed out that even the Apostle Paul saw the parting of the Red Sea, manna from heaven, and the death of the wandering Israelites in the desert as allegorical symbols for baptism, the eucharist, and punishment for sin, respectively. Throughout the Middle Ages, handbooks proliferated, featuring brief plot summaries of the myths to which were attached Christian moral lessons. Renaissance and Enlightenment Mythologies As the Church became not only the most important spiritual but also the most important intellectual and political power in Europe, a thoroughly Christ-centered view of history emerged. While the Church preserved and admired the writings of the great Greek and Roman philosophers and poets, it read their works allegorically, viewing all they said as veiled references to the coming of the Christ and Church teaching. But, even before the invention of the printing press in and the resultant surge in literacy throughout Europe, a renewed fascination with ancient Roman thought and culture had begun to develop. While continuing to identify with Christian teachings, they nevertheless began to read the ancient writers as fellow humans beings with similar passions and concerns. Soon political power came to be valued for its own sake rather than as an instrument of the Church in the service of God. Powerful rulers in France, Spain, and England soon pursued empires that rivaled the Holy Roman Empire in wealth and extent. One important effect of the rise of monarchical power was a potent form of nationalism that eventually gave a new impetus to the study of myth. *Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century* provides a detailed and readable history of this linguistic search for origins. As early as, Jan Van Gorp asserted that his native Flemish was the primordial tongue. But there was more at stake than simply establishing which language had been spoken in

the Garden of Eden. Significant in this search for the language and people of Paradise is how the myths of Eden and Babel were adapted to form a rational framework for academic inquiry. Not unlike Herodotus whose literal belief in Heracles forms part of his attempt to represent history rationally, these early European language philosophers accepted the historical accuracy of the Genesis myth, particularly its depiction of an original human unity based on a common language. And, not unlike Plato, these early scholars adapted and rationalized traditional myths to serve their immediate social and political purposes. Giovanni Battista Vico and *The New Science* These new language-oriented developments in mythology were soon combined with time-honored allegorical approaches so that scholars could peel away the layers of irrationality and error attributed to pagan myths and reveal the presumably rational, Christian truth at the core of these stories. For example, Giambattista Vico, in his *New Science* explicated the scientific principles that, he claimed, could finally make sense of the confused histories, geographies, and linguistics of his time. Vico theorized that languages and cultures undergo ever-repeating evolutionary cycles; human society began after the flood in a primitive state without language, moved through a heroic phase when language was identical with poetry, and culminated in our current stage in which language serves a wide variety of prosaic purposes. Eventually, Vico speculated, an upheaval would occur, starting the process all over again. A generation after Vico, Englishman Sir William Jones, unwittingly gave mythology a more scientific, language-based emphasis when he founded what is now known as comparative linguistics. While serving as a Jurist in India, Jones noticed numerous similarities between Arabic and European languages and the priestly language of Sanskrit. A prodigy who, even in his twenties, was an international authority in five languages and possessed a credible grasp of several others, Jones made a systematic comparison of the grammars and important nouns and verbs of Latin, Greek, and Latin, noticing that they had similarities that could not be explained away by accident. He later noticed that Gothic, Celtic, and Persian, too, seemed closely related to the Classical languages of India and Europe. Unlike Gorp, Thomassin, and Vico, who attempted to make their observations fit into foregone nationalistic or religious conclusions, Jones followed the evidence to a very different conclusion: This scientific approach to language study gave direction, method, and legitimacy to, among other things, the search for the Ur-people from whom, it was believed, all European culture and achievement emanated. As linguistic research advanced, scholars soon uncovered numerous myths outside the Greco-Roman tradition and discovered remarkable similarities between Greco-Roman and Biblical stories and those of the ancient Near East, India, and even China. Through extensive comparative research, Kuhn believed that he had deduced the original Indo-European myth from which numerous, cross-cultural variants eventually emanated. Sometimes, as for Prometheus, the stolen gift was fire; sometimes it was the elixir of immortality. Some preferred to see the Ur-myth as an allegory of the phases of the moon, others argued for the sun, still others found that prevailing winds or other meteorological conditions formed the arch-plot. Ethnic Mythology As has been shown, emergent nationalism and a revived scientific curiosity at the end of the Renaissance were among the most important inspirations for the first significant innovation in mythology in more than a millennium. Like his Medieval predecessors, he assumed the literal existence of a primordial, divinely sanctioned, and linguistically unified humanity. Indeed, myths were important to Herder and those influenced by him in part because it was believed that, as the most ancient narratives a culture possessed, they embodied the purity, virtue, and strength from which increasingly urbanized civilization had been receding for centuries. This hypothetical race, which they called the Aryans, provided 19th-century German nationalists with an ancient, heroic Golden Age upon which to base their theories of national greatness. If, they reasoned, Germans were actually descendants of the Aryans, then they were not the Barbarians so vilified by the Roman historian Tacitus or the vassals of French-speaking Prussia, but the inheritors of an ancient patrimony of conquest, strength, and mighty deeds. In linguistics and mythology, there were Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and, respectively whose *German Grammar* exhaustively demonstrated the relationship between their native tongue and the other Aryan languages. In music, there was Richard Wagner whose famous Ring Cycle was a highly imaginative operatic synthesis of various Norse, Anglo-Saxon, and other Germanic myths about the dragon-slaying hero, Siegfried. In Wagner, we see an almost religious devotion to the values of the Aryan Volk. In philosophy, Ludwig Feuerbach, Ludwig Schemann, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and, early in his career, Friedrich Wilhelm

Nietzsche provide some of the clearest examples of the intersection between myth and racial theory among the educated elite. Nietzsche wrote with great emotional force about the importance of German art, poetry, myth, ancient religions, and native soil: We think so highly of the pure and vigorous core of the German character that we dare to expect of it above all others the elimination of the forcibly implanted foreign elements, and consider it possible that the German spirit will return to itself. Some may suppose that this spirit must begin its fight with the elimination of everything Romanic. There they savor a freedom from all social constraints. One cannot fail to see at the bottom of all these noble races the beast of prey, the splendid blond beast prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory.

Chapter 2 : The Wehrmacht – Wolfram Wette | Harvard University Press

Troy was it a myth or a reality? Troy was thought to be a mythical city in modern times, but archaeologists found proof of its existence. In the 19th century a succession of excavators determined that the ancient city consisted of nine layers, one on top of the other.

Harvard University Press, *History, Myth, Reality* is a translation of the original German text published by S. Fischer Verlag in As we know, only a handful of the 20 million soldiers who served throughout the war were tried and found guilty. At the dawn of the Cold War, these myths were circulated among more than a few military historians in Great Britain and the United States. Consisting of six chapters and a conclusion, *The Wehrmacht* attends to micro-level details in order to construct a broad picture, not only of the history of the Wehrmacht, but also of its historiography. Significantly, his account does not begin with the conclusion of the war crimes trials. Hitler would exploit these racial discourses to promote his anti-Semitic, anti-Slavic program, concomitant to his aim of annihilating the Jews of Europe. Wette then traces the trajectory of these public perceptions, identifying how they informed the ideology of the Prussian officer corps, and linking them to dominant myths of Jews circulating among the Reichswehr and the Wehrmacht. He notes that at the turn of the century pseudoscientific beliefs were deployed to rationalize emerging notions of racial hierarchies, while anti-Semitism became increasingly organized through political associations such as the Deutscher Handlungsgehilfenverband and the Band der Landwirte. For the Nazis these perceptions, ideologies, and pseudoscientific beliefs constituted the baseline for their conception of their Jewish others and became manifest as their official, xenophobic policy. At the same time, the language was intended to blunt their scruples and the feelings of guilt likely to surface in conjunction with such brutality. Thus the main function of the racist propaganda consisted in creating a psychological distance between German soldiers and enemies through continual denigration and dehumanization of the latter in order to make killing them easier. Wette describes a number of theaters of war – in Serbia, the massacres in Belaya Tserkov in August , and in Babi Yar in September – to show how Wehrmacht and SS soldiers took to their duties, murdering tens of thousands of Jews seemingly without remorse. Wette relies on careful research of primary sources, those familiar and overlooked, eyewitness accounts, and other key resources up to the time of his own writing, telling this history at every moment with careful yet passionate sagacity. *The Wehrmacht* keeps the reader apprised of the evolving historiography of the German army, evaluating at key moments scholarship that has decisively shaped its history. In ascertaining the extent to which the average Wehrmacht soldier may or may not have actually held racist beliefs, Wette contextualizes his findings with those of a history, *Frontsoldaten*, written by Stephen G. This text is the result of close evaluation of thousands of letters, diaries, memoirs, and oral accounts by German soldiers on the front in order to access the reality of the soldiers in the bunkers and foxholes. On what sources could the author draw? Wette notes that for almost two decades after the Second World War, most of this writing was carried out by the defeated, and to a far greater extent than most people realize. In June of , former German officers were writing for the history program, and by March they had collectively produced about 34, pages. Throughout *The Wehrmacht* Wette presents the facts as accurately as possible, maintaining throughout a clear and concise style. And here he is attendant to the histories that have tried to exculpate the Germany army while placing sole blame for the disaster of the war on Hitler and his high command. The public discontent in the early s over the unresolved relationship of the Bundeswehr to the Wehrmacht, culminating in the Historikerstreit, raised the historical and political consciousness of the younger generation born after the war. It was subsequently the Wehrmacht Exhibition, mounted by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research between and , that decisively shattered the taboo. To a far greater degree than the Bundeswehr of today, it represented and reflected the general population of the country. Thus it cannot be understood solely as an institution of the state, but must be seen as part of society, closely bound up with the lives of the average German family. *The Wehrmacht* has been beautifully translated by Deborah Lucas Schneider. The prose reads quickly, yet every word carries weight and communicates clearly. It deftly attends to historical details, yet is also attentive to the ideological problems that inform this historiography. In this two

aims are kept in careful balance: The Wehrmacht rigorously critiques the discursive effects that constitute knowledge about the past and vigorously interrogates how such discursive formations also inform ethnic and racial difference. The Wehrmacht is highly recommended for all who may have even a slight interest in the topic, academic and otherwise.

Chapter 3 : Ten Myths in American History : We're History

11 Biggest Myths About American History. By In reality, it saw steel's mass manufacture, an explosion of technological innovation and the first evidence of America's global economic power.

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Lee Baker *The Wehrmacht*: Translated by Deborah Lucas Schneider. Harvard University Press, By now there can be no doubt that the German armed forces committed mass murder on the Eastern Front during the Second World War. Over the last twenty years various scholars, from the pioneering work of Omer Bartov to the more recent work of Ben Shepherd and a host of American and German scholars, have demonstrated that the view of a Wehrmacht with "clean hands" is entirely mistaken. These studies have shown that "average" German soldiers were completely capable of and willing to commit the worst atrocities imaginable. This book is another contribution to that corpus. It is rather a study of the path trod by the commanding officers: As such, this book complements earlier studies by focusing on the highest levels of the Wehrmacht. Wette demonstrates that this level of command not only knew about and approved of mass murder but, after the war, successfully created the myth that the Wehrmacht had played no role in the crimes committed during the war. The major premise of the book is that the German military elite held many views in common with Hitler. In addition to a common antisemitism, the most important of these views was the belief in the need to militarize German society as a first step towards redressing German grievances. They thus shared the idea that any future war would be a war of aggressive conquest and extermination. The Wehrmacht did not need to be Nazified, as its most senior commanders, even men like Seeckt, Blomberg, Fritsch, and Beck, already shared the basic Nazi assumptions about the nature of a future war. As Wette points out, not only were the notorious "criminal orders" written and issued by the Wehrmacht, but military commanders like Manstein and Hoepner went even further by emphasizing, on their own authority, the ideological nature of the invasion of the U. Once the war was lost, many of the same officers often working for the U. This deception, along with other factors, gave the Wehrmacht a sheen of decency which has only recently been removed the traveling Wehrmacht exhibition from 1999 and the commentary it elicited played a significant role in shattering the myth. It is difficult to tell to whom this book is directed; while impressive in its familiarity with the relevant literature, it is based almost entirely upon secondary sources which will be entirely familiar to any specialist. In addition, because it relies heavily upon previously published work, it offers very little which will be new to anyone who has read more than a handful of books on this topic. Its contents, however, assume familiarity with the issues and so it cannot have been intended for a general audience. Since it is a good introduction to the topic of a "dirty" Wehrmacht, it would be most useful in a senior seminar or a graduate readings course or to instructors who cannot read the German literature. You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

Chapter 4 : The Use of Myth in History : The Colonial Williamsburg Official History & Citizenship Site

History / History vs. Myth Was the Iroquois Great Law of Peace the Source for the U.S. Constitution? A popular meme says that the U.S. Constitution notion of democracy really came from the Iroquois Great Law of Peace, except that the Native Americans' version was more inclusive.

Troy lies in present-day western Turkey, at Canakale on the ancient Scamander River. The events that Homer reported as taking place in Troy occurred around b. Troy was it a myth or a reality? Troy was thought to be a mythical city in modern times, but archaeologists found proof of its existence. In the 19th century a succession of excavators determined that the ancient city consisted of nine layers, one on top of the other. Troy is known as the cultural center of classical antiquity. After the Trojan War the city was abandoned for four centuries, until b. The Romans captured Troy in 85 b. Excavators determined that Troy I to IV existed from to b. At this time fortifications were built around the city. Troy VI existed from to b. An extensive fire destroyed Troy V. Troy VI, an embellished reconstruction of Troy V, was destroyed by an earthquake. Survivors built Troy VII around b. This is confirmed by the existence of a mass grave containing the remains of a Greek army. Troy IX was a trading city during the reign of Roman emperor Augustus, however it waned in importance after the rise of Constantinople. German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann, a wealthy retired businessman, illegally excavated the city three times from to He ruined much of the site, taking most of the treasures he found, and was forced to pay a huge fine to the Turkish government for the theft. Further excavation was done in 1894 and again in 1903 Sponsored scientific excavations took place after under the leadership of Manfred Korfmann, and no further levels were discovered. Two geologists, Jan Craft and John V. Luce, determined in that the geology of present-day Troy is depicted in the Iliad. The nearest village is Tevfikiye.

Chapter 5 : Thomas Crapper: Myth & Reality – calendrierdelascience.com

Early historians report that this strange land vanished from the earth in a day and a night, yet scholars, archaeologists, historians, and occultists have kept up an almost ceaseless search for its precise whereabouts.

I marvel at what could be an ideal place to get a panoramic view of the landscape and ocean while having a barbecue picnic. Even the mosquitoes could not fly up that high to spoil the ambience. Since the 18th century, many of these lookout-type structures, some with elaborate wrought-iron balustrades, others with simple or ornamental railings, have been viewed as symbolic far beyond practical use or architectural tradition. In his book *Chesapeake*, James A. It is easy to imagine that these 18th and early 19th century structures could have been designed to provide women with a dignified refuge where they could pine after their absent husbands and mourn their deaths at sea. During the period of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, sizable fortunes were amassed by local merchants along the Atlantic coast. The seacoast was flourishing with commerce and almost any sheltered inlet with water deep enough to accommodate a boat attracted sea traders. With access to white pine that was light enough to float downriver to market and mills, New Englanders were uniquely poised to construct ships, warehouses, and docks, leading to their increased involvement in the sea industry. The West Indies was one the best destinations for trading not only lumber and salt fish, but sugar and molasses that was acquired in New England, then converted into rum at distilleries. Rum bought slaves in Africa that New England-run ships carried back to the West Indies for yet more rum and molasses. As these trade routes were exploited for profit, shipwright apprentices were probably learning skills that would someday be adapted in houses. For example, one intriguing feature of the homes built during this era was an arch in the front roof line, sometimes called a rainbow roof. In her book, *Revelations of New England Architecture: People and their Buildings*, Jill Grossman writes: Whether it came from fishing, whaling, shipbuilding or trading, fortune was being drawn from coastal New England towns, thereby stimulating an outburst of large-scale home-building. In his book, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts: The Dictionary of Building Preservation* indicates that a cupola is usually enclosed, hemispherical or dome-like in shape and projected above a roof, providing a source of ventilation throughout the house, and later evolving into a protected lookout room. According to the *Old-House Dictionary: An Illustrated Guide to American Domestic Architecture*, similar structures called belvederes were small, open-ended platforms, reminiscent of present-day gazebos, pavilions or even church steeples, that were specifically designed for enjoying a view of the water. Their primary function was for occupants to monitor shipping activity in the harbor. In those days, a whaling expedition could last more than a year and a homecoming was something of a major public event. There is also considerable evidence that they had distinct practical, utilitarian functions. The *Aetiology of Nautical Terms* notes that many of these platforms were actually built to give the homeowners a foundation on which to stand while they were attempting to put out rooftop fires, common during the 18th century because of the prominence of chimneys located in numerous rooms. In reality, there may have never been one single purpose for the construction of these walks. But, they will probably always be part of a social architecture that captures our imaginations about the lives of men at sea, the women who remained home and perhaps many untold stories of love, despair and, yes, gender inequality. He lives in Portland.

Chapter 6 : Faqir of Ipi : Myth and Reality | History of Pashtuns

Myth has always been an important part of the West. One Native American myth tells of seven sisters who arose from Devil's Tower to become the stars of the Big Dipper.

Perhaps more than any defining moment in American history, the War of Independence is swathed in beliefs not borne out by the facts. Here, in order to form a more perfect understanding, the most significant myths of the Revolutionary War are reassessed. Actually, the British cabinet, made up of nearly a score of ministers, first considered resorting to military might as early as January, when word of the Boston Tea Party reached London. Recall that on December 16, protesters had boarded British vessels in Boston Harbor and destroyed cargoes of tea, rather than pay a tax imposed by Parliament. Throughout early, the prime minister and his cabinet engaged in lengthy debate on whether coercive actions would lead to war. A second question was considered as well: Could Britain win such a war? Parliament enacted the Coercive Acts—or Intolerable Acts, as Americans called them—and applied the legislation to Massachusetts alone, to punish the colony for its provocative act. England also installed Gen. Thomas Gage, commander of the British Army in America, as governor of the colony. In September, colonists convened the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia; the members voted to embargo British commerce until all British taxes and the Coercive Acts were repealed. News of that vote reached London in December. The Americans had neither a standing army nor a navy; few among them were experienced officers. Furthermore, the colonists had virtually no history of cooperating with one another, even in the face of danger. In addition, many in the cabinet were swayed by disparaging assessments of American soldiers leveled by British officers in earlier wars. For instance, during the French and Indian War, Brig. Could the Royal Navy blockade the 1,000-mile-long American coast? Might not an American army of this size replace its losses more easily than Britain? Was it possible to supply an army operating 3,000 miles from home? Could Britain subdue a rebellion across 13 colonies in an area some six times the size of England? Would a protracted war bankrupt Britain? Was Britain risking starting a broader war? To back down, the ministers believed, would be to lose the colonies. To be sure, the initial rally to arms was impressive. When the British Army marched out of Boston on April 19, messengers on horseback, including Boston silversmith Paul Revere, fanned out across New England to raise the alarm. Summoned by the feverish pealing of church bells, militiamen from countless hamlets hurried toward Concord, Massachusetts, where the British regulars planned to destroy a rebel arsenal. Thousands of militiamen arrived in time to fight; 89 men from 23 towns in Massachusetts were killed or wounded on that first day of war, April 19. By the next morning, Massachusetts had 12 regiments in the field. Connecticut soon mobilized a force of 6,000, one-quarter of its military-age men. Within a week, 16,000 men from the four New England colonies formed a siege army outside British-occupied Boston. Thereafter, men throughout America took up arms. It seemed to the British regulars that every able-bodied American male had become a soldier. But as the colonists discovered how difficult and dangerous military service could be, enthusiasm waned. Many men preferred to remain home, in the safety of what Gen. As progressed, many colonies were compelled to entice soldiers with offers of cash bounties, clothing, blankets and extended furloughs or enlistments shorter than the one-year term of service established by Congress. The following year, when Congress mandated that men who enlisted must sign on for three years or the duration of the conflict, whichever came first, offers of cash and land bounties became an absolute necessity. The states and the army also turned to slick-tongued recruiters to round up volunteers. Moreover, beginning in, the New England states, and eventually all Northern states, enlisted African-Americans, a practice that Congress had initially forbidden. Ultimately, some 5,000 blacks bore arms for the United States, approximately 5 percent of the total number of men who served in the Continental Army. Longer enlistments radically changed the composition of the Army. But few who owned farms were willing to serve for the duration, fearing loss of their property if years passed without producing revenue from which to pay taxes. After, the average Continental soldier was young, single, propertyless, poor and in many cases an outright pauper. In some states, such as Pennsylvania, up to one in four soldiers was an impoverished recent immigrant. Patriotism aside, cash and land bounties offered an unprecedented chance for economic mobility

for these men. Later, he would recollect the calculation he had made at the time: Continental Soldiers Were Always Ragged And Hungry Accounts of shoeless continental army soldiers leaving bloody footprints in the snow or going hungry in a land of abundance are all too accurate. Albigence Waldo, a Continental Army surgeon, later reported that many men survived largely on what were known as fire cakes flour and water baked over coals. But that was not always the case. So much heavy clothing arrived from France at the beginning of the winter in that Washington was compelled to locate storage facilities for his surplus. In a long war during which American soldiers were posted from upper New York to lower Georgia, conditions faced by the troops varied widely. While one soldier in seven was dying from hunger and disease at Valley Forge, young Private Martin, stationed only a few miles away in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, was assigned to patrols that foraged daily for army provisions. Some , men served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. Probably twice that number soldiered as militiamen, for the most part defending the home front, functioning as a police force and occasionally engaging in enemy surveillance. If a militia company was summoned to active duty and sent to the front lines to augment the Continentals, it usually remained mobilized for no more than 90 days. Some Americans emerged from the war convinced that the militia had been largely ineffective. At Camden, South Carolina, in August , militiamen panicked in the face of advancing redcoats. Throwing down their weapons and running for safety, they were responsible for one of the worst defeats of the war. Yet in , militiamen had fought with surpassing bravery along the Concord Road and at Bunker Hill. Nearly 40 percent of soldiers serving under Washington in his crucial Christmas night victory at Trenton in were militiamen. In New York state, half the American force in the vital Saratoga campaign of consisted of militiamen. In March , Gen. Nathanael Greene adroitly deployed his militiamen in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse fought near present-day Greensboro, North Carolina. In that engagement, he inflicted such devastating losses on the British that they gave up the fight for North Carolina. The militia had its shortcomings, to be sure, but America could not have won the war without it. The defeat persuaded France to form a military alliance with the United States. Previously, the French, even though they believed that London would be fatally weakened by the loss of its American colonies, had not wished to take a chance on backing the new American nation. In addition to Saratoga, four other key moments can be identified. The first was the combined effect of victories in the fighting along the Concord Road on April 19, , and at Bunker Hill near Boston two months later, on June But in those two engagements, fought in the first 60 days of the war, American soldiersâ€”all militiamenâ€”inflicted huge casualties. The British lost nearly 1, men in those encounters, three times the American toll. Without the psychological benefits of those battles, it is debatable whether a viable Continental Army could have been raised in that first year of war or whether public morale would have withstood the terrible defeats of But at Trenton in late December , Washington achieved a great victory, destroying a Hessian force of nearly 1, men; a week later, on January 3, he defeated a British force at Princeton, New Jersey. A third turning point occurred when Congress abandoned one-year enlistments and transformed the Continental Army into a standing army, made up of regulars who volunteeredâ€”or were conscriptedâ€”for long-term service. A standing army was contrary to American tradition and was viewed as unacceptable by citizens who understood that history was filled with instances of generals who had used their armies to gain dictatorial powers. The campaign that unfolded in the South during and was the final turning point of the conflict. After failing to crush the rebellion in New England and the mid-Atlantic states, the British turned their attention in to the South, hoping to retake Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. At first the Southern Strategy, as the British termed the initiative, achieved spectacular results. Within 20 months, the redcoats had wiped out three American armies, retaken Savannah and Charleston, occupied a substantial portion of the South Carolina backcountry, and killed, wounded or captured 7, American soldiers, nearly equaling the British losses at Saratoga. In October , rebel militia and backcountry volunteers destroyed an army of more than 1, Loyalists at Kings Mountain in South Carolina. After that rout, Cornwallis found it nearly impossible to persuade Loyalists to join the cause. In January , Cornwallis marched an army of more than 4, men to North Carolina, hoping to cut supply routes that sustained partisans farther south. Nathanael Greene, Cornwallis lost some 1, men, nearly 40 percent of the troops under his command at the outset of the North Carolina campaign. In April , despairing of crushing the insurgency in the Carolinas, he

took his army into Virginia, where he hoped to sever supply routes linking the upper and lower South. It was a fateful decision, as it put Cornwallis on a course that would lead that autumn to disaster at Yorktown, where he was trapped and compelled to surrender more than 8,000 men on October 19, 1781. Washington did not take the blame for what had gone wrong. William Howe invaded Pennsylvania, Washington committed his entire army in an attempt to prevent the loss of Philadelphia. During the Battle of Brandywine, in September, he once again froze with indecision. For nearly two hours information poured into headquarters that the British were attempting a flanking maneuver—a move that would, if successful, entrap much of the Continental Army—and Washington failed to respond. For the most part, he committed troops to that theater only when Congress ordered him to do so. By then, it was too late to prevent the surrender of Charleston in May and the subsequent losses among American troops in the South. In the final analysis, he was the proper choice to serve as commander of the Continental Army. For generals and admirals who were defending their reputations, and for patriots who found it painful to acknowledge defeat, the concept of foreordained failure was alluring. Nothing could have been done, or so the argument went, to have altered the outcome. Lord North was condemned, not for having lost the war, but for having led his country into a conflict in which victory was impossible. In reality, Britain might well have won the war. The battle for New York in 1776 gave England an excellent opportunity for a decisive victory. France had not yet allied with the Americans. Washington and most of his lieutenants were rank amateurs. Continental Army soldiers could not have been more untried.

Chapter 7 : Myths of the American Revolution | History | Smithsonian

The major premise of the book is that the German military elite held many views in common with Hitler. In addition to a common antisemitism, the most important of these views was the belief in the need to militarize German society as a first step towards redressing German grievances. They thus.

Americans have scarcely improved since a frightening poll that prompted a congressional resolution to overhaul higher education history requirements. Wikimedia Commons Puritan reformers in England. The grade-school textbook version of early New Englanders nearly always mentions religious freedom as their impetus to seek new lands. But while indictments like taxation without representation were unequivocally justified, the American colonies in were by no means weak. Britain had administered America loosely and with poor Parliamentary oversight and such self-sufficiency had created both a strong colonial economy and a predilection for independence long before the war. Just like us, the drafters of the Constitution feared special interest groups and factions. Responding to this fear, Article Three of the Constitution reserved the power to elect Senators the higher house of Congress for state legislators, taking it out of the hands of the general public. Wikimedia Commons Grover Cleveland, president from and We all remember jokes from high school history or is it just me? The problem with this caricature is that it makes the entire period seem like a fuzzy, comical dead zone in which nothing much piled up besides economic inequality. It is a gross oversimplification to say the Civil War was the result of a moral imperative to end slavery. What else was going on? You do the math. Wikimedia Commons Estey, founded in the late 19th century, became the largest manufacturer of organs in the United States. But the creation of a middle class had begun three generations prior, in the late 19th century, as post-bellum industry carried the U. During the Second Industrial Revolution loosely, the price of consumer goods fell, overall wealth increased and access to education skyrocketed. Recognizable middle class social indicators an organ in the parlor, for example became chic and expected for families that had escaped poverty. Nicaragua , from ; Dominican Republic from ; Haiti , from And the runner-up goes to questionable involvement in the Mexican Revolution. Furthermore and eerily the flower power Earth Day participants 20 million-large across the country themselves were inheritors of the Earth-conscious existential panic that followed the atomic bomb in The Mattachine Society formed in , advocating early on for equal rights, and in the movement gained national traction and would never fade after the bloody Stonewall Riots in New York City. But between , the term exceptional was used fewer than times in national publications. By it had spiked to over 4., a spike largely pushed by the advent of Tea Partiers to the scene.

Chapter 8 : The myth and reality of widowâ€™s walks | Island Institute

Must read it!!! Answer is quite lengthier but you will get the real fact here.. Earth formed about billion years (Ga) ago and evidence suggests life emerged prior to Ga.

Library of Congress Pocahontas, perhaps eleven or twelve at the time, did not save John Smith from death out of love for him. Library of Congress Chief Seattle never uttered words a Hollywood screenwriter gave him in Architect of the Capitol The Apotheosis of Washington in the Rotunda of the Capitol makes a god of the first president. Library of Congress Abner Doubleday likely never played, let alone invented, baseball. The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death! People stood in ovation. But the historical fact is that though Henry did speak forcefully on that March day to spur the convention to action, we have no reliable record of what exactly he said. The speech children have memorized for almost two centuries was committed to paper in by William Wirt, forty-two years after the event, in his biography of Henry. Indeed, around the time Wirt wrote about Henry, amateur historians were crafting tales of the American Revolution as well as of the colonial era that were designed less to capture the facts than to create a founding myth for the young republic. In the view of professional historians, these myths should be punctured. But historians do so at their peril. The myths are more beloved than the cold facts, and they are hard to kill. Many of them are designed to explain us as we wish to see ourselves. They establish the national character and set the standard for coming generations. Writer Joseph Campbell said that all cultures are based on myths: And we know that myths are not the same as lies. People have always used The Past to explain the origins and purpose of human life, to sanctify government institutions, to validate class structure, to provide moral example. Only in the past two or three hundred years, he said, has historical study developed "to see things as they really were. They knew this experiment in republican government needed people who believe in it and are willing to defend it. Most of the American myths are based on historical fact. Henry did give a rousing speech to inspire the Virginia Convention to create a militia. The Pilgrims did settle Plymouth. An Indian girl by the name of Pocahontas was a figure in the settling of Jamestown. Paul Revere did ride into the Massachusetts countryside to warn that British soldiers were coming. Washington did try to live a virtuous life, though, cherry tree or not, he probably told a few lies. The writers of these tales took those kernels of truth and embellished them, made them sound more romantic and uplifting than perhaps they were, and drove home a moral message designed to educate and inspire a new generation. Make one person the hero, and readers and listeners will be engaged. The writers of the nineteenth century, seeking a unifying power, made Washington the embodiment of a nation of contentious states. He, more than the flag, symbolized the United States. And without a doubt, Washington was the unifying force that made the Constitution possible. Stand in the Rotunda of the United States Capitol and look straight up. James Rees, the president of the Mt. Amy Henderson, the curator of popular culture at the National Portrait Museum in Washington, says, "One of the chief elements of American character is our ability to invent ourselves. Books, magazine articles, and environmental advocacy groups have trumpeted his lyrical message of , words that extolled harmony with nature: I am a savage and do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be made more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive. A Hollywood scriptwriter wrote the words in At Fort Ticonderoga, historic interpreter Gordon Hamilton, dressed in the garb of a New York militiaman in the French and Indian War, leads visitors through the history of the fort, culminating in its capture at the beginning of the Revolution by Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys, heroes of the state of Vermont. The Second Continental Congress had not yet met and had not authorized taking the fort. In fact, its first reaction was to give the fort back to the British. What Allen did say was more prosaic. They were raised to revere him. They know that statement by heart. They feel sure he said it. People cherish them and need them. They are comforting stories that we tell about ourselves. In their minds, the war was not about slavery. Lee was the greatest general who ever lived. Grant was a butcher. Suffering in all of

this were the ex-slaves who saw the rights they gained during Reconstruction disappear for nearly a century as Northern and Southern whites embraced the Lost Cause myth to reunify the nation. Next to it is the caption: Prior to entering the military, he attended school in Cooperstown and the Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1842. Although Doubleday had a distinguished military career, he is best known as the supposed inventor of baseball. In the early part of twentieth century, Thorn said, Albert G. Spalding, a former player and subsequently a sporting goods magnate and National League official, was desperate to prove that baseball was purely an American invention. He wanted to counter claims from a British-born writer that the game originated in England. He created a commission to explore the origin of baseball. It latched onto a letter written to it by a "demented mining engineer" from Colorado, who claimed that at the age of five, he was in Cooperstown and played with Doubleday as he invented baseball in 1839, according to Thorn. But Doubleday was at West Point as a cadet without leave in 1839, Thorn said. In his memoirs, Doubleday never mentioned baseball. He did "invent" one piece of American history. He was at Fort Sumter and fired the first shot in reply to the Confederate bombardment. In a sense, he invented the Civil War. But they are not. Myth is more powerful than fact. He contributed to the winter journal a story about the myths of the Declaration of Independence. Suggestions for further reading: Gallagher and Alan T. Rediscovering the New World New York, Plumb, The Death of the Past Boston, Ray Raphael, Founding Myths: John Thorn, Baseball in the Garden of Eden:

Chapter 9 : The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality - Wikipedia

"Myth has two main functions," the poet and scholar Robert Graves wrote in "The first is to answer the sort of awkward questions that children ask, such.

His contributions to the plumbing industry are even more suspect. For this article we interviewed Dr. Thomas Crapper as a person never existed. Though we do not know his actual date of birth, we can now say the man Thomas Crapper probably was born in September , since he was baptized the 28th of that month. Crapper did have a successful career in the plumbing industry in England from to Thomas Crapper invented the toilet. No one in the know about Thomas Crapper would ever make this statement. The man holds nine patents, four for improvements to drains, three for water closets, one for manhole covers and the last for pipe joints. Every patent application for plumbing related products filed by Crapper made it through the process, and actual patents were granted. British Patent for was issued to a Mr. Albert Gibling for this product. There are a couple of theories on how Thomas Crapper came to be associated with this device. First, is that Gibling worked for Crapper as an employee and authorized his use of the product. The second, and more likely scenario, says Grabowski, is that Crapper bought the patent rights from Gibling and marketed the device himself. Thomas Crapper never was a plumber. Oh yes he was. He operated two of the three Crapper plumbing shops in his lifetime, but left the business three years before the final and most famous facility on Kings Road in London. When Crapper retired from active business in , he sold his shop to two partners who, with help from others, operated the company under the Crapper name until its closing in Geoffrey Pidgeon of Original Bathrooms Richmond upon Thames, Surrey, Great Britain , continues the trade of his great uncle and grandfather, both of whom apprenticed under Thomas Crapper. The origin of crap is still being debated. Where crap is derived from Crapper, it is by a process know as, pardon the pun, a back formation. They saw the words T.