

Notes from the Underground

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The Historical Underground

Pop-hibition?

By: Ian Ussery, Student

October is finally here and I for one could not be happier! I think we all know why, right? Say it with me..... Oktoberfest!! Okay, I guess Halloween will work as well. But for me and those of our student body who are able and decide to partake, the winner is Oktoberfest, especially for a bartender such as myself. However, as I rejoice over the thought of spending the money that I don't yet have, I can't help but take notice of a certain current event that strikes me and my sadly empty wallet as a bad idea. Anybody hearing much of a soda ban that was just passed up north? Anyone?

Well, in case you haven't, let me enlighten you. The Mayor of New York and the Board of Health have decided to place a ban on the sale of "sugary drinks" over the size of 16 oz. in order to combat the so-called epidemic known as obesity. Now, keep in mind that, as is usually the case with most laws of this nature, the legislation is not that cut and dry. For instance, the ban only applies to places that are regulated by the city and on drinks that are not "sweetened" by the establishment themselves and, of course, any products that contain 50% or more milk. Yeah, I'm not sure about that last one either.

A great man once said: "Our means should be as pure as our intended ends." - Martin Luther King.

The New York Times has reported that 58% of

New York adults are overweight or obese and that there are 5,800 deaths a year from obesity. All of this results in around \$4 billion dollars in direct medical costs due to this trend. The obesity rate among children and teens was at 20% in 2010. Moreover, 27% of young adults today are too overweight to serve in the military. Problem? Definitely sounds like there is.

But, as another great historical figure once said: "A difference, to be a difference, must make a difference." - Gertrude Stein

Now, let me ask the tough question: can anyone tell me what happened to the United States 93 years ago almost to the date?

The answer is The Volstead Act, or for you non-history buffs reading this out there, also known as alcohol prohibition. This destructive piece of legislation put a dent in US history and had a profound effect on the whole country. Some historians have even argued that it single handedly hastened the growth of the Mafia and organized crime as a whole. I am sure that many of you out there have heard this story, but do you know why this act was put in place, or even when the idea started to grow? Well keep reading ol' Lovers of History, for I am about to enlighten you!

Prohibition at its core was intended to improve, even enoble, the lives of all Americans, to protect individuals, families, and society at large from the effects of alcohol abuse.

Awesome! Right?

Well, maybe not. However, its not the craziest so-called "improvement law" ever; back in 1698, Tsar Peter the Great ordered men to shave their beards in an attempt to dignify Russia!

The "why" part of the question, though, is even more intriguing. Before Prohibition, were you aware of the fact that 15 year olds consumed nearly 7 gallons of pure alcohol a year? Bear in mind that is not like 7 gallons of Corona, it's more like 7 gallons of Everclear, only made at a time when sanitation was still in its infancy! That is 3 times as much as we drink today. Poor

bartenders! Can you imagine a bar full of belligerent 16 year olds? (shudder) Hopefully, now, you can see where I am going with this. Or maybe you don't. Either way, there are very similar philosophies at play here today.

One key difference is that prohibition was brought to light from the religious sector and aided more by the women's suffrage movement instead of the government and science.

Reverend Lyman Beecher was one of the first to preach about the evils of alcohol in 1826, which was almost 100 years before the government got a hold of the idea. Many of the people who supported his efforts were also fighting to get rid of slavery, but their initial impulse regarding the Temperance movement was to urge moderation (Ding, ding, does this sound familiar?) Then, they encouraged others to help one another stop abusing the drug, and finally the movement grew to demanding prohibition outright.

Now, do I think that New York is going to have 10 year olds rolling up on people with toy Tommy guns and saying "see hear, hand over that Big Gulp, see!?" No. However, am I worried that the government might end up making some of the same mistakes as they did with the fiasco related to drinking? Absolutely!

Granted, I think the ends are pure and do honestly hope that people can find the right means to end their obesity; but I also hope that we as a nation learn from the mistakes of our past. A difference can be made if we make history and do not repeat it. October already has one blemish, and I'd hate for it to get worse. Though prohibition did give this month two very iconic costume choices (the 1920's Gangster and flamboyant Flapper girl), let's not forget the problems it plagued us with.



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Tales of the Brothers Grimm

By: Erica Mares, Student



October tends to bring out the people inside of us who love death, violence, and torture, but the love for sad stories of life without happy endings seems to be more a part of certain cultures than others. Life can't always be a fairytale with a happy ending, and the Grimm Brothers understood this concept very well. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were two German brothers who had an interest in folklore and legends, so they wrote a book based on their research. When adapting some of these stories, Disney ignored the sex, torture, and violence. I think the Grimm brothers' versions were more realistic. After all, in life there are always going to be problems, and rarely is there such a thing as happy-ever-after without some griminess. Ever since their collection of fairy tales was published in 1812, the stories have been altered and shaped to fit cultural norms of the period. But the following excerpt from a poem by Anne Sexton provides a condensed version of the original Grimm's story of Cinderella:

Anne Sexton, "(Cinderella)"

*Once,
the wife of a rich man was on her
deathbed.*

*And she said to her daughter
Cinderella:*

*Be devout. Be good. Then I will
smile down from heaven in the
seam of a cloud.*

*The man took another wife who
had two daughters, pretty enough
but with hearts like blackjacks.
Cinderella was their maid.*

*She slept on the sooty hearth each
night and walked around looking
like Al Jolson.*

*Her father brought presents home
from town,
jewels and gowns for the other
women but the twig of a tree for
Cinderella.*

*She planted that twig on her moth-
er's grave, and it grew to a tree
where a white dove sat.*

*Whenever she wished for anything,
the dove would drop it like an egg*

*upon the ground.
The bird is important, my dears, so
heed him.*

*Next came the ball, as you all
know.*

It was a marriage market.

*The prince was looking for a wife.
All but Cinderella were preparing
and gussying up for the event.
Cinderella begged to go too.*

*Her stepmother threw a dish of
lentils into the cinders and said:
Pick them up in an hour and you
shall go.*

*The white dove brought all his
friends;
all the warm wings of the father-
land came,
and picked up the lentils in a jiffy.*

*No, Cinderella, said the stepmoth-
er, you have no clothes and cannot
dance.*

That's the way with stepmothers.

Continue reading on page 3.....

Rusted By Time: The Bayard Rustin Story

By: Caleb Hinojos, Student

It is interesting to see what historians determine to be chronicled as history. What may be considered historically vital to some may be ignored by another because of personal bias or experience. Throughout my time as a student in the American system of education, one person that has never been given enough attention in the Civil Rights era is Bayard (bye-urd) Rustin. Many claim Rustin was written out of the historical narrative because he was a homosexual, and in the 1950s and 60s, this would have been too much for the general public to accept. Sadly, he is still relatively unknown.

The origin of Bayard's non-violent direct action began in the early 1940s when he joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation. While in this group he learned about Gandhi and how his implementation of this practice had been utilized to create change in South Africa and India. Rustin took trips to Africa and India to gain knowledge on the techniques that he would later incorporate into the American civil rights struggle. In 1942, while in Nashville Tennessee, Rustin boarded a bus and sat in the front. After being told to move, he politely refused on the grounds that the law was unjust. He was beaten and taken to speak with the district attorney, but his passive resistance to this form of abuse led to the charges being dropped. This was

a major moment for Rustin because it affirmed that the technique of passive resistance worked. In 1955, Rustin came in contact with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for the first time. Soon after he would become one of King's personal advisors. In that same year, Rustin helped King develop a plan of attack in order to demonstrate against the racial injustices taking place in the south, particularly in Montgomery, Alabama. This plan would lead to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which involved 381 days of African-Americans refusing to ride city buses until they altered their discriminatory and demeaning policies. The Supreme Court eventually ruled that segregation on public transit was unconstitutional.

In the following years, Rustin actively set up marches and demonstrations all over the world calling for social justice and world peace. After 1960, his relationship with King was minimized due to Adam Clayton Powell and his accusations. That year, at the Democratic National Convention, there was supposed to be an activist march, but Powell blackmailed King by threatening to expose a homosexual relationship between King and Rustin. King withdrew. Even though these accusations were false, King felt that it would not be good attention for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Afterwards, Rustin made his way around the world to organize events that halted social injustices. However, after his trips to Africa in 1961 and 1962, his drive to pursue these endeavors dwindled greatly. In the summer of 1963, A. Phillip Randolph contacted Rustin and told him that he wanted him to be the deputy director for the March on Washington. Upon receiving this position, he underwent preparation for the Civil Rights Movement's biggest and most influential demonstration. His meticulous planning and staging of the Lincoln Memorial culminated in 250,000 activists occupying the mall in Washington D.C. The movement was so large that no one in the city, or the world, could ignore it. After this success, he began speaking out against



other social concerns dealing with labor unions and gay rights, which continued until 1987 when he passed away due to cardiac arrest.

Historical Book Review: *The Purity Myth*

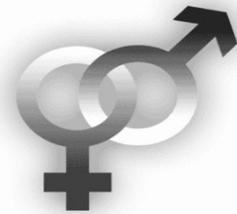
Here is a question to ponder: whom does our sex-obsessed society affect more? Girls or boys?

When feminist blogger Jessica Valenti wrote her book, *The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession With Virginity Is Hurting Young Women*, she examined the various ways in which our society deals with sex and young women. On one extreme end of the spectrum, we have sexual exploitations of women in the media, including the *Girls Gone Wild* franchise, modeling advertisements, and music videos; on the other end, we have purity balls (prom-like events in which young women make virginity pledges to their fathers), abstinence-only education, and media sensations over young, attractive female celebrities pledging abstinence. To sum it up, this is a society that largely values women for their sexuality, or lack thereof.

In her book, Valenti makes the case that these phenomena send harmful messages to young women: messages that say their moral integrity depends solely on whether or not they have had sex, and that one could either be chaste, or be a slut, with no in-between. She also asserts that our current abstinence-only curricula are problematic because they often portray inaccurate information about sexuality and contraception, and often rely on outdated conceptions of gender and sexuality regarding men and women, such as women being naturally disinclined to initiate and enjoy sexual activity, and men being vicious horndogs who want sex all the time.

This book is written from a feminist, socially

liberal viewpoint, but its message I think is valuable to everyone regardless of their political or social leanings. Valenti proposes that we start valuing people based on their character, compassion, humanity, ethics, worldview, and intelligence, and not by how many times we have orgasmed.



Tales of the Brothers Grimm Cont . . .

*Cinderella went to the tree at the grave,
and cried forth like a gospel singer:
Mama! Mama! My turtledove,
Send me to the prince's ball!
The bird dropped down a golden dress,
and delicate little slippers.
Rather a large package for a simple bird.
So she went. Which is no surprise.
Her stepmother and sisters didn't recognize, her without her cinder face,
And the prince took her hand on the spot,
And danced with no other the whole day.*

*As nightfall came she thought she'd better get home. The prince walked her home and she disappeared into the pigeon house and although the prince took an axe and broke it open she was gone. Back to her cinders.
These events repeated themselves for three days.
However on the third day the prince covered the palace steps with cobbler's wax and Cinderella's gold shoe stuck*

*upon it.
Now he would find whom the shoe fit,
And find his strange dancing girl for keeps.
He went to their house and the two sisters were delighted because they had lovely feet.
The eldest went into a room to try the slipper on,
But her big toe got in the way so she simply sliced it off and put on the slipper.
The prince rode away with her until the white dove told him to look at the blood pouring forth.
That is the way with amputations. They just don't heal up like a wish.
The other sister cut off her heel but the blood told as blood will.
The prince was getting tired.
He began to feel like a shoe salesman.
But he gave it one last try.
This time Cinderella fit into the shoe like a love letter into its envelope.
At the wedding ceremony the two sisters came to curry favor and the white dove pecked their eyes out.
Two hollow spots were left like soup spoons.*

Cinderella and the prince lived, they say, happily ever after, like two dolls in a museum case never bothered by diapers or dust, never arguing over the timing of an egg, never telling the same story twice, never getting a middle-aged spread, their darling smiles pasted on for eternity.

There are so many other stories in the Grimm's Brothers collection, some of which are much more gruesome than this. Some even have disturbing images that help make the point very clear: everything does not always end up so nice and perfect. Especially in our society, where we love to make things seem so nice and perfect, this fact can sometime be quite surprising.

***“[I]n life
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“HISTORY IS OUR WEAPON OF CHOICE”



Join Us: Fridays/1 p.m./ESEE 1224

Contact: Bradley.borougerdi@tccd.edu



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Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

We are proud to present to you our October issue of *Notes from the Underground*. In honor of LGBT Month, we have several articles that deal with issues of sexual orientation and cultural perceptions relating to gender and sexuality. This issue also marks a very special milestone. At the beginning of this academic year, members of The Historical Underground and the sponsors of the organization set a goal to make the newsletter even more student-centric. Well, the students have succeeded. Every single article in this newsletter is student-written! Every month it seems we have a nice blend of veteran members and newer members contributing to the newsletter, and – as editors – we could not be any more proud of our members’ dedication and hard work throughout this year.

The Historical Underground continues to be active on and off campus. Members attended the recent talk by historian Gene Rhea Tucker regarding his new book *Oysters, Macaroni, & Beer: Thurber, Texas, and the Company Store* (Texas Tech University Press, 2012) in the Southeast Library. John D. Lundberg, who teaches at Southeast, will be giving a talk on November 8 in the Library about his prize-winning new book, *Granbury’s Texas Brigade: Diehard Western Confederates* (LSU Press, 2012). Please come out and support John! Our thanks go out to Tracey Minzenmayer, James Foreman, and Jo Klemm for helping to organize these events! On a less academic note, one of our editors, Bradley J Borougerdi, recently donated the money for the construction of a garden at the Arlington Classics Academy in Arlington. Several members (Caleb Hinojos, Mathew Shaw, Hannah Ward, Madiina Ssali, and Eric Salas) volunteered to construct the garden with the help of members of the greater Arlington community, and Kevin Cooke, a 3rd grade science teacher at the Academy. Check out our Facebook page to see our members helping to make our community a bit more environmentally friendly and sustainable!

Next month is Native American History Month, and we hope to have several articles to develop that theme. Additionally, Kallie and Greg Kosc will be making a presentation in recognition of Native American History Month on November 15 in the North Ballroom. Lastly, thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter, and if you are interested in joining The Historical Underground, we are holding meetings every Friday from 1-2 p.m. in room 1224.

~ Bradley J Borougerdi, Greg Kosc, & Eric Salas