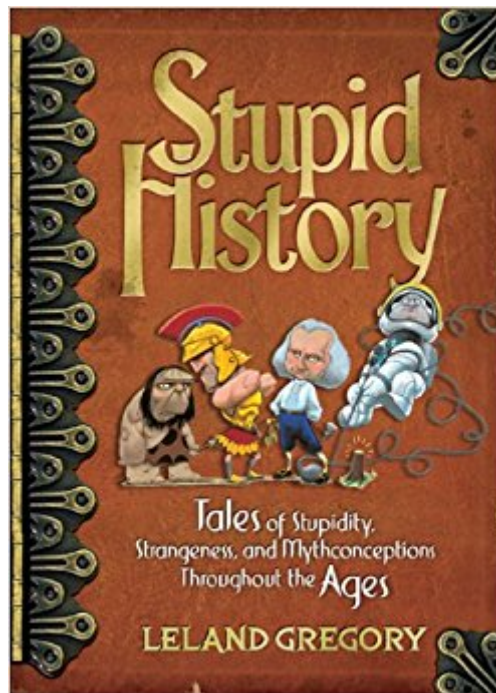




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Stupid History: Tales Of Stupidity, Strangeness, And Mythconceptions Throughout The Ages



Synopsis

Why exactly is Paul Revere revered? Was the lightbulb really Thomas Edison's bright idea? Best-selling author Leland Gregory employs his masterful wit to expose historical myths, faux "facts," strange events, and tales of human stupidity throughout history. If it would shock you to learn that Benjamin Franklin didn't discover electricity, you'll appreciate this take on hundreds of historical legends and debacles. Historians and humorists alike may be surprised to learn that: Samuel Prescott made the famous horseback ride into Concord, not Paul Revere. As a member of Parliament, Isaac Newton spoke only once. He asked for an open window. On April 24, 1898, Spain declared war on the U.S., thus starting the Spanish-American War. The U.S. declared war the very next day, but not wanting to be outdone, had the date on the declaration changed from April 25 to April 21. With these and many other stories, leading humorist Leland Gregory once again highlights both the strange and the funny side of humankind.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The jokes, wacky anecdotes, and inane quotes in Leland Gregory's Stupid-themed anthologies showcase the best of human nature at its worst. Through his Twitter handle of @ChronicStupid, Leland shares headlines, quips, and unbelievable feats of folly culled from print, online, and broadcast media around the globe. He has authored more than a dozen humor titles, including What's the Number for 911? and the New York Times best-sellers Stupid American History and America's Dumbest Criminals. A tireless promoter, he has made hundreds of radio and television appearances, including multiple appearances on NBC's Today show.

"Stupid History..." is a book by Leland Gregory. The soft cover book is 320 pages in length and the e-edition is a 894 Kb download. This book is filled with approximately 200 very short vignettes of historical facts, myths and interesting anecdotes. It is surprising how many items I recognized, only to find that the facts as I knew them, were wrong. I was not able to check all entries but those that I could find on 'google' did support Gregory's corrected versions. Gregory has a literary style that makes these tiny items fun and easy to peruse. Readers will recognize many of these stories as they have endured through the ages. These short pieces are varied in scope, dealing with different periods of history, famous (and infamous) people and many other assorted topics. In addition the author usually comes up with some funny quip or pun to finish off each of the entries. Conclusion: A short, enjoyable book detailing a host of mistaken facts and myths; stories that have been altered or embellished, yet through time have become accepted, by and large, as the truth. I'm not sure why the author decided to title this work with the words "Stupid History"...unusual maybe, but not stupid.

4 to 4 1/2 Stars Ray Nicholson

Short - mostly one page stories that correct the "normal" history and then tell the real story. Easy read - can stop anywhere and pick up the next time. Lots of humor and great "Facts" about history!

I've bought several of Leland Gregory's books and they're fine for what they are: good "throne" reading, but not serious. The "stupid history" series is among his better efforts. Definitely not "scholarly" and certainly there are mistakes and unsupported "gossip" more than facts. But the "history" books are a bit more robust, a bit more entertaining and a bit more cohesive than some of his other works that feel more like "brand extension for a quick buck"... For a quick mindless read, you could do worse.

If you want an entertaining read, I can't recommend this book highly enough. The author has a good sense of humor (despite a few (perhaps intentionally) bad puns). He also weaves a good tale. The book is set up to tell short (usually a paragraph long) anecdotes about historical myths or bizarre coincidences. It really does work on that level. The only problem is, some of the history, while not "false", per se, is told in a misleading way. His Lizzie Borden anecdote is a good example. While Gregory rightly points out that Lizzie Borden was acquitted, and that therefore, she was not *legally* found to have given her mother "40 whacks", there is a difference between what someone was found to have done legally, and what they actually did. The overwhelming evidence (most of which

wasn't heard by the jury) was that Borden killed her parents. Gregory's assertion that the Constitution doesn't contain the phrase "separation of church and state", while literally true, doesn't begin to tell the story. He rightly points out that the establishment clause of the First Amendment was put in there to prevent the federal government from establishing a national church, but he ignores the fact that, in practical terms, the way you prevent the government from establishing a national religion *is* to separate church and state, and that you can't have freedom of conscience if you forbid a national church but allow state churches. But those are only two incidents, and they didn't distract me too much from the enjoyment of the book. This is a flawed book if looked at from a strictly historical perspective, but not fatally flawed, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I just think Gregory's next edition of this book should be more thoroughly researched and foot-noted.

Have you ever gotten the impression that a lot of what you know about history is wrong? Well, you would be right. For example, Napoleon, not really that short. Paul Revere, not the actual midnight rider. And some things you do not know about history are just too ridiculous to be made up, like the fact that the first person ever punished in the stocks was the man who made them. His crime? Charging too much for his work. What else about history is just plain stupid? Filled with fun stories and nuggets of trivia, this book is just the kind that I love, one that does not take itself too seriously. We always hear that what we learn in school is false, and this book cites many examples. I love the fact that not only do we learn the truth, but for many of the stories, we learn why the falsehood was ever circulated. The book has a lighthearted feel, though it does tend to be a little heavy handed with the puns and word play. That, however, can be overlooked because of the solid content on nicely varied subject matter. I read a couple of excerpts to my Hubby, and he loved it. I think any good natured student of history will appreciate this book, along with many a retired history teacher. There is nothing stupid about loving this book.

Ah, the foibles of history. Bah humbug. Mr. Gregory points out the misconceptions long held as to history and what really was misinterpreted. This was a fun book to read because of the discrepancies of what is believed to be factual history handed down through the centuries. I was howling through history and snickering at some of the pages. No candy was used during the reading of this book. This is an easy read as each anecdote is only a page long, if that. Want light reading with chuckles, not a clown, howls, and smiles? This is the book.

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