

Part 3: Lessons Stories and Articles

Lesson #1

Plymouth – Experience Teaches the Value of Free Enterprise

Colonists who sailed to the new country from Europe were often sponsored by trading companies who put up the money for the ships and expected to profit off the fur, timber and fish sent back to England. The Pilgrims in Plymouth were a religious group of Separatists brought by the Virginia Company in 1620 to settle the northern part of Virginia. This trading company set up the same compulsory communal rules as had been given by the sponsors for the colony of Jamestown. A common storehouse was required and all food and clothing was deposited for all to use. This arrangement failed again just as it had done in Jamestown. The industrious men toiled and the lazy ones loafed which resulted in a “starving time” for the colony. Each year became more challenging under the communal system. The production level under this system was so low that ultimately the colonists faced complete extinction by starvation.

After seven years, the pilgrims demanded and obtained the right for each man to keep what he had earned. Governor Bradford reported that “they should set corn every man for his own purpose, and in every regard trust to themselves...and so assigned to every family a parcel of land...” After one year Bradford was able to record, “This had very good success; for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been...” (Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, 160-162) In nine years the Pilgrims repaid their debt to their investors and were free to govern themselves under a charter from the king.

Jamestown - Discovery of Free Enterprise

The earliest surviving settlement named after King James was started by 143 men in 1606. The settlers were instructed to establish a common store system in their new colony. This communal arrangement required that every member of the colony deposit his goods into a central common storehouse from which the whole colony could draw according to each person’s needs. It was soon discovered that few of the settlers had farming or hunting experience and were too lazy to work or too proud to do common farm labor. The common-store soon emptied and by the end of the first winter, half of the settlers had died from lack of sufficient food.

Captain John Smith changed the order of things saying, “No work, no food.” This idea was further promoted when in 1610 a new governor, De La Warr, completely abandoned the common-store and gave each man his own plot of land where he could produce his own food. This was the introduction of the free enterprise system in America. From this point on, if a settler wanted to eat, he would be responsible for growing or trading for his own food. The development of free enterprise would become a cornerstone of America’s greatness.

Lesson #1

Thomas Edison

The Age of Edison by Ernest Freeberg

Thomas Edison claimed that inventive genius was nothing more than “hard work, stick-to-itiveness, and commonsense.” People who spent time with him to discover the secrets of his success noted his wide reading habits, his patience and an ability to make careful calculations. Edison epitomizes the rise of the self-made man, often called the poor boy who struggled up. Though he came to be known as the electric king of the nineteenth century, he toiled in greasy work clothes at Menlo Park.

America's remarkable technological creativity came in part from inventions that generated ever more inventions. The electric light was one of the greatest of such inventions. Light became a tool for amplifying vision which served a wide range of fields that no one inventor could have anticipated. Doctors used electric light to amplify the power of the microscope, "which in turn helped to confirm the germ theory of disease." Electric light's power to reveal the hidden world of miniscule creatures in water and organic matter led to the new ideas about the source and prevention of devastating diseases.

In the United States, the political democracy and economic free market seemed to liberate so many people's hunger for riches, fame, and power. The U.S. economy offered these rewards that promoted individual ambition and genius for the benefit of all. The patent office became a key mechanism for the accomplishment of technical inventiveness.

Down through history great ideas were carefully guarded by craftsmen as guild secrets or left "buried in the napkin." (A guild was a medieval association of craftsmen or merchants.) Not in the United States. Liberal patent laws gave intelligent artisans, mechanics, and farmers the protection they needed to bring ideas into the open, temporarily enriching them while making a lasting contribution to the commonwealth.

Drafters of the U.S. constitution authorized Congress to "promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their Writings and Discoveries." (Constitution Article I Sec. 8) The people most interested in America's Industrial Revolution recognized that inventions can be encouraged or stifled by public policy.

The knowledgeable Thomas Jefferson was the nation's first head of the board of patent examiners and could see patents as a useful "spring to inventions." He set wise guidelines insuring that every application should be carefully reviewed by an inspector who should grant a patent only to the individual responsible for a new invention which could be demonstrated new and useful. These standards opened the way for every farmer and mechanic who worked with a machine to have an opportunity to make improvements and maybe even a fortune. The patent office gave equal hearing to applicants from the working class who might lack scientific training but who knew how to transform their thinking into things. For a "mere pittance," even "the humblest citizens could hope to turn a good idea into a temporary but valuable government-protected monopoly.

Lesson #1

The Ant and the Grasshopper

Retold from Aesop by Rohini Chowdhury

Once there lived an ant and a grasshopper in a grassy meadow.

All day long the ant would work hard, collecting grains of wheat from the farmer's field far away. She would hurry to the field every morning, as soon as it was light enough to see by, and toil back with a heavy grain of wheat balanced on her head. She would put the grain of wheat carefully away in her larder, and then hurry back to the field for another one. All day long she would work, without stop or rest, scurrying back and forth from the field, collecting the grains of wheat and storing them carefully in her larder.

The grasshopper would look at her and laugh. 'Why do you work so hard, dear ant?' he would say. 'Come, rest awhile, listen to my song. Summer is here, the days are long and bright. Why waste the sunshine in labor and toil?'

The ant would ignore him, and head bent, would just hurry to the field a little faster. This would make the grasshopper laugh even louder. 'What a silly little ant you are!' he would call after her. 'Come, come and dance with me! Forget about work! Enjoy the summer! Live a little!' And the grasshopper would hop away across the meadow, singing and dancing merrily.

Summer faded into autumn, and autumn turned into winter. The sun was hardly seen, and the days were short and grey, the nights long and dark. It became freezing cold, and snow began to fall.

The grasshopper didn't feel like singing any more. He was cold and hungry. He had nowhere to shelter from the snow, and nothing to eat. The meadow and the farmer's field were covered in snow, and there was no food to be had. 'Oh what shall I do? Where shall I go?' wailed the grasshopper. Suddenly he remembered the ant. 'Ah - I shall go to the ant and ask her for food and shelter!' declared the grasshopper, perking up. So off he went to the ant's house and knocked at her door. 'Hello ant!' he cried cheerfully. 'Here I am, to sing for you, as I warm myself by your fire, while you get me some food from that larder of yours!'

The ant looked at the grasshopper and said, 'All summer long I worked hard while you made fun of me, and sang and danced. You should have thought of winter then! Find somewhere else to sing, grasshopper! There is no warmth or food for you here!' And the ant shut the door in the grasshopper's face. It is wise to worry about tomorrow today.

Teachers may choose to tell this story rather than have students act it out. There are multiple versions from which instructors can create their own version. We use the story to instill the importance of hard work in the free enterprise system and to bring discussion of the danger of desiring entitlement. A discussion of the grasshoppers in "A Bugs Life" leads to the truth that it is unfair for food to be taken from the those who work hard to give to those who do not work. This is a revealing example of the effort of some members of society who want to take advantage of others and live on the work they do. The human inclination to avoid work and find someone else to work for them is well demonstrated.

Lesson #2

Communication Story – The Battle of Marathon

The battle of Marathon is one of history's most famous military engagements and one of the earliest recorded battles. The battle is considered a defining moment in the development of European history. A mighty Persian army swept from the mid-east conquering country after country. As the Persian fleet sailed toward Greece in 490 BC, they arrived on Greek soil at Marathon Bay. The Persians had a massive infantry and cavalry which included 48,000 men, outnumbering the Athenians 4:1. The Persian invasion at Marathon occurred on September 9.

In the battle, the Athenians were able to surround the Persians, whose bows and short lances were no match for the strong spears of the Athenians. The previously invincible Persians turned their backs and fled as the Athenians chased them back to their ships. The Athenian army realized that the Persian fleet could sail and attack the undefended city of Athens. He called upon Phidippides to run to Athens to bring the news of victory and a warning of the approaching Persian ships. Phidippides ran approximately 26 miles from Marathon to Athens, the first marathon ever. It is said he successfully completed the run in about three hours. Phidippides became a martyr, dying from exhaustion after fighting all day and completing the run. However, he successfully warned the Athenians and when the Persian fleet arrived at Athens, Athenian soldiers were ready to protect their land. Upon seeing the prepared Athenian army, the Persians turned and sailed back to Persia in defeat.

Thus, the Battle of Marathon marked the end of a ten-year conflict between Greece and Persia. It distinguished the first time the Greeks had beaten the Persians on their own land. It gave Greeks faith in their own destiny as a nation, and therefore this battle is considered one of the most important events marking the birth of European culture. Finally, Marathon was a battle in which morale triumphed over numbers, as the outnumbered Athenians defended their home and their heritage.

Websites to study: <http://www.thenagain.info/webchron/mediterranean/Marathon.html> www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/pfmarathon.html <http://www.preceden.com/timelines/46485-important-events-in-ancient-greece#sthash.BBAXoC8r.dpuf>

Newburgh Conspiracy

Officers were angry with Congress for failing to honor its promise to pay them and for its failure to settle accounts for repayment of food and clothing. They began circulating an anonymous letter condemning Congress and calling for a revolt. On March 15, 1783 they met at the Newburgh Temple near Washington's headquarters. They were determined to lay out a strategy to overthrow the Continental Congress. As the officers conducted their meeting, suddenly, in strode Gen. General George Washington, surprising the conspirators by showing up at their meeting. He asked to speak to the assembled officers.

As Washington surveyed the sea of faces before him, he no longer saw respect as in times past, but suspicion, irritation, and even unconcealed anger. These officers were determined to seize control of the fledgling government and put Washington in as their king. To such a hostile crowd, Washington was about to present the most crucial speech of his career.

He gave a short but impassioned speech, urging them to oppose anyone "who wickedly attempts to open the floodgates of civil discord and deluge our rising empire in blood." His speech was magnificent but it was not this that turned the tide and saved the American Experiment. The room was silent as he finished but then he announced that he had something else to read. Pulling from his pocket a copy of the letter from a Virginia congressman he stumbled over the words. Then saying simply,

"Gentlemen, you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have grown gray in your service and now find myself growing blind in the service of my country."

Somehow these humble words, spoken by the exceptional man standing before them, changed the mood of the angry battle-hardened men. Respect and admiration swept over them. This simple act and statement by their venerated commander, coupled with remembrances of battles and privations shared together with him, was more effective than the most eloquent oratory in changing their minds on the matter.

The temptation to crown Washington king or dictator was ended. The officers stood down and the revolt was averted at perhaps the most vulnerable time in the nation's history. George Washington by his honor had crushed the Newburgh Conspiracy.

The liberty of millions had depended on the character of one man. In rejecting power, General Washington became the first prominent military leader in the history of the world to win a war and then voluntarily step down instead of seizing power. He gave power back to the people with the noble desire that they learn to govern themselves.

Bullet proof George Washington

The Bulletproof George Washington by David Barton

This story of George Washington's miraculous preservation in battle once appeared in virtually every student history textbook in America until the 1930's. This story deals with his involvement in the French and Indian War as a young man only 23 years of age.

There were 86 British and American officers in that battle. The Indian chief directed his warriors to take down the officers riding on horseback. As the battle wore on, most of the 86 officers were shot. The Indian chief took note of one officer (George Washington) still riding who had twice had his horse shot out from under him. Each time he had grabbed another horse left idle by fellow officers who had been shot.

The chief commanded. *“Quick, let your aim be certain and he dies,”* The warriors leveled their rifles at the last officer on horseback. Round after round was aimed at this one man. The native warriors stared at him in disbelief. Their rifles seldom missed their mark. A brave stated, *“I had seventeen clear shots at him...and after all could not bring him to the ground.”* Still the officer remained unhurt. The chief suddenly realized that a mighty power must be shielding this man.

“Stop firing!” he commanded. *“This one is under the special protection of the Great Spirit. This man was not born to be killed by a bullet.”* At the end of the battle, George Washington was the only officer who had not been shot down off his horse. He openly acknowledged that God's hand was upon him, that God had protected him and kept him through that battle.

The next day, he wrote a letter to his family explaining that after the battle was over, he had taken off his jacket and had found four bullet holes through it, yet not a single bullet had touched him; several horses had been shot from under him, but he had not been harmed. He told them: *“By the miraculous care of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human expectation.”*

Fifteen years later, in 1770 -- The old Indian chief having heard that Washington had come back to those woods, traveled a long way just to meet with him.

He sat down with Washington, and face-to-face over a council fire, the chief told Washington that he had been a leader in that battle fifteen years earlier, and that he had instructed his braves to single out all the officers and shoot them down. Washington had been singled out, and the chief explained that he personally had shot at Washington seventeen different times, but without effect. Believing Washington to be under the care of the Great Spirit, the chief instructed his braves to cease firing at him. He then told Washington:

“I have traveled a long and weary path that I might see the young warrior of the great battle...I am come to pay homage to the man who is the particular favorite of Heaven, and who can never die in battle.” Listen! The Great Spirit protects that man [pointing at Washington], and guides his destinies—he will become the chief of nations, and a people yet unborn will hail him as the founder of a mighty empire.”

Lesson #3 Caesar Rodney

The Midnight Ride of “Who?” ...Why Caesar Rodney, of Course!

Most Americans have heard of the midnight ride of Paul Revere and his fellow patriots in warning the citizens of Lexington-Concord that the British soldiers were coming, but few know about the ride that actually saved the colonies and made a unanimous vote possible for the colonies to seek independence from England.

Caesar Rodney was an important patriot but a man who suffered from poor health. Asthma often made breathing difficult, and gout sometimes left him unable to walk, but worse yet was a skin cancer that plagued him from his youth. It began on his nose then spread to cover one side of his face. Although his family entreated him to go to England for treatment, his dedication to the American cause prevented him from seeking the only possible cure to his disease. He instead chose to cover his disfigured face with a green scarf.

Caesar Rodney was a delegate from Delaware at the Continental Congress in Philadelphia starting May 14, 1776. Fifty-six men attended representing the 13 Colonies, now called states. The President of the Convention was John Hancock.

On June 7, 1776 Richard Henry Lee delegate from Virginia introduced a resolution calling upon the colonies to declare themselves free and independent states. It was agreed that the vote had to be

unanimous before the colonies would take any additional steps toward liberty. The final vote was postponed until some of the delegates could return home for instructions from their states. They agreed to return by July 2, for the official vote.

On July 1 an unofficial vote was taken and it became apparent that there was not going to be a unanimous vote in favor of Independence. Delaware with 3 delegates, Thomas McKean in favor of independence, and George Reed not in favor of independence (yet) were deadlocked 1-1. The third delegate, Caesar Rodney, had returned home to take care of local business. Seeking to break the tie, Thomas McKean dispatched a messenger to get Caesar Rodney to the convention by the next day to break the tie in favor of independence.

The messenger arrived late on the night of July 1 and Caesar Rodney dashed to his barn, saddled his horse and rode the 80 miles to Philadelphia through a night of rain and thunder. He arrived on July 2 in time to cast his vote in favor of independence for Delaware, thus making it unanimous for all 13 colonies to declare themselves free states.

Caesar Rodney wrote his brother a letter dated July 4, 1776 in which he stated, *“I arrived in Congress (tho detained by thunder and rain) in time enough to give my voice in the matter of Independence... We have now got through with the whole of the declaration and ordered it to be printed so that you will soon have the pleasure of seeing it.”*

It is a heroic story of Caesar Rodney weighed down with illness to make his “Midnight Ride” in order to give unanimous vote for Independence.

Lesson #4 or #5

Not Yours To Give

Davy Crockett on The Role Of Government

From: *The Life of Colonel David Crockett* Compiled by: Edward S. Elis (1884)

CitC Instructors – There has been some controversy over the validity of the following story but whether or not all the details are true, the principle is true and was upheld by the Founding Fathers. There is a historical record that supports a similar story - the House considered a bill of relief for the family of a deceased General Brown in April of 1828 and Davy Crockett is on record opposing that bill and offering personal support to the family. You can read the very brief summary of that in the Register of Debates. (Crockett's comments are summarized at the bottom right of the page.) With this Research that does give evidence of the House bills referred to in the story, we will use the story as it has been for many years to help citizens understand the proper role of our elected congressmen. We want to teach students that tax money was not intended to be used by government officials for charities of their choosing. In simple words, tax money “Is not theirs to give.”

In the early days of the Constitution, Congressmen began to consider whether it was appropriate to use tax money for charitable purposes. They learned that it was not constitutional by a speech given by Congressman Davy Crockett.

Davy Crockett encountered one of his constituents, Horatio Bunce, as he was out securing votes for the next election. This common farmer had studied the Constitution as many colonists did at the time of the debates and discussions to ratify the Constitution. Horatio knew that there were no provisions for congress to make charitable donations. He also knew how his representative had voted when a bill giving aid to fire victims had been taken. He explained this to Mr. Crockett and said if he wanted his vote again in the upcoming election he would need to follow the Constitution and not vote in Congress to give for charitable purposes. It was said that this man from Crockett's district proceeded to instruct him on the proper course of action to take.

Congressman Davy Crockett did join the House of Representatives in a vote for relief money for victims of a fire. His constituent, Horatio Bunce, bluntly told Crockett, "*The power of collecting and disbursing money at pleasure is the most dangerous power that can be entrusted to men...*" From this statement, it is apparent that Horatio Bunce understood that civil magistrates must be checked by a higher law than their own, the Constitution. Bunce pointed out that the Constitution did not give Congress the power to award charity. Crockett saw the error of his ways and claimed he was a 'new man'.

When Mr. Crockett returned to congress and another bill came before the House to appropriate money to benefit the widow of a distinguished naval officer. Crockett said, "*Mr. Speaker, We have the right, as individuals, to give away as much of our own money as we please in charity; but as members of Congress we have no right to appropriate a dollar of the public money. I cannot vote for this bill, but I will give one week's pay to the [widow], and if every member of Congress will do the same, it will amount to more than the bill asks.*" He took his seat. The bill was not passed.