

OPINION

'True' history includes many views

America. There are so many stories to tell, from the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock to our ill-fated war with Vietnam. It has the power to make our pulses race and our imaginations soar.

ANTHONY MARTINEZ

GUEST COLUMNIST

and Chicano scholars have worked fervently through the years to learn more about this land we call America. From a love and pride that should be praised, not scratched apart, we found our "roots," rediscovered Pueblo pottery and found pride in La Raza.

A few people have complained that a recent UCLA project on American history omitted Paul Revere, Daniel Webster, Alexander Graham Bell and other figures from the report. They should be glad they were able to learn about those figures in the first place.

Through all my years of history, I was never told of the Bracero Program, Juan N. Cortina, Operation Wetback, Felix Tijerina or Cesar Chavez.

Here is a more specific example: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. Article 9 of the treaty promised Mexican-Americans "all the freedoms of a U.S. citizen under the Constitution."

Article 10 promised that land grants from Mexico already given to Mexican citizens in the southwestern United States were guaranteed.

Article 10 was deleted shortly after being introduced, but Mexico said it would not sign the treaty until this article was returned. The U.S. government reassured Mexico that Article 9 covered Article 10, based on the U.S. Constitution, and the treaty was signed.

As a result, the Mexicans lost their land. Challenged in a Texas court, many residents did not have the physical documents to protect their claims.

Others who did couldn't speak English or afford a lawyer, and they lost their lands through "legal" means.

Land was also taken by squatters. Easterners were flooding into Texas and claiming land, already settled or not. Mexican-Americans occasionally were removed by physical force.

At the same time, ranches such as the King Ranch in south Texas began growing. The Texas Rangers worked for many of

these wealthy Anglo land owners and eliminated entire Mexican-American families and communities.

Spanish folk songs, called corridos, recorded much of the history of the Rangers and their brutal injustices.

In addition, Anglo communities sometimes raised property taxes for the Mexican-Americans until they couldn't pay. The taxes would then coincidentally drop when an Anglo would take the Mexican's place.

In 7th grade Texas history I learned plenty about how the "bad" Mexicans tried to stop the "good" Texans from getting what was "rightfully" theirs. They had Manifest Destiny on their side, right? That may be good of American history, but it's not my history.

No one in my family worried about crossing the Appalachians to get west. No one in my family felt that "taxation without representation" was infringing on their rights. No one in my family partook in these events, but I am nonetheless American. What is my history?

America and its history is not static. America is always becoming. When America stops becoming, it will no longer be - I guarantee you.

Some might say that I'm putting down America and that I am not proud to be an American. That couldn't be further from the truth.

America is the place that saved my family members from death in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. It is American history that I am criticizing, not America.

If those who don't agree wish to gallop around wearing blinders, I encourage them to continue.

They'll never know the jockey on their backs or the circles in which they're running around.

However, the rest of us - despite the politics and rhetoric - thirst to know the rest of the story.

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THE BATTALION
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EDITORIAL

SCRAP THE SUITS

The Miss America Pageant should eliminate the swimsuit competition.

The swimsuit competition of the Miss America Pageant has long been a hotly debated topic.

Though the pageant began as a bathing-beauty contest in 1921, the swimsuit competition's continued inclusion in the program has been the subject of controversy since 1945.

Yesterday, the Miss American Organization announced that the swimsuit competition will be laid to rest once and for all.

The fate of the swimsuit competition will be decided this year during the actual telecast of the pageant on Sept. 16.

Television audiences will be able to call in on a "900" number and vote for or against it.

If the majority of caller vote against it, the swimsuit competition will be replaced with another type of competition.

Since the contest began, it has evolved from a small production to a lavish and widely watched event.

However, though the contest matured, its competition categories unfortunately did not.

The swimsuit competition should have been removed years ago, but it remained because of popular demand and tradition.

Comparing women's near-nude appeal is sexist and demeaning and has absolutely nothing to do with the talent, charm or beauty of the individuals.

It actually detracts from the pageant, degrading it from a scholarship competition to a well-watched peep show.

Leonard Horn, CEO of the Miss America Organization, said he "personally cannot rationalize putting a young college woman in a swimsuit and high heels."

Since 1950, participants in of the competition have been voicing public objections to the swimsuit portion of the contest.

The first winner to refuse to be photographed or to appear in her swimsuit after her crowning was Yolande Betbeze Fox, who said that type of publicity made her "extremely uncomfortable."

Last year the organization decided not to require contestants to wear high heels during the swimsuit competition, instead allowing the contestants to go barefoot.

The pageant should eliminate the entire event.

When viewers vote on the swimsuit issue, hopefully good taste and decency will win out over voyeurism.



Frustrated citizens often lash out at ineffective government

What do the Oklahoma bombing, the steady increase of hate groups and others who stockpile weapons, and formal militias have in common? They are all a result of the government's increasing inability to satisfy its citizens.

Bigger and bigger groups of citizens - bigger groups with bigger and bigger guns.

"Now hold on," you might say. "What do hate groups have to do with dissatisfaction with the government?"

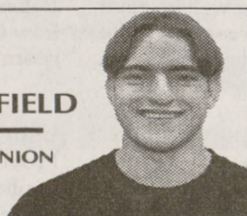
It is a well-known sociological fact that when two groups of people have the same socioeconomic status (usually indignant people), the groups feel like they are in competition with each other.

When something goes wrong with one group, a way is found to rationally blame the other group, making it a scapegoat for all problems.

With America's middle class slowly disappearing into the lower class, groups such as Aryan Nation and skinheads are becoming more and more prevalent.

Most people think skinheads are just a bunch of punks that likes to throw cheap punches - well, they are, but they are probably more interested in

KYLE LITTLEFIELD
ASST. OPINION EDITOR



politics than you think. It is their disenfranchisement with the government that fuels their hate for minorities.

If people stripped away the hate for minorities and looked at what needs aren't being met for these skinheads, they just might find that the majority of them are reacting to their socioeconomic status.

Move them up on a higher class and the hate would probably disappear, for the most part. Or at least the violent expression of hate would be less common.

Groups such as the Michigan Militia, which is suspected to be connected with the Oklahoma bombing, are growing larger in size for some of the very same reasons.

These groups feel dissatisfaction with the government because people's needs aren't being met with Washington's current state.

Militia is really only a word to describe citizens (like you and me) who want to change things - albeit, they may be using the wrong methods.

That they have had to resort to violence and terroristic means shows the degree of frustration and utter discontent with the watered-down democracy that exists in America today.

In the current issue of Esquire magazine, one article depicts the typical militia member as basically a common citizen of the United States.

What is happening? These militias aren't all made up of radical crazies anymore - we are beginning to find more "regular" people as members.

Militia is really only a word to describe citizens (like you and me) who want to change things, but they use the wrong methods.

With the startling rise in militias, small (or large) bodies of armed and often dissatisfied citizens, those in power would be wise to re-examine the quality of the pedestals they've placed themselves on.

Perhaps things aren't as sturdy or as eternal as we imagined them to be.

The United States, with her promise of "liberty and justice for all," seems the crowning achievement of brilliant thinking.

People like John Locke and others were able to help reinvent government. In fact, they did more than reinvent, they created something new, whose

greatest strength was also its major weakness - "by the people."

It's a system, just like any other system, be it political, economic or otherwise. Democracy can only be as good as and successful as the people who make it up, like us.

It's ignorant to believe that just because we have a brilliant and inspired document at our helm that we will exist forever.

The United States isn't necessarily a permanent fixture. Just like Rome, we could collapse at any time.

The Roman Empire stood for over 500 years. Just imagine what the citizens of Rome thought when the Empire had already ruled for 250 years.

They probably never thought that in another 250 years their dreams would collapse and disappear. And yet political trouble and turmoil secured the demise of the great empire.

It is time we treat democracy with the respect it deserves.

The emergence of the many militias in the U.S. is a harbinger of what could be our future if we don't pay more attention to the people who compose this great country.

Kyle Littlefield, a senior journalism major, assisted by Erin Hill, a senior English major

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