The Truth Essay, Research Paper

The Truth, the Whole Truth and Nothing But…Lies

Textbooks in today’s schools still tell the same story that has been handed down from generation to generation. Every year children dress up and put on plays about the famous story of the first Thanksgiving. No one knows the truth though or at least people pretend to not know the embarrassing truth of our “founding fathers.” Textbooks today give the candy coated version of good saintly Englishmen come to a better world and find good neighbors willing to help in their time of need.

As the story goes, the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth by “accident” and found the Indians who taught the Pilgrims how to plant and grow food. Because of the Indians generosity, the Pilgrims were able to live through winter. Upon the first harvest following the harsh winter, the Pilgrims and Indians sat down together for a grand Thanksgiving feast. Most of the textbooks found in schools today either portray this version of the founding of the United States or they tend to just gloss over it and try to leave it out all together. For the authors of the textbooks know that if the students found out the real truth there would be nothing left of nationalism. For most textbooks leave out the early settlers such as the Spanish and the Dutch. These civilizations settled America long before the Pilgrims arrived and with these civilizations came what was to make it easy for the Pilgrims to settle in America – disease.

Most of the Native Americans had never but subjected to diseases much less the diseases Europeans brought with them. Killing off most of the Natives, the diseases made it easy for the English to come and take over the land. For the English seemed immune to the “plague” that was sweeping the New World and this was the will of God, punishing the Natives so the English could settle. Therefore, when the Pilgrims first arrived at Plymouth, the few Indians that were there were helping only to gain security, for their tribes had become very weakened. It is thought that the land was completely vacated and the Pilgrims only found cleared paths and flowing streams perfect for a settlement.

The Pilgrims did have help though from one Indian named Squanto who is said to have been a slave in Spain and had escaped back to Massachusetts only to find his family dead. Squanto is also another myth. Instead of being a slave, Squanto is portrayed in history books to have learned English from fishermen and had helped the Pilgrims to plant crops. Textbooks also leave out parts of history where the English forced Indians into slavery and stole from the Indians corn, personal belongings and even stole from the dead.

So why is there a myth about the first Thanksgiving? Thanksgiving is created for Americans own ethnocentrism. People long ago made a story to make the Pilgrims sound like good, Christian, democratic and generous people who would never dream of mistreating others and only go off in order to profit. In order to keep Americans thinking that this is the best country, textbooks must eliminate the hard truths of the plague, a hijacking and the awful relationships and treatments of the Indians.