



# The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History

By Thomas E. Woods Jr.

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Claiming that most textbooks and popular history books were written by biased left-wing writers and scholars, historian Thomas Woods offers this guide as an alternative to "the stale and predictable platitudes of mainstream texts." Covering the colonial era through the Clinton administration, Woods seeks to debunk some persistent myths about American history. For instance, he writes, the Puritans were not racists intent on stealing the Indians' lands, the Founding Fathers were not revolutionaries but conservatives in the true sense of the word, the American War Between the States (to even call it a civil war is inaccurate, Woods says) was not principally about slavery, Abraham Lincoln was no friend to the slaves, and FDR's New Deal policies actually made the Depression worse. He also covers a wide range of constitutional interpretations over the years, particularly regarding the First, Second, Ninth, and Tenth amendments, and continually makes the point that states' rights have been unlawfully trampled upon by the federal government since the early days of the republic. Though its title is more deliberately provocative than accurate, Woods' attack on what he sees as rampant liberal revisionism over the past 25 years proves to be an interesting platform for a book. He's as biased as those he rails against, of course, but he does provoke thought in an entertaining way even if he sometimes tries to pass off opinion as hard facts.

This quick and enjoyable read is packed with unfamiliar quotes, informative sidebars, iconoclastic viewpoints, and a list of books "you're not supposed to read." It is not a comprehensive or detailed study, but that is not its aim; instead, it offers ideas for further research and a challenge to readers to dig deeper and analyze some basic assumptions about American history--a worthy goal that Woods manages to reach. -

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

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--Shawn Carkonen

### From Publishers Weekly

This book is not so much politically incorrect as it is contrarian, as well as utterly contemptuous of anything supported by Liberals or "Intellectuals." At every opportunity, Woods quotes government leaders, media sources and "distinguished" academics who have said something that he feels backs up his view. That view is, by and large, classically conservative, with a focus on states' rights and small government. Any flaws in or missteps by politicians become instant basis for rejecting them wholesale (i.e., Lincoln's racial views; the fact that JFK's two major books were ghostwritten), as Woods dredges up accusations both familiar and long-forgotten. The historical coverage is hardly comprehensive, since Woods focuses on telling the "truth" about issues Liberals have allegedly distorted, like the New Deal and the Civil Rights movement. Some ideas that he claims are controversial are anything but: most people know the Civil War was not fought primarily to abolish slavery, and it's no secret that Stalin starved his people. Woods writes with zeal, and speckles his narrative with suggestions for further reading labeled "Books You're Not Supposed to Read" (which are mostly Right-wing revisionist histories) and "PC Today" boxes containing a grab-bag of conservative gripes and assertions (i.e. "It is not true, as most people believe, that the Indians had no conception of land ownership and did not understand what they were doing when they sold their land to the Puritans"). Diehard Republicans may find this book an inspiring corrective to supposedly Liberal-biased history texts, but others will be put off by Woods's cherry-picking approach and supercilious tone.

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### Review

"It is not surprising that a history guide written by a professor with an undergraduate degree from Harvard and a doctorate from Columbia made it onto the *New York Times* bestseller list. What is surprising --

refreshingly so -- is that a text that challenges the liberal canon has so resonated with the American public . . . Provides a compelling rebuttal to the liberal sentiment encrusted upon current history texts. . . *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History* is ultimately about truth . . . This is a book everyone interested in American history should have in his library." --*Weekly Standard*

"His take on American history is bold, brilliant, thought-provoking, and what is even better, entertaining." -- Clyde N. Wilson, professor of history, University of South Carolina

"Knowing our past is essential if we are to preserve our freedoms. Professor Woods' work heroically rescues real history from the politically correct memory hole. Every American should read this book." --The Honorable Ron Paul, MD, US House of Representatives

"An important work that refutes the misrepresentations of American history that have misinformed generations about their country, its origins, purposes, successes, and failures. Riveting, highly readable." -- Paul Craig Roberts, former assistant secretary of the US Treasury

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