

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# LIFE &

# TRADITION

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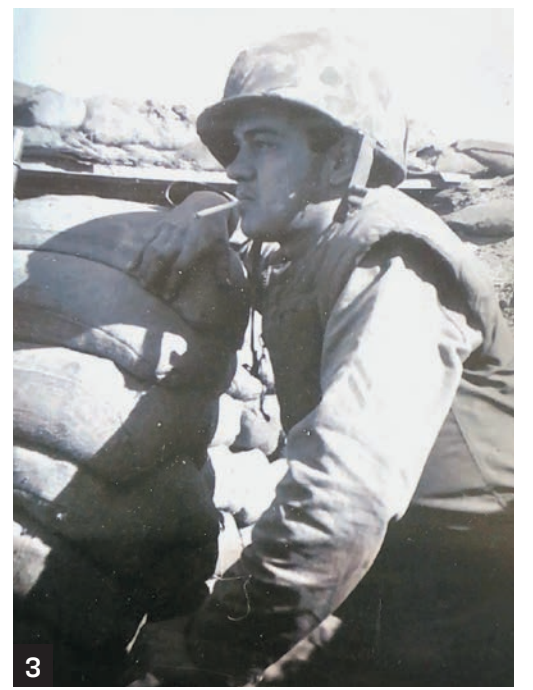
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COURTESY OF THE MORAGLIAS



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1. Moraglia's hometown of Palo del Colle, near Bari, Italy.

2. As a kid, Moraglia took a photo of a downed German plane.

3. A British soldier on a motorcycle. Moraglia is behind him, with hands on his shoulders.

4. Joe Moraglia (R) in the arm of his father and with his family.

5. Some of the Moraglias' family members.

## CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

# Adventures in World War II Italy

Joe Moraglia recounts his childhood story as an American kid who helped the British

Joe Moraglia  
at home in  
Long Island,  
N.Y.



SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES

## DUSTIN BASS

Joseph Moraglia was born in Brooklyn on July 4, 1931. He was the youngest of nine children born to Domenico and Rosa Moraglia. Fittingly for being born on the Fourth of July, he was the only child of the Italian family born in the United States.

Joseph turned 91 this past July 4. He's the poster child for the American dream. He married his sweetheart, Loretta, in 1957. They have four children and nine grandchildren. He was a successful entrepreneur multiple times over. He was in the Naval Reserve from August 1949 to November 1950, until he enlisted in the Marines for three years to fight in Korea. He fought from May 6, 1952, to July 2, 1953, and after only a month in action, he was promoted to sergeant. His stories of com-

bat against the North Koreans and Chinese along the 38th Parallel are harrowing. He led a mortar unit, was nearly killed by a mortar blast, and carried one of his wounded men to safety under heavy fire. He was an extra in "Retreat Hell," a Korean War film about a marine battalion facing incredible odds. He moved to Florida, where he purchased his parents a home after they returned from Italy. Every year, he goes to the family home in Palo del Colle, a small town 10 miles west of the port city of Bari, Italy.

"I did so many things I can't even remember," he said with a laugh.

It's possible that Joe, as everyone calls him, has forgotten more than he can remember. After 91 years of a full life, that's understandable.

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Joe Moraglia, 13, standing behind the soldier on the motorcycle.

## CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

# Adventures in World War II Italy

Joe Moraglia recounts his childhood story as an American kid who helped the British

*Continued from Page 1*

But there's one story he can't forget. There's no way he could. It's a story that reads like the best of wartime fiction.

This isn't a story about his service as a Marine in Korea. This story is about his service to the British as an American kid stuck in World War II Italy.

## The Moraglias Return to Italy

Domenico Moraglia was a businessman. Born in 1888, he became one of the 4 million Italians from 1880 to 1920 to plant roots in U.S. soil. His entrepreneurial spirit would soar in Brooklyn, where he started businesses and sold them. From those sales, he returned home to Italy to purchase farmland in Palo del Colle. As he traveled and prospered, his family grew. He was the beneficiary of the booming post-war economy during the Roaring '20s.

While Americans enjoyed the fruits of their labor, the economy suddenly faltered and then crashed. When Joseph was born, the Great Depression had been in full swing for more than a year.

As the 1930s crept closer to the 1940s, Leonardo, Joseph's 22-year-old brother, moved back to Italy. Swept up in the emotion and excitement of a new political movement, Leonardo would join the Royal Italian Army to fight during the Second Italo-Ethiopian War.

"My father was very mad because my father was an anti-fascist," Joe said.

Shortly after the war in Ethiopia ended in 1937, Leonardo returned to the United States. Ironically, he would later be drafted into the U.S. Army to fight the Axis Powers, which included Italy. At about the same time, Domenico decided to return to Italy to cash in on the farmland he had bought. It would be the quickest and most certain way to place himself and his family on firm financial footing in the United States.

"He was supposed to go alone, but my mother says, 'No, I want to see my mother and everything else. So we'll all go,'" Joe said. "So they made it like a trip."

The Moraglia family arrived in Palo del Colle sometime in 1938. Domenico tried to sell his farmland, but there was one problem: No one was buying. The economic crisis was a global crisis. As a rather wealthy landowner, local authorities tried to convince him of the nation's new political movement of fascism, a term coined by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

"The authorities in Palo del Colle did everything spiteful to him to make him join



Moraglia celebrated his 91st birthday last month.



A memento from Moraglia's time in the military.



Moraglia went on to join the Naval Reserve, and then enlisted in the Marines.

the party, but he would not join," Joe said. It wasn't just the political climate that was so different from the United States. From the concrete and skyscrapers of New York to the farmland and baroque architecture of Palo del Colle, Joe, or Joey as he was called as a kid, had practically been transferred to a different dimension.

"I didn't like it," he said. "I was so used to the nice United States because all I did was go to school and play. Over there, I had to go to the farm and pick olives out of the mud and everything else. I didn't like farm work."

The small Italian town was also woefully behind Brooklyn technologically, from running water to transportation.

"We had these fountains about every two or three blocks. Me and my sisters would carry water to the house in two buckets. When we had to do the washing, we would make about 10 trips. That was work," he said. "Also, no one had a car in town. Everyone was horse and buggy."

Palo del Colle may not have kept up with Brooklyn, but the Italian residents did keep up with the news coming out of New York, especially when it regarded Italians. In 1935, while the Italians were preparing to fight the Ethiopians, there was an Italian who had come to the United States to fight. His name was Primo Carnera. He had won the heavyweight boxing championship from Jack Sharkey in June 1933. Two years later, almost to the day, he would face Joe Louis at Yankee Stadium. Carnera, whom Mussolini glorified as the symbol of Italian strength, didn't last through the sixth round after getting knocked down three times. The knock-out left a lasting impression on the kids of Palo del Colle.

"The kids my age started saying, 'Show me the American punch.' They called it 'The Punch,'" Joe said. "So I made a punch, and I hit one of the kids—the one who was on top of me saying, 'Show me the punch. Show me the punch.' And I knocked him out. Well, that was it. They said, 'That's the punch!' I made a reputation of 'Don't mess with Joey.' Joe's 'American punch' actually helped other local kids. He said kids he didn't even know would invoke his name as a deterrent to bullies.

"They would say, 'We're gonna tell Joey,' and so they would leave them alone. This went on for years."

As "Joey" was making a name for himself among the local youth, Domenico was being warned by the U.S. Consulate that his family needed to get out of Italy. In the words of Joe: "The drums of war were beating."

On May 22, 1939, Mussolini signed the

Pact of Steel with Germany's Adolf Hitler, creating a political and military alliance between the nations. Three months later, the Germans invaded Poland. World War II had begun. The Moraglias were stuck in Italy.

## Secluded From the War

From 1938 to 1945, the Moraglias would remain in Italy. But while the war raged on, Palo del Colle was practically immune to it. The fighting hadn't reached the southeast coast of Italy. Joe's days would be consumed by going to school, visiting the beaches of Bari, and working the family farm.

Until 1943, Joe would see only Italian soldiers. In July of that year, Mussolini was overthrown. Italy surrendered to the Allies. But the Nazis remained, disarming the Italian soldiers and stationing themselves in various parts of the country.

"The Germans used to come and go," Joe said. "We didn't like them. They weren't friendly. They were rigid. You couldn't talk to them or get near their camp. We had a soccer stadium. A company or battalion would stay over there for a month or a few weeks and then move on. It was almost like a rest area."

Joe was aware of what had transpired with Mussolini and why the Germans had arrived. When he saw the Germans leave for good, he knew that the Allies were on their way.

## The Allies Invade

On July 10, 1943, just six days after his 12th birthday and 15 days before Mussolini was overthrown, Operation Husky would commence, with more than 150,000 Allied troops invading Sicily. By Aug. 17, 1943, the Allies had liberated Sicily. However, the fight for Italy was much harder than anticipated. What British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called "Europe's soft underbelly" proved to be what U.S. Gen. Mark Clark called "a tough old gut."

The first Allied troops Joe saw were from the 8th Indian Infantry Division, which arrived in September after crossing the Strait of Messina.

"They were a novelty to us," he said. "We never saw any of them before. We didn't even know where they came from."

Soon the British arrived in Bari. Then the Americans. The major port city would be a supply center for Allied troops fighting in Europe, primarily Britain's 8th Army. With the arrival of Allied troops and a new Italian government, Italy declared war on Germany on Oct. 13, 1943.

"Our big bombers used to come along at

least every week or more, and a lot of them," Joe said. "They were coming from Africa to Germany. After about a half hour, you would hear the bombs going off—boom, boom—from far away. And then you would see the planes coming back. We were right in line, and they would pass right over us."

While bombers flew to bomb Germany, some of the heaviest fighting of the war was taking place on the west side of Italy.

Shortly after the British 8th Army crossed the Strait of Messina, the U.S. 5th Army landed in Salerno, and the British 1st Airborne Division landed in Taranto, just 54 miles south of Bari. The Allies had their sights set on Naples, which they took on Oct. 1, 1943. Rome was the next to fall, but taking the Eternal City proved more costly and time-consuming. It would be another eight months before the Allies pushed the German divisions out of Rome. Two days later, on the northern coast of France, Operation Overlord, known as the D-Day Invasion, took place.

While the Allies were toiling along the west coast of Italy, Joe and the newly liberated Italians on the east coast were working for the Allies.

"The British came and set up shops. It was like a town. They had everything over there," he said. "My father became the interpreter for the head British general or whoever it was. He did the hiring. He hired all the Palo farmers. They were all working, and they were coming from other towns to work. Even his friends that owned farms were mad at my father because they said, 'Hey we've got no more laborers to come and work.' He said, 'I can't help it. The people come here to work, and they've got the money.'"

## Bari: The '2nd Pearl Harbor'

Bari had become the Italian home for the British and was also headquarters for the newly activated 15th Army Air Force under U.S. Maj. Gen. James "Jimmy" Doolittle, who had arrived in Bari on Dec. 1, 1943.

Despite the mass buildup of Allied troops, Bari appeared immune to attack. British Air Vice Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham stated on the afternoon of Dec. 2, 1943, that he "would regard it as a personal affront and insult if the Luftwaffe would attempt any significant action in this area."

The Luftwaffe was eager to oblige, and a single German reconnaissance plane flew over the port city. The pilot reported on the vast amount of ships crammed into the harbor. Within hours, the Luftwaffe struck.

The attack on Bari was dubbed the "second Pearl Harbor." On the evening of Dec. 2, 1943, almost two years to the day after the first Pearl Harbor attack, approximately 100 Ju-88s flew across the Adriatic toward the port.

"I was about two miles away working with the Americans. We were sitting eating and all of the sudden, 'Boom! Boom! Boom!' They swooped and hit all the ships over there," Joe said.

The attack lasted all of 20 minutes, but the damage was immense. Seventeen Allied ships (five American, four British, three Italian, three Norwegian, and two Polish) were sunk and eight were damaged, with more than 31,000 tons of cargo destroyed. There were more than 1,000 Allied soldiers killed and about as many wounded. Against a setting sun, Bari's port was engulfed in flames and a strange smell.

"One of the ships was loaded with gas—poisonous gas. Nobody knew there was gas in there," Joe said. "I was in the plumber shop. Our shop was in charge of having the fire engine. We had two of them. The American soldiers headed for the port. I wanted to go, but they wouldn't let me. It's a good thing I didn't go because it wasn't as good as I thought it was going to be."

The U.S. Liberty ship John Harvey was secretly carrying 100 tons of mustard gas bombs. Allied intelligence suggested that the Germans had been stockpiling chemical weapons. U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt issued a proclamation that if the Germans used chemical weapons, the Allies would respond in kind. The John Harvey was loaded for just such an occasion.

The number of civilian casualties is still unknown and may never fully be known. Conservative estimates suggest 1,000 casualties. The fact that it was mustard gas was kept a secret during and after the war in order to eliminate the possibility of a German propaganda victory. Ironically, the raid on Bari was the only chemical warfare incident of World War II.

"A lot of people died," Joe said. "In fact, a number of my relatives died. They lived in Bari Vecchia near the port. They said the wind was blowing out to sea, but they lived too close."

## A Post-War Adventure

The war in Europe lasted another 17 months. It culminated almost simultaneously with the deaths of two Axis dictators. On April 30, 1945, as the Allies swarmed into Berlin, Hitler committed suicide in his bunker. Two days prior, Mussolini suffered

a much worse fate. While trying to escape to Switzerland, he and 17 others, including his mistress, Clara Petacci, were stopped by resistance fighters near Lake Como and executed. Their bodies were then brought to Milan's city square, the Piazzale Loreto, and hung upside down by their ankles.

On the day of Mussolini's execution, Venice fell to the Allies. The war in Italy was over. The war in Europe had concluded. The British were leaving Italy, but there was one job that still needed to be completed.

The trucks that had been used to convey bombs from the railroad to the port had to be taken to Milan. There were 50 trucks in all. With only 13 British soldiers to undertake the task, the rest were drivers from Palo del Colle—and a 13-year-old U.S. Italian boy.

"The captain asked me if I wanted to come. My father says, 'Go,'" Joe said. "I was right there with the captain. I knew most of the roads, but I had never gone that far. We were doing good until we got about halfway, and I made a mistake."

Upon his directions, the entire convoy began traveling down a narrow farm road that led nowhere near Milan. All 50 trucks had to conduct an arduous and time-consuming u-turn. The captain was irate and grabbed his gun. Joe knew what to do: run and hide. "I don't think he would have shot me," he said. "A couple of the sergeants or peons saw me and what was going on and put me in the back of their truck and put canvases over me. So I made the rest of the trip under those canvases. Hiding. Once we got going, he wasn't looking for me anymore."

## What British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called 'Europe's soft underbelly' proved to be what U.S. Gen. Mark Clark called 'a tough old gut.'

When Joe and the 50-truck convoy arrived in Milan, it was a city in revolution. Its former political leader had been executed and hung in the streets. Partisans were vying for power, among them the already-prominent Italian Communist Party. The plan was to drop off the convoy of trucks and then take the train back to Palo del Colle, but the man who "made the trains run on time" was now dead, and the trains weren't coming. A seemingly harmless trip was now an apparent danger for the southern Italians.

"It was crazy," he said. "They had just finished hanging Mussolini. The northern people didn't like the southern people. They were giving us a hard time. You couldn't say that you were from the south or they would kill you. You didn't know who to trust."

Days went by, and Joe was still in Milan with no way of making the 550-mile trek back home. He milled around the city, even visiting the Piazzale Loreto, although the bodies had been taken down by then.

"I can't say that I saw Mussolini because I'd be lying, but I told everybody that I saw it," he said with a big laugh. "That made things interesting, you know? But they showed me where it happened. The scaffold where they hung them was still there. The ropes were still there."

While touring parts of the city, Joe ran into several of the British soldiers from the convoy. They asked why he was still in Milan. When he told them that no trains had



An old photo of the Moraglia family.

arrived, they told him to come with them to Udine, near the now-Slovenian border. They would drop off 12 trucks in Udine and keep one to bring him back home.

"So I left without telling anybody," he said.

## The Adventure Continues

A train finally arrived in Milan, but Joe was already gone. Those from Palo del Colle boarded and went home. When they arrived, his father was waiting.

"He asked, 'Where's Joey?' They said, 'Oh, we don't know. He disappeared. There was a revolution in Milan. They probably killed him,'" Joe said. "So that's how it got around that I was dead."

His family was distraught. "There were no telephones or communicating to call home," Joe said. "I couldn't care less. I was having fun with the soldiers."

It was a 300-mile trip to the former "war capital" of World War I. The downsized convoy journeyed through a country undergoing a post-war revolution. They rode through cities and towns. They rode past long stretches of beautiful Italian countryside that neighbored the Adriatic coast. Eventually, they arrived in the heavily-bombed city of Udine. Although the beautiful sites of the city, such as the Piazza della Libertà, the Loggia di San Giovanni, and the Piazza San Giacomo, could be seen, Joe wasn't there for sightseeing. Unbeknownst to him, he was there to conduct business.

"I assume they sold those trucks on the black market," Joe said. "I assume because they took me into a basement, and they all looked like shady characters. The sergeant told me to interpret. They were talking about so many trucks and money and this and that. Then they come out with bags full of money."

It's uncertain who was purchasing the trucks. Perhaps Italian partisans, members of the Cosa Nostra, or simply a group of Italians hoping to escape the country. The British soldiers and one Italian kid piled into one truck and left Udine with money to spare. The destination was Palo del Colle, but the soldiers, with no war to fight, were in no hurry.

"All of a sudden, we stopped someplace, and they parked the truck," Joe said. "We were on the outskirts of Venice."

The group spent about a week in The Floating City. The Italian kid who had lived through the entire war in Mussolini's Italy, surrounded by German, Indian, American, and British soldiers, finally got to hold a gun. While the soldiers went into the city, his job was to stand guard and protect the truck.

"They gave me the rifle and said, 'Shoot anybody that comes near it,'" Joe said with a look on his face as though he still can't believe it. "It was about three nights. I was staying there with the rifle in my hand. I didn't have any problems."

One night, a soldier who had too much to drink or bad food or was simply exhausted from the nights in Venice decided to stay

back and guard the truck. Joe had earned his keep.

"So they took me. That was the first time I ever saw Venice, such a beautiful place. It looked like there was never a war," he said. "Everybody's partying. There were bars on the sidewalk. Soldiers with women on their laps."

Venice seemed like an Italian city separate from Italy, or at least separate from the war that had plagued it. The former 1,000-year republic with its 118 islands connected by canals and bridges was open for Joe's curiosity. The nightlife was wild and exhilarating. The British soldiers were certainly an entertaining bunch. When they met several American soldiers, they were excited to introduce them to one of their own. Either the British hadn't noticed or simply didn't care, but Joe had picked up a British accent. "One of the guys says, 'Hey Yankee, one of your landsmen is here,'" he said. "So they say, 'Oh, yeah. Where are you from?' So I start speaking Limey and the Americans think the British have pulled a fast one on them. All of the sudden, there are punches going on between the Americans and the British. I didn't know what was going on."

Joe stayed out of the way while the former allies broke into a fight. But it was over nearly before it had begun. Perhaps laughter overtook the fighting. Or maybe the soldiers deemed it better to get back to the ladies, alcohol, and enjoying their victory celebrations. Either way, the scum was short-lived. Joe's night in Venice ended, and a couple more days elapsed before the British figured that it was time to take their interpreter back home. The near-500-mile trip was probably wearisome and uncomfortable, but that was no matter. Joe was finally going home. The only issue was that he was dead, at least to everyone back in Palo del Colle.

## Back From the Dead

Before the British bid Joe adieu, they gave him a small bag of money to compensate him for his services. He was happy to get it, but he knew his father would kill him if he brought the money home. Then again, with a son seemingly back from the dead, he may have been too overjoyed to be upset. Regardless, Joe safely hid the money, then strode home.

"While I'm walking home, all of the sudden I see my father walking, he was coming from the farm," Joe said. "He was just a little ahead of me. I said, 'Papa, Papa.' He just kept walking. He wouldn't turn his head. He goes home and closes the door."

It's a part of the story that still gets Joe emotional. His father, having been told that his son was dead, thought he had seen a ghost. Certain that he had been killed in Milan, the family had already prepared to have a memorial service for him. The service proved premature. He was now back home. Alive and well.

"That was the end of that trip. After that, everything was OK," he said.

Indeed it was. Joe celebrated his triumphant return in glorious fashion. He took the bag of money, rented a beach house, and brought all of his friends with him for a week. The kid who had garnered so much attention from the local kids with his American punch now had their attention with his wild American, Italian, and slightly British story.

Dustin Bass is the host of EpochTV's "About the Book," a show about new books with the authors who wrote them. He is an author and co-host of The Sons of History podcast.



Joe Moraglia and his wife Loretta at home in Long Island, N.Y.

DEAR JUNE On Family and Relationships



## Mother of the Bride Upset by Family's No-Show Behavior

**Dear June,**  
I live on the West Coast, and my brother, sister, and other extended family live on the East Coast. My parents and grandparents are deceased. My only daughter got married very recently. Of course, we invited all my East Coast family. Right after the engagement was announced, many of them texted, called, and assured they would attend the wedding. As the wedding grew closer and invitations were mailed, I noticed texting and calls from them began to stop. My husband made a couple of phone calls encouraging them to come and how important it was to us to have them present for the wedding.

Not a single person on my side of the family came for our daughter's wedding. I do not believe it was financial, as they have good jobs. I was devastatingly hurt, and my daughter was hurt. However, it was not as bad for her, as all of my husband's family came. She also had both her siblings there and both parents. For the past 15 years, we have made trips back to visit them at great expense, time, and effort. This is not reciprocated, as they do not visit us here.

When I tell people about this, they are shocked and say they don't understand. I'd like some insight. Already decided we are no longer traveling back there every year after this. Not sure how to handle this, though, overall. It's like I don't mean much to them, [nor does] our family out here. They did mail gifts, cards, and cash to my daughter, but all we wanted really was their presence at the wedding.

—Devastated Mother of the Bride

### → Dear Devastated Mother of the Bride,

Congratulations to your daughter and new son-in-law! But it is indeed sad that so many of your family mysteriously could not come.

It certainly seems callous of them to talk of coming and then to renege without any explanation, but clearly there is more to the story than we know. I have some thoughts and suggestions, so see if anything strikes a chord:

One consideration, perhaps, is that to

them, sending gifts and money was a heartfelt expression of love. I've written before about the five love languages, discovered by Gary Chapman, a minister and relationship counselor who realized that many of his married clients couples were doing their best to express love to their partners, but the other was not receiving it. The five love languages are words of affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time, and physical touch.

Each one of us has a primary language that makes us feel most loved. So, for example, if a husband's primary language is quality time, he might want his wife to spend evenings with him. But if her primary language is acts of service, she might focus on doing all kinds of things for him, not realizing that what he really wants is just her presence. You can take an online quiz to find your primary language if you don't already know.

Regarding your family situation, I wonder if perhaps quality time is the primary love language for you and your daughter, while some of your family may prefer gifts. So they may have put a lot of love and care into generous gifts, not realizing at all how much more you wanted them there. This probably won't explain all the absences, but it might be a factor in some.

Something else to consider is whether, for some reason, they did not feel comfortable coming. One reason that occurs to me is COVID-19 vaccination status. Could a differing perspective have caused some of your family to skip the wedding? If so, perhaps they were trying to be tactful by not telling you so as not to cast a cloud over your daughter's celebration.

There are a number of other sensitive political and social issues that are currently tearing many families apart. Do you think any of these might be at play? An issue for all families to consider is how members with different views are treated. While it is certainly fine and good to discuss and debate politics in some situations, it can be very tricky to talk about these sensitive topics without escalating emotions leading to frustra-

tion and antagonism. Ideally, families should be able to put aside differences to celebrate and mourn together, and support one another, but this is not always the case. Etiquette should dictate that sensitive issues are not discussed at a wedding, but these days I'm not sure one can always count on good manners.

Do you think concerns about being targeted for their views could have kept some family members away? Also consider the influence of spouses. Even if your family is warm and welcoming and never discusses sensitive issues, if a spouse has a different view, they might try to limit their family's contact with yours because they don't agree with your values. It is a sad truth these days that some people today don't want a connection with family or friends who have different perspectives on certain issues. I hope this is not the case in your family, but it should be considered.

“  
**Not a single person on my side of the family came for our daughter's wedding. I do not believe it was financial as they have good jobs.**

Devastated Mother of the Bride

For some family members, could there be issues beneath the surface that kept them away?

Alcohol consumption is one possibility. During the pandemic, substance abuse became more prevalent; are any of your family members dealing with this? If so, maybe they are embarrassed to say anything to you and are afraid of how they would behave at a wedding. Or perhaps they didn't want to attend an event with temptation.

Also, could embarrassment over weight gain or mental health issues be a reason why some family members decided not to come without explanation?

Perhaps some are dealing with issues but don't want to say anything.

It could also be that some in your family are simply more selfish than you previously realized. They simply care more about their own lives and plans than about celebrating family milestones. I truly hope this is not the case, but it is also a possibility that should be considered.

Of course, the only way to know for certain is to inquire. If, in time, you are able to find out the reasons why each family member chose not to attend, it might help bring healing and closure to this painful event. My suggestion would be to wait to speak to them until you feel less devastated.

And one final thing to consider: I was taught long ago that a conflict between individuals or groups is an opportunity either to pull farther apart or to grow closer together. To me, it seems that you care very much about your extended family, so perhaps you can use this opportunity to get to know them better. If sensitive issues are what kept them away and they don't want contact right now, keep them close in your heart. It is my understanding that dark and malevolent forces are manipulating these issues, with the express goal of causing division between good people. If you want more on this, read The Epoch Times' editorial series “How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World.”

If some members didn't come because they are not doing well, then perhaps they could use some extra support. If they didn't come due to selfishness, then you have an opportunity to see more clearly what kind of people your family members have become, and you can set your expectations for them accordingly. But at the same time, let us not fault them too much for selfishness, because we all fall prey to it. Also, women generally have more emotional sensitivity, so when it comes to matters like this, your brothers might just be clueless. They might have thought they were doing you a favor by just sending a nice check and not making you pay anything to host them.

If this is the case, just try to appreciate their good intentions, and know that sometimes men and women simply place value on very different things and we need grace for the other gender's way of thinking.

And truly, whatever their reasons for not coming, and whether you can know the reasons or not, I think the most important thing is to find grace for them, because this will give you peace. I believe that most people are doing their best with what they have. We can never truly understand all the forces acting on others, shaping them, and we are not all equally able to shape ourselves. So sometimes, the most powerful thing we can do is wish goodness and light try to limit their family's contact with yours because they don't agree with your values. It is a sad truth these days that some people today don't want a connection with family or friends who have different perspectives on certain issues. I hope this is not the case in your family, but it should be considered.

If you are inclined to a spiritual perspective, perhaps their not coming was a cry for help, telling you that they are drowning—even if they don't consciously realize it—and need your love and support more than ever. Or perhaps it was a spiritual test for you. Can you use this opportunity to grow stronger in love?

It seems to me that your commitment to family is above average, which is a truly beautiful thing. Your family bonds will be different going forward. But if you can continue to keep them well-tuned, as you apparently have been, then you are truly a blessing for your family, whether they appreciate it or not.

—Sincerely,  
June



Do you have a family or relationship question for our advice columnist, Dear June? Send it to [DearJune@EpochTimes.com](mailto:DearJune@EpochTimes.com) or Attn: Dear June, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY, 10001

June Kellum is a married mother of three and longtime Epoch Times journalist covering family, relationships, and health topics.

### HISTORY

## How Government 'Helped Advance' One of Greatest Inventions of the 19th Century: The Telegraph

Much of the telegraph's success can be attributed to the fact that government officials failed to recognize its potential, paving the way for entrepreneurs

LAWRENCE W. REED

No mortal being knows tomorrow as well as he knows yesterday, but that doesn't stop very many from predicting the future anyway—sometimes suggesting a measure of scientific precision by offering excruciating detail. Nobody knows what 2023's GDP growth will be, nor what the temperature will be on Christmas Day in Chicago, but you can bet that plenty of people will be happy to throw some numbers at you.

Every time government officials choose to subsidize an industry or handicap another, they pretend to know more about the future than they really do. Economists call it “picking winners and losers,” and it notoriously flops. And why should we expect otherwise? People who invest their own money, and have every incentive to invest it well, frequently make mistakes. People who gamble with other people's money and bear few if any consequences for error will surely make even more mistakes. This is not rocket science.

The U.S. government bet on Samuel Langley and gave him a couple million dollars to invent an airplane, but Langley crash landed and the unsubsidized Wright Brothers did the job for free.

A few decades earlier, the same government doled out land and public money to three transcontinental railroad lines, all of which wasted the subsidies and went broke. Meanwhile, the most successful transcontinental (built by James J. Hill) never took a dime from Washington.

A century ago, Lord Kelvin of the British Royal Society declared that “radio has no future,” just as the world went crazy for radios.

The Obama administration famously doled out half a billion dollars to the green energy firm Solyndra, which happily took the money and declared bankruptcy two years later.

I don't intend in this essay to produce a list of forecasting failures, whether from the government or the private sector. Volumes have already been written on the subject. My task is far more modest—namely, to share with readers one interesting example that occurred barely 200 years ago.

The telegraph, one of the great inven-

tions of the 19th century, revolutionized communications. As Tom Standage explained in his splendid book “The Victorian Internet,” before the telegraph, messages traveled at the speed of horses. From London to New York, a message required weeks of travel by ship. But after the transatlantic cable debuted mid-century, a telegraphed message from London showed up in New York in a matter of minutes. The world over, this was greeted as nothing short of miraculous.

When a 28-year-old scientist named Francis Ronalds approached the British Admiralty with his idea of sending messages via wire, he had good reason to expect a positive reception. Quite possibly the world's first electrical engineer, he had already accomplished the impossible by transmitting a signal across eight miles of wire. It was the world's first working electric telegraph.

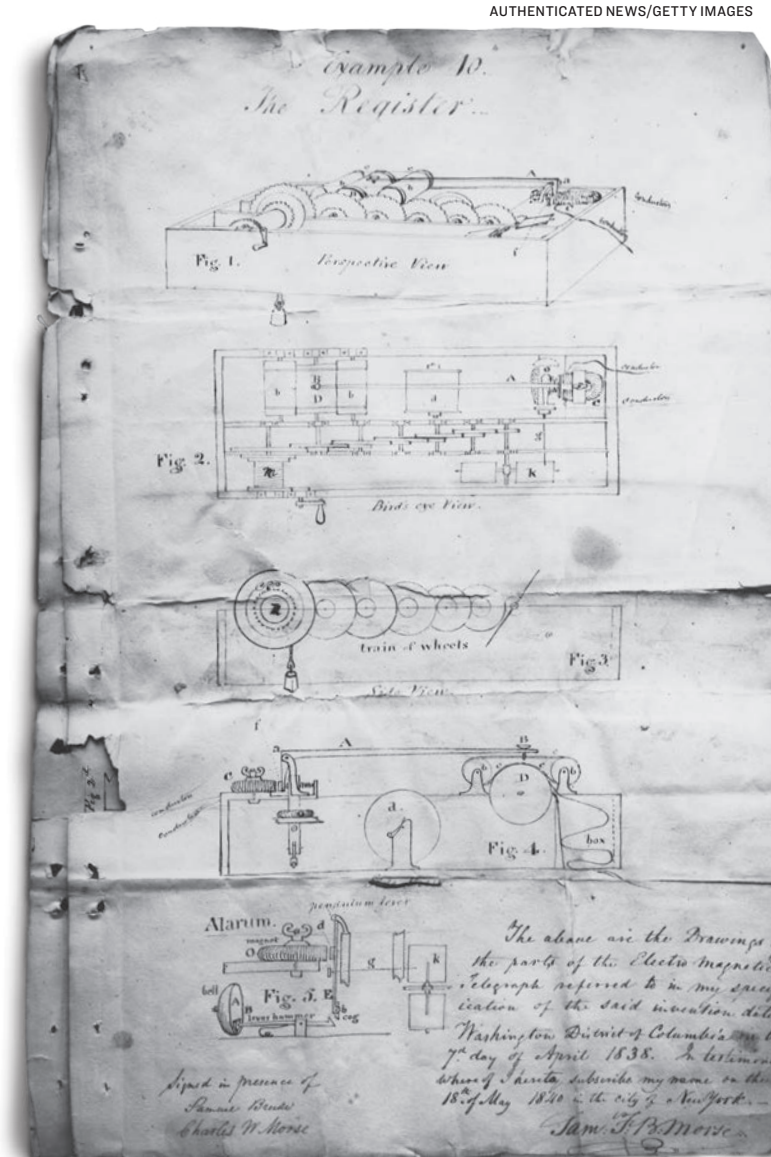
On Aug. 5, 1816, Sir John Barrow delivered the British Admiralty's stunning verdict. Ronalds's invention was “wholly unnecessary,” he said. His Majesty's military would continue to communicate via semaphore



Francis Ronalds (1788–1873), English scientist and inventor.

SOERFM/CC-BY-SA 4.0

The patent and designs for Samuel Morse's electromagnetic telegraph, May 18, 1840.



### A Proverb to Live by: 'Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Your Anger'

ANGELICA REIS

“Don't let the sun go down on your anger” is something I first heard in the original “Little House on the Prairie” television series. Little did I know at the time that this proverb has thousands of years of history and is backed up by science.

The Ingalls family, whose lives as early American pioneers were chronicled in Laura Ingalls Wilder's beloved books, tried to live their lives as good, God-fearing people. (Some-

how, as I write this, I'm struck that while this was depicted in the—very mainstream—TV show in the '70s about their lives, it seems to be, sadly, something that mainstream series just wouldn't do these days. But that's a topic for another day.)

That being the case, the TV series about them modeled a lot of good child-rearing. “Ma” Ingalls, as the mother of the family was called, told her kids when they quarreled, “Do not let the sun go down on your anger.”

You may know that this phrase comes from the Bible, in the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, i.e. the Book of Ephesians (4:26). The full sentence is as follows: “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”

This has been with us for about two millennia, as it was probably written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (A.D. 60–62). (While we're here, I'd like to make a plug for a very fine film about Paul's life, if you haven't seen it already. It's from 2018 and called “Paul, Apostle of Christ.” It makes the early days of Christianity so real and relevant, and allows one to put into historical perspective—and picture, and relate to—the persecution that many communities of faith, such as those under communist China, still experience today.)

And now back to the early pioneer days of South Dakota.

When Ma Ingalls cited this proverb, or passage, she of course intended to have her kids make up as quickly as possible so that tomorrow could be a new day. We know that burdens, whether they be grudges or negative thoughts of any kind, do weigh us down. And sometimes, you can even see this in people without their having to say anything. As these certainly aren't good for the soul, how could they not be

a burden on the body as well?

In fact, they really are. Some fascinating studies have looked at the importance of one's mindset in relation to sleep quality. One published in the peer-reviewed journal Behavioral Medicine in 2019 looked at the sleep quality of 3,500 young and middle-aged adults, and found that optimistic people sleep better and longer.

We know that positive thinking can help decrease cortisol and increase serotonin in the brain, allowing the body to be calmer and more relaxed.

If you think about it, this all really makes sense. For example, if you're in a reactive mindset and not “letting go,” it's harder for your body not to react to stimuli during the night, and for it to “trust” enough to let itself sleep.

But this is certainly just one small side benefit of the wisdom contained in this proverb. On top of that, the sooner we can make amends, the sooner our relationships heal, and the better our families and communities are.

It's helpful, then, to reflect on any burdens we may be carrying—any resentment, even if not anger. Doesn't the thought of letting that go feel good? When many people think of such things, they realize that sometimes they've carried burdens not only into a new day, but even into a new year or decade. Perhaps we can trust more that there are reasons for things, that challenges truly are opportunities for growth, and that often the hardest times are the ones that lead to the greatest changes.

And if we can think this way, we will be modeling really healthy behavior for our kids. We could genuinely say to them, “Don't let the sun set on your anger,” and they would see us doing it, too.

I'll share a poem that some have chosen to

(signal flags and the like), as it had for centuries.

That was temporarily bad news for Ronalds, but good news for the telegraph. If the British government had become involved and thrown public money at it, it might have jeopardized the future growth and competitiveness of an industry that took off on its own. Commercialization of the telegraph blossomed in the 1840s, in response to market demands instead of political decisions.

In America, the first telegraph line was run by the federal government, from 1844 to 1846. As historian Burton Folsom explained:

“Cave Johnson, the Postmaster General, argued that the use of the telegraph ‘so powerful for good or evil, cannot with safety be left in the hands of private individuals uncontrolled.’ Only the government, Johnson concluded, could be trusted to operate the telegraph in ‘the public interest.’”

Johnson's assessment proved dead wrong. After two years, Congress tired of the losses and privatized the line. Entrepreneurs figured out how to make it profitable and quickly turned the telegraph into a national, then international, enterprise.

Ronalds fared quite well in spite of the Admiralty's judgment. He became a wealthy man and one of the world's most respected scientists of the day. Known even in his lifetime as the “father of electric telegraphy,” he made immense contributions to civil and mechanical engineering, meteorology, and early camera technology. At the age of 82, he was knighted by Queen Victoria, in part for the invention the British Admiralty rejected more than a half century before.

On his own dime, a private inventor named Ronalds saw a future in something he created—a future that government officials chose at first to ignore. In the end, the Admiralty was the loser. The winners were consumers, taxpayers, and Ronalds himself.

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Lawrence Reed writes a weekly op-ed for *El American*. He is president emeritus of the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) in Atlanta, Georgia; and is the author of “Real Heroes: Inspiring True Stories of Courage, Character, and Conviction” and the best-seller “Was Jesus a Socialist?”

### For Additional Information

• “The Victorian Internet” by Tom Standage

• “Francis Ronalds the Forgotten Father of the Electric Telegraph” by Rebecca Northfield

• “When the Telegraph Came to Michigan” by Burton W. Folsom

memorize—a wonderful reflection:

‘Words’

By John George Fleet (1818–1902)

*Words are things of little cost,  
Quickly spoken, quickly lost;  
We forget them, but they stand  
Witnesses at God's right hand,  
And their testimony bear  
For us, or against us, there.*

*Oh, how words often ours have been  
Idle words, and words of sin;  
Words of anger, scorn, and pride,  
Or desire our faults to hide;  
Envious tales, or strife unkind,  
Leaving bitter thoughts behind.*

*Grant us, Lord, from day to day,  
Strength to watch and grace to pray  
May our lips, from sin set free,  
Love to speak and sing of thee,  
Till in heaven we learn to raise  
Hymns of everlasting praise.*

Ultimately, it pays to be good. It's healthy to be good. And it's happy to be good.

So here's to gratitude, to forgiveness, and to joy!

Angelica Reis loves nature, volunteer work, her family, and her faith. She is an English teacher with a background in classical music, and enjoys uncovering hidden gems, shining them up, and sharing them with readers. She makes her home in New York state.

# Taking Poetry to Heart Is a Lifetime Gift

JEFF MINICK

In the spring of 2014, I served as prompter for a local homeschool poetry fest in Asheville, North Carolina. From pre-K students to high school seniors, students marched onto stage and recited verse to an audience composed of family and friends. The little ones trebled out

nursery rhymes, middle schoolers delivered impressive reams of rhymes—Shel Silverstein’s “Sick” was always popular—and the high schoolers often aimed at the stars. My job was to sit in the front row with copies of all the poems, ready to help if someone stumbled or forgot a line.

The most impressive performance I witnessed in my three years as prompter was a rendition of T. S. Eliot’s “The Love

Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” The performer, Carolyn, had taken some of the seminars I’d offered to homeschoolers for several years, and I was aware of her academic and acting abilities, but that night, she dazzled me. She recited without mistake or hesitation, including the six opening lines in Italian. “Prufrock” is a free verse piece, long, with some rhyming lines but no particular meter. If you know the poem, you are now probably as impressed as I was.

Many educators have long disdained memorization, whether it be of poetry or the multiplication tables. Google “memorization in school,” and you’ll find arguments back and forth about the value of committing facts, dates, and yes, even poetry, to memory. The best of these viewpoints, I believe, are those that advocate a balance between memory work and analytical thinking.

To dismiss entirely the tool of memorization, however, is to ignore a fundamental aspect of childhood development, a fact Intellectual Takeout editor Annie Holmquist mentions in her 2017 article “Children Have Amazing Powers of Memorization ... So Why Aren’t Schools Using Them?” The article revisits “The Lost Tools of Learning,” the essay in which author Dorothy Sayers strongly advocates for memorization in early education, the “Poll-Parrot” stage. According to Sayers, and as many parents recognize, children of kindergarten and elementary school age possess an amazing ability to absorb the multiplication tables, facts of history and science, foreign languages, and of course, nursery rhymes and poetry.

Memorizing poetry strikes me as especially important, bestowing as it does singular gifts on its recipients. For one, taking the tempo of verse, and making it our own, subconsciously delivers the rhythm and meter of our English language to the mind. As a schoolboy, Winston Churchill memorized and recited all 1,200 lines of Macaulay’s “Lays of Ancient Rome,” and continued to tuck into his mind dozens of other verses as well. The cadences and musical language of these lines undoubtedly contributed to his powers as a speaker and writer.

In addition to imbuing us with the beauty of our native tongue, poetry acts as an interior flame that can inspire us during hardship long after we have left the schoolyard. Rudyard Kipling’s “If,” for example, which I had certain classes put to memory, abides in the hearts of those students even today, whispering, perhaps, encouragement when they most have need of it.

In one middle school seminar I taught

on composition and literature, I made “The Impossible Dream” our class anthem. We sang this Broadway hit from “Man of La Mancha” from time to time, and some of the students eventually memorized most of the lyrics. Several years later, when I ran into one of those students, she thanked me, saying she’d thought of that song many times and that it had kept her going in her studies and her social life.

**Poetry acts as an interior flame that can inspire us during hardship long after we have left the schoolyard.**

As in so many things, the memorization of poetry best begins with baby steps. Teach those 3- and 4-year-olds lots of nursery rhymes. Often all you have to do is read and repeat, read and repeat, and they’ll lock down the verse. Give older students short works in the beginning, like “Dreams” by Langston Hughes or Emily Dickinson’s “There is no Frigate like a Book.” From there, students can progress to longer poems by the likes of William Shakespeare, Rudyard Kipling, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Browning, Robert Frost, and dozens of others. These pieces are best tackled by breaking them down into parts and constantly reviewing the stanzas already learned.

I also recommend a trip to the library, where you can take a look at the many anthologies. Browse through these, and pick out the poems that interest you. Better yet, select a couple of favorite collections and keep them in your home.

Learn some poetry by heart, and its words, rhythms, images, and meaning become like that muscle beating away in your chest, a life-giving part of you until the end of your days.

*This article was originally published on FEE.org.*

*Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, “Amanda Bell” and “Dust on Their Wings,” and two works of non-fiction, “Learning as I Go” and “Movies Make the Man.” Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.*



BIBA KAYEWICH

Young children possess a great capability for memorizing, according to writer Dorothy Sayers.

## EDUCATION

# Can Changing Social Studies Improve the Education System?

Civics Alliance’s new American Birthright curriculum aims to revamp public education system

DUSTIN BASS

At the end of 2021, the Pew Research Center conducted a study of 17 countries with first-world economies on how divided their citizens were along political, racial, and ethnic lines. Perhaps it’s no surprise that America ranked first. But perhaps American division has less to do with politics, race, and ethnicity, and more to do with how the U.S. education system has centered on those three categories that make up the subject of social studies.

Since the 1960s, social studies has been the rich soil in which to cultivate what is called New Civics. This New Civics is commonly referred to as “action civics” and has less to do with learning about what is required to be a good citizen of a republic and more to do with engaging in social issues, such as climate change or gun control.

Undoubtedly, the public education system needs reforming, and for David Randall, director of research at the National Association of Scholars, the reformation should start with social studies.

Randall is also executive director of the Civics Alliance, which according to its website is a national coalition of organizations and citizens dedicated to preserving and improving America’s civics education. The alliance isn’t simply a group of educators and citizens campaigning for education reform. It has assembled an exhaustive social studies curriculum called American Birthright.

### What Is American Birthright?

“The Civics Alliance wants to improve every aspect of American social studies instruction by inspiring America’s state education departments and public schools to provide social studies instruction that

teach American students their birthright of liberty,” Randall said.

The curriculum is a throwback to classical liberal education that pulls from ancient Greeks and Romans up through American founders and thinkers such as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. According to Randall, this civics curriculum isn’t groundbreaking. In fact, it’s not even new. It’s just an education that has been abandoned to the peril of the nation.

“The education system has abandoned both traditional content and traditional pedagogy, and has abandoned liberalism for radicalism,” he said. “We can go back to Deweyan pedagogy since the 1920s, the radicalization and softening of education since the 1960s, and, perhaps as important, the near-disappearance of even a minority of conservatives from universities and education schools from the 1990s, and the consequent turn from liberal bias to authoritarian radicalism.”

“If we restored a proper education, à la American Birthright, we would have students graduate from high school possessing substantial knowledge, educated to think freely, and able to act as citizens of the republic without needing to go to college.”

Randall said the American Birthright project began in October 2021. Since they weren’t attempting to “reinvent the wheel,” they pulled their curriculum standards from previously proven materials, such as the 2003 Massachusetts Standards. For parents looking through the K-12 curriculum found in the alliance’s Model K-12

Standards, it may seem overly demanding. Unfortunately, this is the result of lowered educational standards and therefore student and parent expectations over the decades. Randall agrees that the curriculum is demanding, but only demanding in the modern sense.

“Our schools in 1960 would have thought this pretty standard in its expectations,” he said. “We’re just going back to the standards we had.”

### The Goals

As mentioned, the goal of the Civics Alliance is to improve social studies instruction. Throughout the Model K-12 Standards, it mentions one way of doing that and that is eliminating pedagogies in education. Although pedagogy is defined as “the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept,” Randall suggests that this type of teaching doesn’t benefit the student or the teacher.

“The focus on pedagogies leads teachers to teach skills rather than content,” he said. “When you require it, you don’t just constrict how teachers can teach, you cut the number of classroom hours for learning facts. Freedom for teachers and more hours to learn actual content—that’s why we emphasized no pedagogies.”

Randall said the Civics Alliance has a rather ambitious overarching goal for the American Birthright initiative over the next decade: to have at least half the states adopt the curriculum in part or in whole. The project was just released at the end of June and already there is growing interest. He

said numerous state legislators have expressed interest, as well as some private schools.

“Most importantly, we now have five state affiliates, all formed since the launch of American Birthright,” he added. “That’s what we want—a grassroots effort to push for this, to get public opinion behind American Birthright.”

### The Push for Public Opinion

Public opinion on public education hasn’t boded well over the past number of decades. Gallup has polled Americans since 1973 about their level of confidence in the education system. It has dropped 30 percentage points since they began polling. Although there are many reasons why public education continues to falter—from bad teachers to bad administrations to bad students to bad curriculum, Randall believes changing how and what is taught in America’s schools by providing an effective keystone for education reform could be a pathway to achieving the success Americans have been wanting for so long.

“Directly, we want to provide a positive model for social studies standards, to oppose the radical ones coming down the pike,” he said. “Indirectly, to use improved social studies standards to call for improved textbooks, professional development, curricula, etc.”

“American Birthright can’t fix all education by itself; but without reformed social studies standards, you can’t fix the rest of the educational machine.”

*Dustin Bass is the host of EpochTV’s “About the Book,” a show about new books with the authors who wrote them. He is an author and co-host of The Sons of History podcast.*



Among the colorful colonial buildings of Salvador, in the Brazilian state of Bahia, sits the church and convent of São Francisco, a church managed by Franciscan friars. The church is across the square from the Cruzeiro de São Francisco, a large stone cross. Three doorways lead inside, with two bell towers on each side, on façades of white sandstone from Brazil. The upper middle façade has volutes (spirals), a white marble statue of Saint Francis of Assisi, and the coat of arms of the Franciscan order. The overall façade is influenced by Mannerist architecture, an Italian artistic style from the late Renaissance.



One of the details of the church’s entrance hall is a bas-relief of a putto holding flowers, in an elaborate framing. Putti are little boy figures, sometimes with wings, and are often depicted in Baroque and Rococo art. The gilded woodwork combines Portuguese and Brazilian artistry.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

# THE CHURCH AND CONVENT OF SAO FRANCISCO

A Blend of Portuguese and Brazilian Artistry

ARIANE TRIEBSWETTER

Some of Brazil’s most beautiful churches are located in the colorful, historic city of Salvador, in the state of Bahia. Among them, one stands out: The church and convent of São Francisco (St. Francis) is a magnificent representation of both Portuguese and Brazilian artistry from the 18th century.

The initial convent and church were built in 1587 by friars of the Franciscan order. Unfortunately, these were destroyed during the Dutch invasion of Bahia in the

17th century. Father Vicente das Chagas began reconstruction in a grandiose style in 1686. Multiple artists worked on decorations to complete the project in the 18th century.

While the church square is relatively simple, the church’s interior is glorious. It is lavishly ornate and gilded, a decorative technique for applying gold to a surface. Gold leaf and gold dust cover the church’s walls, pillars, archways, and vaulted ceilings. European Rococo extravagance combines with local faunal and floral elements, the definition of Bra-

**São Francisco is a magnificent representation of both Portuguese and Brazilian artistry from the 18th century.**

zilian Baroque, and a unique Brazilian architectural style.

European influences continue with azulejos—glazed ceramic tiles from Portugal—which are found throughout Brazil’s colonial churches. These tiles are organized in ornate panels depicting allegorical scenes based on Flemish engravings from the 17th century and Latin quotes from the famous poet Horace.

*Ariane Triebswetter is an international freelance journalist, with a background in modern literature and classical music.*



The entrance hall of the São Francisco Church exhibits multiple religious paintings and azulejos panels displaying biblical scenes, making the church unique. The Portuguese influence is noticeable throughout the church, with the ceramic tiles imported from Lisbon in 1748, after the church’s reconstruction.



One of the about 50,000 azulejos panels in the church and convent of São Francisco. São Francisco has the most azulejos of all of South America. Here, the phrase “Cantemus Domino,” which means “Let us sing to God” is illustrated.



The church has a two-story cloister with a covered courtyard often found in religious buildings. This one has a simple aesthetic, with religious paintings and azulejos imported from Lisbon. Approximately 35,000 azulejos are displayed in the cloister, inspired by prints from the emblem book “The Work of Quintus Horace Flaccus” by Otto van Veen. The book is a collection of mythological illustrations, with moralistic quotes from Horace. The azulejos-filled panel around the outside wall of the cloister depicts a main street or avenue with people walking along public buildings of 18th-century European architecture and arches, framed by fauna and flora, and putti.



Another of the church’s striking elements is the wooden ceiling, created by artist José Joaquim da Rocha in 1774. The ceiling was painted in an illusionistic perspective, a Renaissance technique used to create the illusion of depth. The wooden carvings in star, diamond, and hexagonal shapes hold sacred paintings. Both the ceiling and the pulpit are decorated with biblical scenes, and the azulejos display allegorical scenes with moral messages from Roman mythology.

EDUCATION

# Be Careful What You Pack for College Classes

More than 2 decades of studies have found that laptops and the college classroom make for, in most cases, a dangerous mix

MATTHEW JOHN

As this sweltering summer gives way to fall, a fleet of American teens will be off to college in a few short weeks.

Alongside laundry bags, binders, dorm décor, bed sheets, that go-to shampoo, and perhaps a favorite comforter, a laptop computer is now just as much a staple as the paper planner of yesteryear.

They're used for everything from typing up papers to accessing course assignments, doing research, posting to discussion forums, and, well, all of those other less collegiate things we do as social beings: emailing friends, checking social media, shopping, and all that.

The problem is that the boundaries between those two worlds—the academic and the social—appear to be tragically thin when it comes to the sphere of a 12- to 15-inch screen.

More than two decades of findings by educational researchers suggest that most students have an exceptionally hard time keeping work as work and fun as fun. The two spheres blend and blur imperceptibly when the laptop comes out—regardless of the occasion. And the classroom proves little exception.

More than any shiny instrument in the student's arsenal, the laptop, it turns out, is today's proverbial "double-edged sword"—able to dish out as much damage as it does benefits to its user.

But unlike the gaping flesh wound that a sword might inflict, the harm done by that shiny chrome device tucked in the backpack is less obvious. Poor or compromised end-of-term grades prove far less immediate than physical injury, and the pain (if felt at all) is less connected to its source.

In a sense, the laptop might be more appropriately likened to the Trojan horse: a stealth invader that, by all appearances, seems a coveted gift. After all, who isn't thrilled to head off to campus with the latest Retina Mac, specked out with the best video processing card and oodles of memory?

Turning to the research, however, we find instead a cautionary tale. The new and shiny isn't necessarily the friend it seems.

First, it's worth noting an attitudinal change among educational researchers, although it hasn't really trickled down to the general public yet. There has been a gradual dawning of concern among researchers over the years regarding laptops (or computers more generally) in the classroom that seems well justified.

## Students typically underestimate the extent of their misuse of laptops.

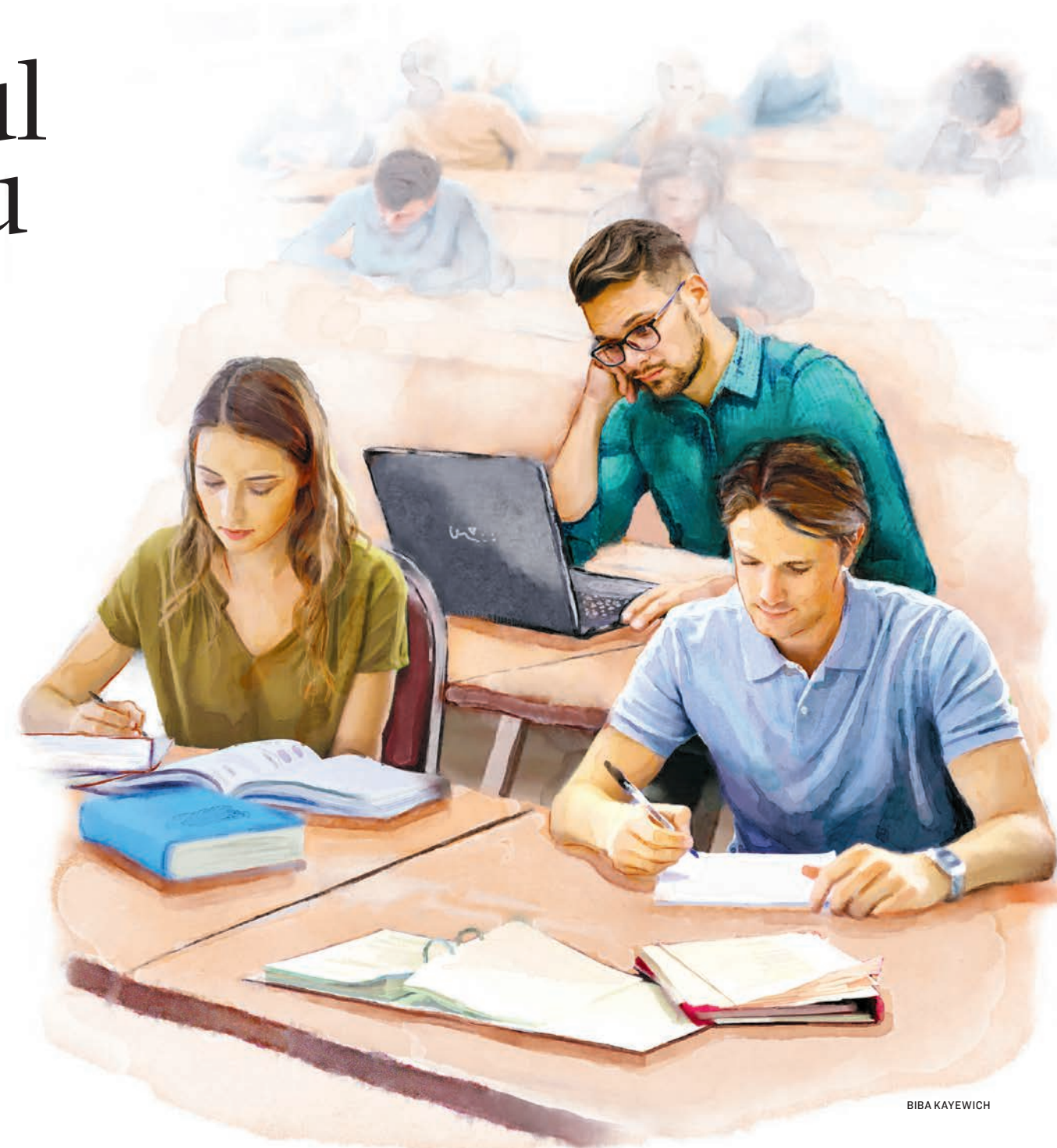
A look back at early research from the 1990s paints a rather Pollyanna picture of infinite possibilities and a seemingly endless parade of positive outcomes.

Notable studies from 1994 through 1998 swoon about all sorts of computer-spawned perks: increased student motivation, better-developed job skills, improved school attendance, better problem-solving, stronger writing skills, and even an increase in sustained academic achievement.

Pretty much every pedagogical plus that you could think of was an alleged benefit of the emerging technology.

It was a romance that, in hindsight, might have been born more of rose-tinted glasses or attributable to the novelty of it rather than to actual, well-sorted-out outcomes.

By the early 2000s, as computers became more mobile, studies were emerging that suggested a less rainbows-and-unicorns picture.



BIBA KAYEWICH

Researchers at the University of Michigan found that students wasted nearly 40 minutes out of every 100-minute class period doing nonacademic things online.

A 2001 paper by Geri Gay, professor of communication at Cornell University, and Michael Grace-Martin, a research associate, used a proxy internet server to record and analyze student web browsing during class. They chose two upper-level college courses and monitored the activities of 82 students. And mind you, these were college-age students—not less-mature middle or high schoolers—attending an Ivy League institution.

What the team found was completely counter to the dominant narrative: The more time during class students spent on the internet, the worse their final course grades were.

While this would seem to be a kind of "no-duh" affirmation of common sense, one has to remember that tens of millions of dollars were then—just as with now—being pumped into new classroom technologies throughout the country, from the elementary level on up. Little skepticism of it all was being registered. It was a runaway train.

A personal tidbit is worth sharing, from another New York state campus. It was but a few years after the Cornell study that I remember a friend sharing her horror while auditing a class at Columbia University's law school, observing a large lecture and seeing what America's elite lawyers-to-be were doing with themselves. While their extraordinarily accomplished professor was at the podium, expounding on the intricacies of contract law, dozens of students could be seen throughout the lecture hall on their laptops, doing anything but studiously jotting lecture notes.

Some were messaging each other. Others were catching up on email. Several were shopping. One was even watching a random video online. Still others were checking out the news.

Yet these were elite students at one of the top five law schools in the United States—who had earned their seats by scoring nearly perfect marks on the hyper-competitive LSAT and earning nearly perfect grade point averages over the course of years of undergrad study. And now they were among one of the most competitive student bodies prepping to enter one of the most competitive professions.

If you would expect anyone in the classroom to not squander an educational opportunity, it would be them.

It was an eye-opening—as well as sobering—moment to hear about this. The academic literature since then has only affirmed the startling sketch my friend painted that day. Yet few of my colleagues in the teaching profession are familiar with it. A few seminal studies present an alarming picture.

One 2010 study published in the Journal of Information Systems Education examined the extent of student multi-tasking in a lecture-based college course. This should have been a highly engaging course, mind you, as it included "substantial problem-solving activities," according to the study's authors. Their finding?

"Students engage in substantial multitasking behavior with their laptops and have non-course-related software applications open and active about 42% of the time," the study reads.

That's nearly half the time spent in class. "Substantial" indeed! Significantly, the researchers used internet monitoring as well as student self-reporting of activities and, afterward, compared the two. Sure enough, students greatly under-reported their own multi-tasking activities.

We should note the implication here: Students typically underestimate the extent of their misuse of laptops; they don't grasp the extent of the issue. There's a disconnect between reality and their problem—something eerily similar to what happens with substance abuse.

Other studies, which in some cases have relied solely on student self-reporting, should be viewed in a skeptical light.

## A good old-fashioned spiral notebook might not be as flashy as the latest laptop, but it's far more likely to spell success in the classroom.

Another significant study came about in 2012 and was published in the journal Computers & Education. A collaboration by six researchers, this well-designed study pitted students with computers and internet access in class against a "paper-and-pencil" control group, which was sans laptops.

They found that "participants who did not use any technologies in the lectures outperformed students who used some form of technology"—which they attributed to what psychologists call the "bottleneck theory of attention." In lay terms, multitasking undermines your ability to focus.

So much for souped-up processors and blazing bandwidth.

Another 2012 study by Faria Sana, Tina Weston, and Nicholas J. Cepeda adds another dimension to the problem. Not only is the laptop prone to hurting one's own academic performance, but also that of one's nearby peers.

The team found that "participants who were in direct view of a multitasking peer scored lower on a test compared to those who were not" and concluded that "multitasking on a laptop poses a significant distraction to both users and fellow students."

A misused laptop doesn't just make you a worse student. It makes you a worse citizen, too. It's not just self-destructive, then. It's also selfish.

But what about those exceptional Ivy students? Surely they can get away with a few naughty forays more than the rest of us, given their academic firepower?

Yet again, the research says no.

A tellingly titled 2014 study by Susan Ravizza and colleagues at the University of Michigan, is relevant here: "Non-academic internet use in the classroom is negatively related to classroom learning regardless of intellectual ability."

So if there's one upside to the laptop's downside, perhaps it's that we're all equally prone to its destructive powers. You can't outsmart it; you can only outsmart yourself.

A similar follow-up study by Ravizza et al in 2016 found that not only is intelligence not a mitigating factor when laptop multitasking in class, but neither is motivation or interest in the course material. It seems the temptation to surf and message and step out of bounds trumps our best intentions.

The Michigan team found that students wasted, on average, nearly 40 minutes out of every 100-minute class period doing nonacademic things online—including, as at Columbia, checking email, shopping, reading the news, chatting, and playing games. (And let it be said that University of Michigan students aren't exactly underachievers, either!)

This means that it's not enough just to be motivated, interested, or even super smart. The laptop's potential for corruption outweighs its promise. And we're all in this equally together.

It's a humbling—but important—thing to realize.

What about taking proactive countermeasures, then? Can one beat back the devil with stealth strategies such as, say, planting oneself in the first row, as up-front and center as possible?

Unfortunately, nope—once again.

A clever 2020 study by Walter F. Bischof and Alan Kingstone found that "using a computer had the same harmful effect on grade performance regardless of whether the student sat at the front or back of the classroom."

While some studies have found some positives associated with laptop usage, they've tended to be few and far between. They also seem to agree that it's hard, if not impossible, to identify which few select students are the ones who benefit.

Even studies that have found purported benefits—such as using the internet for class-related activities—have, in some well-conducted evaluations such as Ravizza's, been found to be unfounded. Laptop usage for in-class activities "was not associated with a benefit to classroom performance," in her team's own words.

Increasingly, it seems as though the evidence is piling up against the laptop, at least in the college classroom.

Even if a student were to exercise absolute self-control (say, turning off one's own Wi-Fi at the start of class) and just use the laptop for notetaking, he or she would probably be missing out. The benefits of paper-and-pen go beyond avoiding internet distractions to deeper learning and long-term memory formation.

All in all, the benefits (which seem increasingly slim, if any) seem far outweighed by the cons.

A good old-fashioned spiral notebook might not be as flashy as the latest laptop, but it's far more likely to spell success in the classroom. And by golly, it's a lot less hefty to lug around.

Matthew John is a veteran teacher and writer who is passionate about history, culture, and good literature. He lives in New York.

# FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

### What Is Good

By John Boyle O'Reilly

"What is the real good?" I asked in musing mood.

Order, said the law court;  
Knowledge, said the school;  
Truth, said the wise man;  
Pleasure, said the fool;  
Love, said the maiden;  
Beauty, said the page;  
Freedom, said the dreamer;  
Home, said the sage;  
Fame, said the soldier;  
Equity, the seer;

Spake my heart full sadly:  
"The answer is not here."

Then within my bosom  
Softly this I heard:  
"Each heart holds the secret:  
Kindness is the word."

JOSE LUIS PELAEZ INC/GETTY IMAGES

“It is not that I’m so smart. But I stay with the questions much longer.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879–1955), PHYSICIST

### WHY DID THE TEACHER WRITE ON THE WINDOW?

HIS LESSON WOULD BE CLEAR

OLGA PINK/SHUTTERSTOCK

# This Week in History

## A STEAMBOAT SETS SAIL

On Aug. 17, 1807, the Clermont, the first steamboat, designed by American engineer Robert Fulton set sail for the first time. The ship took 32 1/2 hours to travel the 150-mile journey from Manhattan to Albany, making history.



American engineer and inventor Robert Fulton.



An illustration of the Clermont from an 1870 book.

ALL IMAGES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza

# HAMSTERS IN THE WILD

## Hamsters are best known in America as pets.

However, the common pet hamster originated in Syria. It's called the golden hamster, and it's also known as the Syrian hamster. Though there are many species of hamster, this is the most common pet.

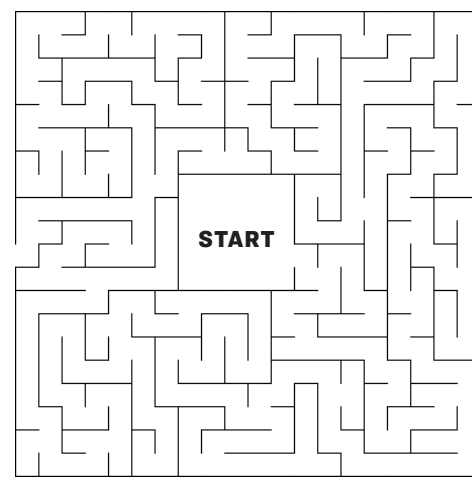


It's no surprise that the Syrian hamster lives in Syria. Their preferred habitat is in agricultural fields, especially in bean plots near wells. In the wild, the Syrian hamster comes in one color: golden brown, with white below. Some golden hamsters also have a black stripe on the face. Like mice, hamsters have many young at a time, but the golden hamster is even more prolific, with a gestation (pregnancy) period of only 16 days. In that period, 8 to 12 young develop and are born, completely helpless, with their eyes closed. In another two weeks, they will open their eyes. About a week after that, they are weaned off their mother's

milk, and a week after that, they become full, independent adults. Though they typically live only about two years in the wild, hamsters have surprisingly full and eventful lives. First of all, like many mammals, they are solitary and aggressive toward members of their species, except toward their own young. They live in burrows, which they sleep in during the day. At night, they will go gather food to bring back to their burrows. Each night, one hamster can traverse up to a total of eight miles in its effort to gather food, which is usually seeds, nuts, and small insects. To communicate with others of their species,

Syrian hamsters have a few methods. The most common is scent marking. A hamster, using the scent glands on the sides of its body, will rub certain surfaces at the edges of its territory. It marks the territory boundary, but also can send several messages to other hamsters. Hamsters can discern by a scent mark if they are related to the hamster that marked the spot. If they happen to meet another hamster, they rely on body language. If things are going badly between two hamsters, they will chatter their teeth, which is a sign of aggression. They will also squeak in certain situations.

# AMAZING ESCAPES!



USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, -, AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

Easy puzzle 1

7	10
	60
6	7

+ - x ÷

Solution For Easy 1  
L - L + 9 = 01

Medium puzzle 1

13	20
	49
4	17

+ - x ÷

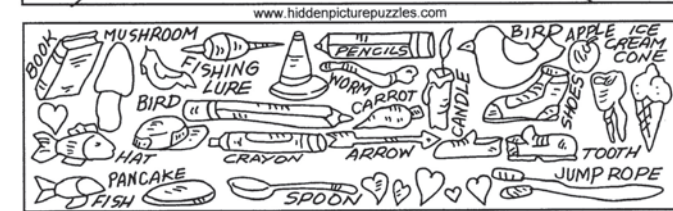
Solution for Medium 1  
02 - Z1 + P = 61

Hard puzzle 1

12	32
	72
12	16

+ - x ÷

Solution for Hard 1  
Z1 + 21 + 91 = 26



HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Bal  
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

WORD SEARCH: Back to School!

D	P	S	O	C	C	E	R	B	S	P	C	E	C	H
A	E	Q	S	E	R	K	P	I	H	S	H	O		
N	N	P	D	T	A	S	O	T	Y	E	T	I	M	
C	C	F	A	M	K	U	L	E	S	M	A	N	E	
I	E	W	N	A	X	E	C	O	N	I	I	T	E	R
Q	L	R	I	T	L	F	H	G	N	C	S	I	S	O
E	S	R	S	H	G	F	O	Y	I	S	T	S	E	O
C	I	A	H	E	N	G	L	I	S	H	R	T	H	M
O	P	L	J	D	Q	H	O	C	K	E	Y	I	B	A
N	Y	G	Z	T	C	J	G	L	U	E	K	C	B	G
O	G	E	N	B	T	Y	L	C	L	U	B	S	A	E
M	O	B	E	U	S	H	I	S	T	O	R	Y	N	R
I	L	R	A	M	V	S	T	A	P	L	E	R	D	M
C	F	A	J	R	U	T	H	E	A	T	E	R	G	A
S	L	L	X	M	T	E	A	C	H	E	R	V	Q	N

Algebra	Home Room
Art	Math
Band	Music
Biology	Paste
Chemistry	Pencils
Chinese	Physics
Clubs	Psychology
Crayons	Soccer
Dance	Spanish
Economics	Stapler
English	Statistics
French	Teacher
German	Tennis
Glue	Theater
Golf	US History
Hockey	

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# THE REAL STORY OF JAN. 6



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### WHAT REALLY HAPPENED ON JAN. 6, 2021?

It's been over a year since Jan. 6, 2021, and the events that happened at the Capitol that day have once again been brought before the court of public opinion. However, in many discussions of the events, key information is omitted.

The Epoch Times takes a look at the whole story, from the origins of the chaos to the police's use of force against protesters, in an effort to present an objective view of what truly transpired.



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