

December 25, 1999

O. Amer Pre

Ladies & Gentlemen of C-SPAN:

I have just spent the past 4 weeks enjoying your refresher course in American History - the Presidents series. For the first time since being in school 50 yrs. ago, I can now recite the chronology of the presidency from Washington to Clinton. Thank you for reeducating me in that regard. Until now I could never keep straight those dates about 1820-1860. Thank you for setting me straight again.

That being said, I was greatly disappointed at the omission of some significant and important facts & events pertinent to a few of the Presidents lives.

First - Andrew Jackson:

1. Absolutely no mention of the fact that he was the first territorial governor of Florida. In 1821 he organized the first 3 counties in the territory. Why do you think the village of Cow Ford renamed itself JACKSONVILLE? He resided in St. Augustine during his tenure there. I can't believe Dr. Remini didn't mention this fact, as it was much better training for the presidency than any of his abbreviated terms in Congress.

2. He commissioned the 1832 Walker Expedition; the first legal entry by Americans into Mexican California, actually possessing Passports, and the first Americans to discover Yosemite valley while enroute on westbound journey.

3. That Chicago, which would become in a few short decades the nation's second largest city, was founded in 1833 "on his watch" another DRIBBLET for Remini, since he lives there.

I tried several times to phone this information in to you during the programs but never got through.

Second:

William H. Harrison was territorial governor of the "Indiana" territory when Ft. Dearborn was built at what would later grow into Chicago. The Harrison there was massacred by Indians in 1801 and the Fort reestablished in 1804. Why no mention of that significant event within his jurisdiction as territorial governor?

Third:

Ulysses Grant signed the 1872 mining act, and also established Yellowstone as our first national Park. No mention of either achievements in your program on him. The mining act was a big impetus to our industrial growth, in spite of its pollution legacy that we're still dealing with today. I'd say - on balance - the pollution was worth it in the long term. It lifted us out of the mud and into the heavens in less than a century - the greatest century in human history for technological progress.

Finally - the series has provoked more questions in my mind than it answered. I've concluded that we haven't had any "bad presidents", just some who were least effective than others due to circumstances beyond their control in most cases. There is no one single "greatest president" due to the vast differences between the eras in which they lived. Also it is too early to judge a sitting or recent president. It takes time for policies to either bear good fruit or rotten fruit. So much for the Presidents!

I'd like to see you do a 50 week series on how our various state boundaries evolved to their present configuration. Considering that so many of them are illogical and downright "goofy" I think it would be very interesting to know how they got that way, and who, what, when and how they were eventually determined. Especially all of those with "pan handles" that don't make any geographical sense at all. W. Va. looks like a Pina Colada in a pineapple with its finger up Pennsylvania's rear. And why does Mo. have that little boat hull between Tenn. & Ark.? I am the only one in the nation that's curious or cares about such things? Sincerely yours,