



WHY STUDY HISTORY?

By Susan Bradrick

PARENTS ...

Did you hate history in school? Many did—my husband and myself included! Lists of summarized facts & dates endlessly strung together in textbooks did little to draw us into the wonder of the works of God among men from Creation forward. But, as homeschoolers, we and our children have had the exciting opportunity of exploring the past together as a family and discovering how valuable this subject really is. As we have shared this adventure over the years, to our amazement we have learned that:

- * History is not dead, but alive!
- * History is not dull, but active and intriguing!
- * History is not divorced from real life, but imminently pertinent to how we live our daily lives!

FOR EXAMPLE ...

This is an election year. Our understanding of history will affect why and how we vote—or if we vote at all. The documents written by our nation's founding fathers—as understood according to what they meant by the words & ideas they penned—are our "government's government," so to speak. So those desirous of exercising their civic right & responsibility to impact our government for good (and teaching their children to do so), will be wise to *study and understand both the governmental documents and the men who wrote them*. And this, in part, is the study of history!

And, if you are interested in music and art, examine their development by studying the lives of the musicians through the ages who led the way in these disciplines. Learn how the prevailing philosophies of the day influenced and were reflected in their art. Then use that understanding to analyze the art and music of today. Also be sure to study the lives of scientists throughout history to observe why and how they arrived at their significant discoveries and ideas. Then consider how these have impacted human society. The historical subjects to study and the applications are endless—and exciting!

BUT, BE CAREFUL ...

Be very careful in choosing sources for your history study. We suggest that you rely on historians who carefully construct histories according to the facts revealed by original documents and eye witnesses. And as your children get older, read as many original documents and first hand accounts as possible. Simply reading an account by someone who read someone else's account who read someone else's account could well lead to a twisted view of the actual people & events.

This can happen unintentionally, of course. But historians can also purposely re-write history to fit their personal philosophies and further their agendas—or just to make a more interesting story. To avoid these, especially avoid public school history texts and run-of-the-mill histories from the library or secular book stores. But also be aware that some Christian authors who, in their zeal to present a "Christian viewpoint," may not entirely support the true facts of history, either. So read authors you know to be reliable, seek recommendations from people you trust for other historians worth reading, and check out any questions you might have by researching dependable documents, when possible.

A FEW TRUSTWORTHY HISTORICAL SOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED ON THE STUDY OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS & OTHERS:

1. ***The Magna Carta, 1215, 1225, 1297*** (
2. ***The Mayflower Compact, 1620***
3. ***The Declaration of Independence, 1776***
4. ***The Constitution of the United States, 1788***
5. ***The Amendments to the Constitution of the United States Bill of Rights, 1791***
6. Autobiographies and other writings of the historical figures you are studying.
7. Peter A. Lillback's ***George Washington's Sacred Fire*** – A well written, thorough, and thoroughly researched & documented history of George Washington and his faith; a sturdy rebuttal to the skeptics and historical revisionists of the past hundred years who have minimized the character of Washington and his crucial role in history; 1180 pages; Providence Forum Press, PO Box 446, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010; www.providenceforum.org, 2006.
8. ***Leaders in Action Series***, various authors, Cumberland House Publishers: More than a dozen inspiring biographies of great leaders in history: i.e., J.S. Bach, William Wilberforce, George Whitefield, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Stonewall Jackson, Booker T. Washington, Winston Churchill, and many more; well researched and superbly written; excellent both for student reading and family read aloud books. Highly recommended. Sold by many homeschool booksellers.
9. ***A Worthy Company, Brief lives of the framers of the United States Constitution*** - M.E. Bradford, Plymouth Rock Foundation, Inc., 6 McKinley Circle, Marlborough, NH 03455, 1982
10. ***Lives of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence*** - B.J. Lossing, 1848, reprinted by Wallbuilders Press, PO Box 397, Aledo, TX 76008, 1995-2002
11. See “**Resources**” Tab at www.ChristianHeritageOnline.org for Documents #1-5 above, as well as other reliable history resources. And check back for new additions.

AN ENDLESS NUMBER OF GOOD RESOURCES ...

Many exceptional and reliable resources are available on every period of human history. Search the many excellent Christian homeschool supply catalogs/websites, ask other homeschoolers—particularly those who are good students of history, ask you pastor ... And, above all, ask the Lord for help in finding just those books & sources that will best help you & your family understand His work throughout history. He will provide!

FINALLY ...

As you may have heard it said, “**History is His Story!**” Study history! Just be sure you get the true story.

MICHAEL & SUSAN BRADRICK live in Western Washington and are founders and board members of Christian Heritage Home Educators of Washington. They have homeschooled their nine children since 1981. They and their children, now grown, have all thoroughly enjoyed & benefitted from making history from a Biblical perspective the core subject of their homeschool curriculum. Permission granted to print & use this document for non-commercial use.