

MAKING AN ACCURATE AMERICAN HISTORY



A Work that Gives Years of Labor to the Minutest Details

By Leigh Mitchell Hodges

MILLIONS of persons have seen portraits of Henry Hudson, who discovered the river bearing his name. At least, they think they have! But they have not. For no authentic likeness of him has yet been found anywhere.

The same is true of Champlain and Edward Braddock, and many another historical character of earlier times, whose supposed likenesses are common enough in textbooks and histories.

Thousands of school children have learned that the first raising of the Stars and Stripes in battle was on August 2, 1777, when, as a matter of fact, the correct date of this important event is August 3, 1777. The flag in question was not even made until the morning of this latter day!

Multitudes have read how Columbus, on his return to Spain, cast anchor in the port of Palos on Friday, March 14, 1493, and yet there never was such a date as Friday, March 14, 1493! It was Friday, March 15.

With many persons it is an historical fact that the immortal encounter between the Bon Homme Richard and the Serapis took place off the coast of Flamborough Head, SCOTLAND, on the evening of September 25, 1779, and that the contest was waged through "the long hours of the night," whereas, in truth, it was off England, on September 23, and the fight was finished by 10.30 P. M.

These and numerous other corrections of important historical facts which have long been accepted as final are the result of a desire for accuracy which is the ruling passion in the life of a certain man in Cleveland, Ohio.

And, if this man's dearest wish be granted him before another Man with a Scythe comes along, he shall have reared as his monument a history of our own country from its very beginnings which will be as nearly accurate as is humanly possible.

CHARLES WILLIAM BURROWS was a young New Englander with a West Point training when he went to the thriving city of Cleveland years ago, and he was poor. Today he is the head of a big publishing house in Tom Johnson's town, and already famous as one of two men who are making over our history according to its FACTS, and not the fancies, more or less correct, with which most historians have contented themselves.

And in this great and interesting task, to which he is devoting his time and his fortune with all the enthusiasm of a boy on circus day, he is constantly tripping over the mistakes made by less careful chroniclers of the past; mistakes such as those just cited.

Twenty-one years ago he conceived the idea, which was with him a patriotic purpose, of producing an accurate history of the United States and its people from the earliest records to the present time. He saw in his mind a row of eight or ten octavo volumes which would, in the course of a few years, realize his ambition.

Too busy to assume the writing thereof, he sought a scribe to co-operate with him, and selected his friend and fellow-townsmen, Elroy McKendree Avery, already well known as an author and scholar. The two went over the preliminary plans for the vast work and agreed that it would be at least a matter of four years. At the end of four years not even the first volume had appeared, though both men had been working away steadily and enthusiastically. At the end of ten years it was the same. Now, at the end of twenty-one years, four volumes have come from the press, and the total number to be issued has been increased to fifteen. So prodigious of growth is history of this sort when once it is taken in hand!

And back of the quartet of tomes that are, and the remaining eleven in various stages of preparation, are scores of experiences romantic enough to form foundations for so-called works of fiction.

EXHAUSTIVE TASKS

Think of spending several years of time and much good money to make sure of the fact that no genuine likeness of Champlain exists! Think of traveling thousands of miles to get first-hand evidence that the so-called first printed picture of the American bison was NOT the first! Think of working nights and enlisting the assistance of five famous authorities to secure a perfect chart of the movements of one warship in a famous sea.

Yet these are only samples of what these two men, lately joined by Dr. Paul Leland Haworth, have done in their labor of love, for such it really is. Not content with such access as they themselves had to the libraries, museums and universities of the world, they, from time to time, called to aid them the foremost of authorities on matters in hand. Even then, not content to risk accuracy in any degree, they delved into odd and half-forgotten nooks and corners to unearth the original documents and data upon which these authorities based their decrees.

"And yet, we have not attained absolute accuracy in every instance," said Mr. Burrows to me the other day. "We have gone as far as we could; but in some cases we have been compelled to rest with what might best be termed 'hearsay' evidence, even though it be the highest order of hearsay, and one commonly accepted by historians as final."

Then he smiled, and showed me a big bundle of letters of different shapes and colors. "These are acknowledgments from historians whom we have corrected," he said. "Whenever we found evidence that a historian was wrong, we communicated with him at once, and our proofs have usually been accepted with good grace and gratitude. Because of them many a book long adjudged standard has had to



add new notes, or even be put through a 'revised edition.'"

Especially notable is the case of the first raising of the Stars and Stripes in battle, which instance will serve to illustrate the methods of these historians of a new sort.

"In his 'History of the Flag of the United States of America' Preble gave the date of its first use in action as August 2, 1777, and the place as Fort Stanwix, N. Y., while so eminent a historian as John Fiske gave August 6 as the date and Oriskany, N. Y., as the place," says Mr. Burrows. "Aside from these, certain local historians claimed the honor for Cooch's Bridge, Del., on September 3, insisting that the flag raised at Fort Stanwix was an improvised rather than a regularly manufactured one."

"Both Preble and Fiske are authorities, and, in the main, worthy of full confidence. The correct date for the first raising of the flag in battle, however, is Sunday, August 3, 1777, and, as Preble gives it, Fort Stanwix was the place."

"This fort stood where Rome, N. Y., now is, on the portage between the headwaters of the Mohawk, running east to the Hudson, and of Wood creek, running west to Oneida lake, to Oswego river and Lake Ontario, at Oswego, N. Y. This fort was defended in the summer of 1777 by Colonel Peter Gansevoort in command of a regiment of New York colonial troops, consisting of eight companies."

"In our researches we came upon two journals kept by officers of Gansevoort's regiment, one that of Ensign William Colebreath and the other that of Captain Abraham Swartwout—the latter being privately printed in 1889 in an edition of 100 copies, none of which was offered for sale."

"In these journals it is plainly shown that the knowledge of the enactment of the flag statute by Congress on August 3, 1777, got to Albany, N. Y., on the 11th of July, 1777, and that Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Willett, commanding some troops, 200 in number, started on the same day to proceed up the Mohawk river in bateaux, carrying to the garrison supplies, ammunition and provisions and his men as reinforcement."

"Their arrival at Fort Stanwix did not occur until 5 o'clock on the afternoon of Saturday, which was the 2d of August. A great deal of enthusiasm was displayed, and during Sunday forenoon an improvised flag, in accordance with the new statutes, was prepared. The only piece of blue cloth to be found in the garrison was the blue cloth military cloak of Captain Swartwout, which he sacrificed for the occasion, and, after the flag had been prepared, it was flown on the northeast bastion and a cannon leveled and fired at the enemy, who had, in the meantime, appeared in force before the place."

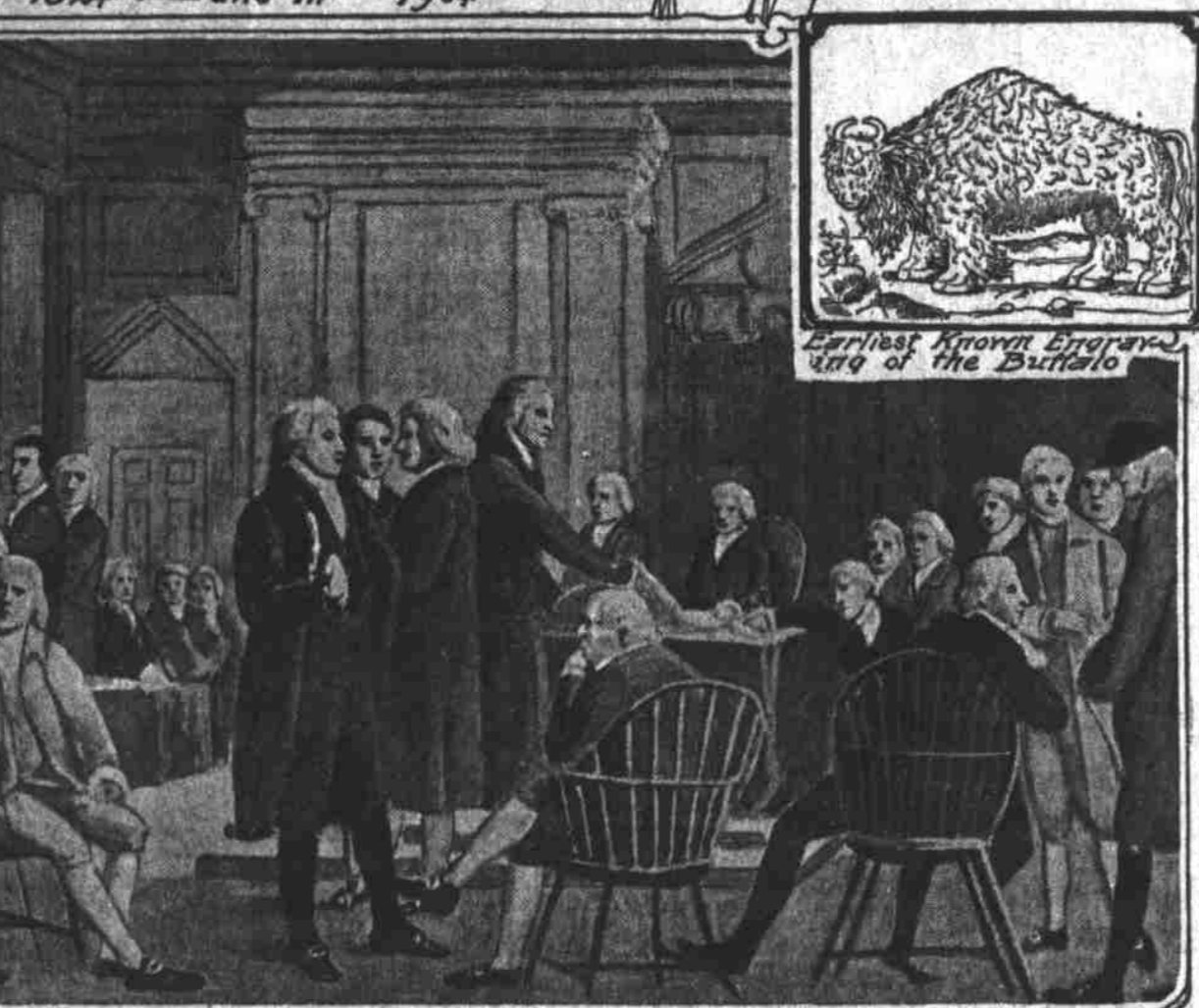
And as a further and even more striking example of the time and labor devoted to the verification of details, let me cite another instance as told me by this indefatigable seeker after historical certainties:

"The surrender of Fort William Henry, on the shores of Lake George, occurred, as you know, on the morning of August 9, 1757. The surrender was made by Lieutenant Colonel Monro. In no history known to us, though we have carefully gone through thirty standard works on the subject, is Monro's first name given. It was George."

"Moreover, the spelling of his last name is given in at least eight ways—Monro, Monroe, Monrow, Munro, Munroe, Munrow, etc.—and he is often referred to as 'Colonel.' We, therefore, attempted to secure correct data as to his first name, correct spelling and correct rank. For eighteen months we corresponded with all the great archival libraries of the world, seeking this information. Search was also made in the archives of the French Department de la Guerre, French Rolls and Records Office, English Army Coun-

cil, English War Office and the English Rolls and Records Office, to find any original document signed by him.

"Finally there was discovered, through the kindly aid of our embassy in London and the English Army



"The Congress Voting Independence" by F. H. C. Selected for its Historical Accuracy.

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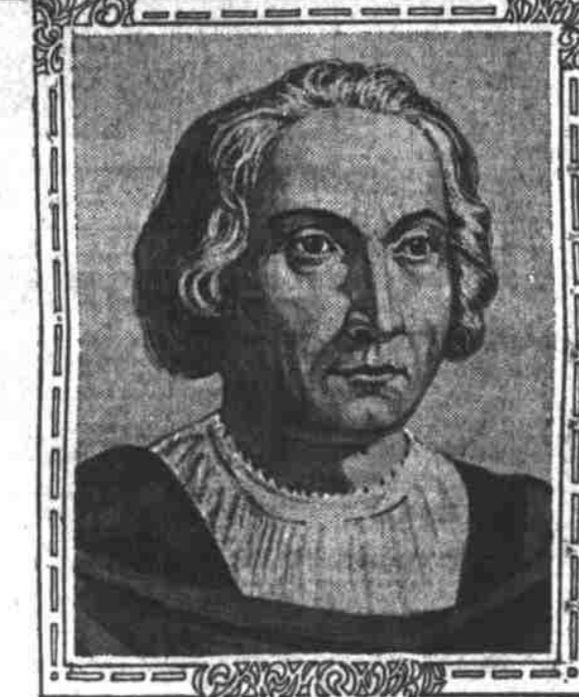
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Earliest Known Engraving of the Buffalo



Portrait and Signature of Columbus From Painting in Marine Museum at Madrid

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Council, by the keeper of the rolls and records in Ireland, an authenticated letter of Monro, of September 17, 1753, recommending the promotion of an officer, and from this was facsimiled, on tracing cloth, his signature, which has been engraved for reproduction in Avery's history.

"In addition, it was discovered that Monro was lieutenant colonel of the Thirty-fifth Fusiliers, so an examination was made of the records of the two battalions of the Royal Sussex Regiment, of England, this being the name borne today by that regiment. When finally obtained, it may be of interest to know that the tracing came to me as a Christmas gift. The letter now in my possession, bearing the desired information and tracing, left the office of our embassy in London on December 13, 1904; reached New York December 23, and was distributed in Cleveland in the last mail of Saturday afternoon, December 24, 1904, the day before Christmas, and, needless to say, after a search extending over a year and a half, was received as a highly valued Christmas gift."

The huge history will be full of facsimile signatures of the great ones who pass through its pages, and in many instances these will be the first genuine reproductions of the sort ever made public, for here, as in other ways, we have all these years been accepting certain bits of chirography as original with certain men, when, in fact, their handwriting was vastly different.

To get at such signatures has often been a ticklish task, requiring the aid of diplomats in gaining access to documents of priceless worth, which are kept hid in the secret places of the Old World. But such determination as has been displayed by Mr. Burrows and Dr. Avery usually wins, and thus far they have met no obstacle beyond its power.

MASTERPIECE OF WRITING

As to the literary excellence of the work, the four volumes now off the press proclaim it a masterpiece of historical writing. Dr. Avery has the rare ability of making a few words say a great deal, as witness this description of the discovery of America, from the first volume:

"In his journal, Columbus says that on this Thursday they encountered a heavier sea than they had met with before on the whole voyage; and that 'after sunset they sailed twelve miles an hour until two hours after midnight, going ninety miles.' When, at 2 o'clock in the morning, Rodrigo de Triana sighted land two leagues distant (its direction from the ship is not recorded), the mariners 'took in sail and remained under square sail, lying to till day.'"

"With what impatience the dawn must have been awaited! Who can comprehend the emotions of Columbus in those hours? The wisdom and the sublimity, the persistence and the enthusiasm that for eighteen years had kept him from despair, had guided him to triumph—triumph over the sneers of monks and scoffs of sages, triumph over the treachery and doublet of monarchs, triumph over the errors of ages and the superstitions of millions, a triumph that revealed the great mystery of the ocean and realized the visions of a lifetime."

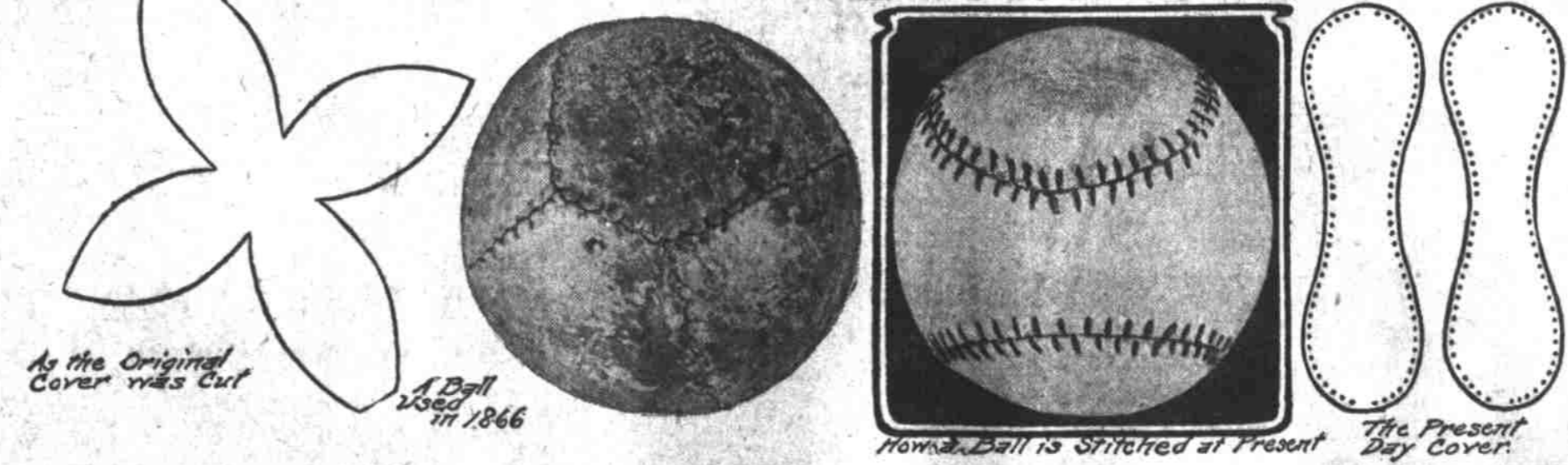
"There before him in the gloom of early morning lay the Indies, with all the opulence and splendor of her palaces and cities. There in peaceful slumber lay the countless millions to whom he had come as the messenger of the glad tidings of salvation. He thought that he had discovered a new route to India. He knew not, nor did he ever know, that he had found a world, and not a way. He had sailed upon the unknown sea to seek the El Dorado of wealth and power, and found instead the battlefield of liberty."

Each volume thus far produced has been written and rewritten, and no manuscript has been allowed to reach the printers until the best of authorities on the subjects included therein have had it in hand for revision and possible correction. In this way it is hoped to get at and preserve the truths of our history for all time, and to sanction these truths the wide world has been ransacked for nearly a quarter of a century, and neither of the men interested can say how much longer it will take to complete the task.

Already Mr. Burrows has spent a fair fortune—nearly \$200,000—in the acquisition and preparation of the facts, but this does not seem to bother him in the least.

"Of course, I do not expect to get it back," he says, "but I shall be fully repaid if I am allowed to live long enough to see the work finished as Dr. Avery and I have planned it."

THE MYSTERY OF THE BASEBALL COVER



LOOK at it—the baseball of today! It is perfectly spherical. The seams of its cover present the only perfect solution of one of the most difficult problems in the application of geometry. The sewing of the seams presents the only solution of a problem equally difficult, yet arrived at by the dogged, stubborn slogging of repeated experiment.

It has saved you fortunes; it has cost you for-

tunes. It has flung away one vast fortune and it is making other fortunes.

The modern baseball is a miracle of mathematics, a prodigy of patience, a triumph of science which the nation has made its work and its play, its world-famed industry and its world-famed relaxation.

And it bids fair, also, to be the national mystery, the eternal enigma, more dubious than the

riddle of the Sphinx, more debatable than the authorship of the Junius letters, more puzzling than "The Breadwinners"—more unsolvable, even, than the origin of "Beautiful Snow."

For who invented the double figure 8 cover now universally in use? That is the great mystery of baseball manufacture. The man who invented the modern cover and neglected to patent it missed a great fortune.

It is one of the two gilded trophy balls that remain out of the bushel they used to treasure. One of those balls bears the glorious legend, "Athletics vs. West Philadelphia, July—1866, 4 to 13." The other harks back another classic year: "Athletics vs. Union of Morrisania, August 3, '55; 25 to 15."

"The old ball used to cost us \$2," said Mr. Reach, in one of his vain efforts recently, just before he went to his Adirondack camp for the summer, to solve the baseball's mystery.

"There were two manufacturers with reputations

when I began to play ball back in the fifties—Harvey Ross, of Brooklyn, and John Van Horn, of New York city. The cover was made of horsehide then, as now. Ross was a member of the famous old Atlantic club, and they used the Ross ball. Van Horn belonged to the Union of Morrisania, and they used the Van Horn ball.

"Both were good balls, as well made as man could make them in that day. Their one weak spot was where the ends of the cover were stitched together; it was there that the cover ripped during a hard game, and for the batsman was a bitter thing to have runs made.

"Even when I went into business, in '58, those two were the standard balls. When the new ball did appear, it was a fortune made for the man who invented it, and did not patent it—it did not at first spring into popularity. The reputation of the Ross ball was so firmly fixed. But gradually the absolute perfection of the new design, combining such simplicity with such maximum of strength, compelled the total abandonment of the old form. The figure 8, as we call the modern cover, became the standard recognized the country over."

To Ben Shibe, indomitable slogger at any problem, undertakes, belongs the credit of the final victory over the rebellious matter that enters into the modern cover of the baseball. "Al" Kosch was in the sporting goods business in Philadelphia, while Shibe was a manufacturer from 1864. In 1881 the two formed their partnership, mutually advantageous as giving Kosch an interest in the control of an excellent manufacturing business and Shibe a partnership in a leading sales concern.

Shibe, at the time, was deep in the mysteries of the modern ball cover, for the inventor—that great unknown, learned mathematician or untaught, inspired genius—had not perfected his wondrous scheme until Shibe, in 1884, a ball player, who had bought the queer novelty in some shop gave his stray sample to Shibe, and that expert of the whirling sphere comprehended at first glance the marvel that had been wrought. Yet when he came to make it—and for a long time he did make it—and even while he sold it with ever-increasing success and profit, he was dissatisfied.

OLD COVER LACKED SMOOTHNESS

Perfect as was the design, it never worked out perfectly in the stitching. Somewhere—usually where the tips of one "w" were fitted on either side of the waist of the other, the stitches always "drew," calling for the nimble skill of workmen in the adjustment of the cover, yet never making the absolute smoothness which insured protection to the full strength of the hide.

Two years after the partnership was formed, Shibe struggled with that vexatious problem, trying, trying, measuring, designing—all in vain. Just what would not give it up; and, at last, by dint of sheer, unconquerable pluck and patience, he discovered that the nature of the sphere demanded that the stitches at the end of the "w" if they were to fit perfectly with the stitches in the waist they must be more numerous and more closely grouped in a steadily decreasing space of separation, than the others. He worked it out to the last elaborate stitch of the 116 stitches. There was when the Columbus of the new hemisphere had been found, he took a patent on it in 1886.

ONE sporting goods firm alone manufactures 1600 dozen standard baseballs every working day of the year. Any one can calculate the millions in the twelvemonth; and any one can count the millions of dollars that total output brings—the best spent millions any people ever paid for the health that comes of honest outdoor sport.

Two members of the firm of A. J. Reach & Co. linger on, hearty as the youngest of them, from the days when professional ball players were not and the game was strictly a gentleman amateurs' game. They are "Al"

Reach and "Ben" Shibe. It is an old-fashioned partnership, where the partners are cronies, with the good old times constantly recalled to cheer the good new times and the victories of youth revived to push the pulses of benighted age. And always the cronies chat ends thus: "Ben, I wonder whether we'll ever find out who it was made the first real ball?"

"Al, there isn't a man alive to tell the world the name to put on his monument."

That four-leaf clover thing, among the illustrations, is the cover of the old-time baseball; and that sphere with the straight line of stitching across the top, where