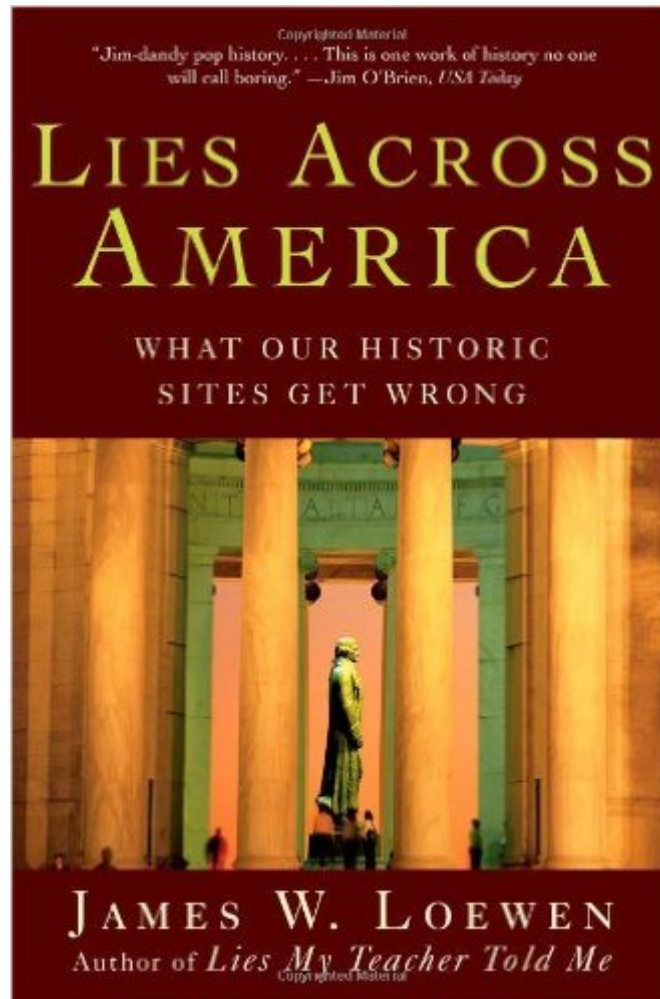


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Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong



Synopsis

From the author of the national bestseller *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, the second myth-busting history book which focuses on the inaccuracies, myths, and lies that can be found at national landmarks and historical sites all across America. In *Lies Across America*, James W. Loewen continues his mission, begun in the award-winning *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, of overturning the myths and misinformation that too often pass for American history. This is a one-of-a-kind examination of sites all over the country where history is literally written on the landscape, including historical markers, monuments, historic houses, forts, and ships. With entries drawn from each of the fifty states, Loewen reveals that: The USS Intrepid, the "feel-good" war museum, celebrates its glorious service in World War II but nowhere mentions the three tours it served in Vietnam. The Jefferson Memorial misquotes from the Declaration of Independence and skews Jefferson's writings to present this conflicted slave owner as a near abolitionist. Abraham Lincoln had been dead for thirty years when his birthplace cabin was built. *Lies Across America* is a reality check for anyone who has ever sought to learn about America through the nation's public sites and markers. Entertaining and enlightening, it is destined to change the way American readers see their country.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For all the shrill complaints, you'll notice no one points out any errors in this book. Indeed, most of the factual history in the book is solid and not even seriously debated by historians. For example - numerous memorials notwithstanding - all serious historians agree that the Confederates, not the

Union, burned Richmond and many other Southern cities as they abandoned them. I learned a lot from this book, and I haven't found any serious problems with his facts for the items I've looked into - although I don't think *everyone* would agree that President Buchanan was gay. Like his earlier book, one of his central points is that accurate and complete history - with all its controversy and complexity - is simply more interesting than the sanitized (and sometimes just plain wrong) version we get in school or from historical monuments. I strongly agree, but some people are very uncomfortable with this view, as is clear from the other comments. He doesn't say our Founding Fathers were "despicable", merely that they were human beings with human flaws - some of them large. For example, he has a lot of good things to say about Thomas Jefferson, but it's a pretty serious omission to sweep the fact that he owned slaves under the rug. If you want to hear only good things about our major historical figures, do yourself a favor and *do not read this book*. He does have a serious axe to grind with the South, but remember he's competing with books like "Slavery: as it was", which is still trying to paint an idyllic picture of black simpletons who really preferred being slaves (read some of the glowing reviews *that* book gets). We would probably complain if Germany still had monuments to Nazis, yet the South has many monuments vicious and outspoken racists.

If you have any doubts about the lightning rod James Loewen has given us in this book and its predecessor, "Lies My Teacher Told Me," take a look at the few low ratings given by other readers. The code words are all there -- he's an ivory tower academic, he's anti-confederate, it's all "political correctness," he's racist because he's "anti-white," and so on. Cages have been rattled, it's as simple as that. Some cherished myths go down hard in these books. Anyone who dismisses this as a "doctoral dissertation" from someone in an "ivory tower" hasn't read any dissertations, trust me. These are funny, chatty, entertaining books. (This one in particular is a great browse, because it's broken cleanly into sections about individual monuments.) Loewen's voice is perfect for this tone and subject, not in any way affected or studied; he's a likeable author, and these are enjoyable books. Loewen's overarching theme is that history would be a much more vital, constructive force in American life if Americans were actually exposed to its true breadth and depth. Loewen makes many impassioned appeals to primary sources, to the voices and sentiments of actual participants. He gets at those basic themes in a nicely straightforward, common-sensical way -- by comparing primary sources to the schlock we're given in their place. For my money, the humor and pathos, the melancholy irony, in that comparison is a breath of fresh air. Lies My Teacher Told Me used a comparison of several high school textbooks as its departure point. Here Loewen begins by

examining historical markers, asking whether each does an adequate job of describing the history it's meant to include.

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