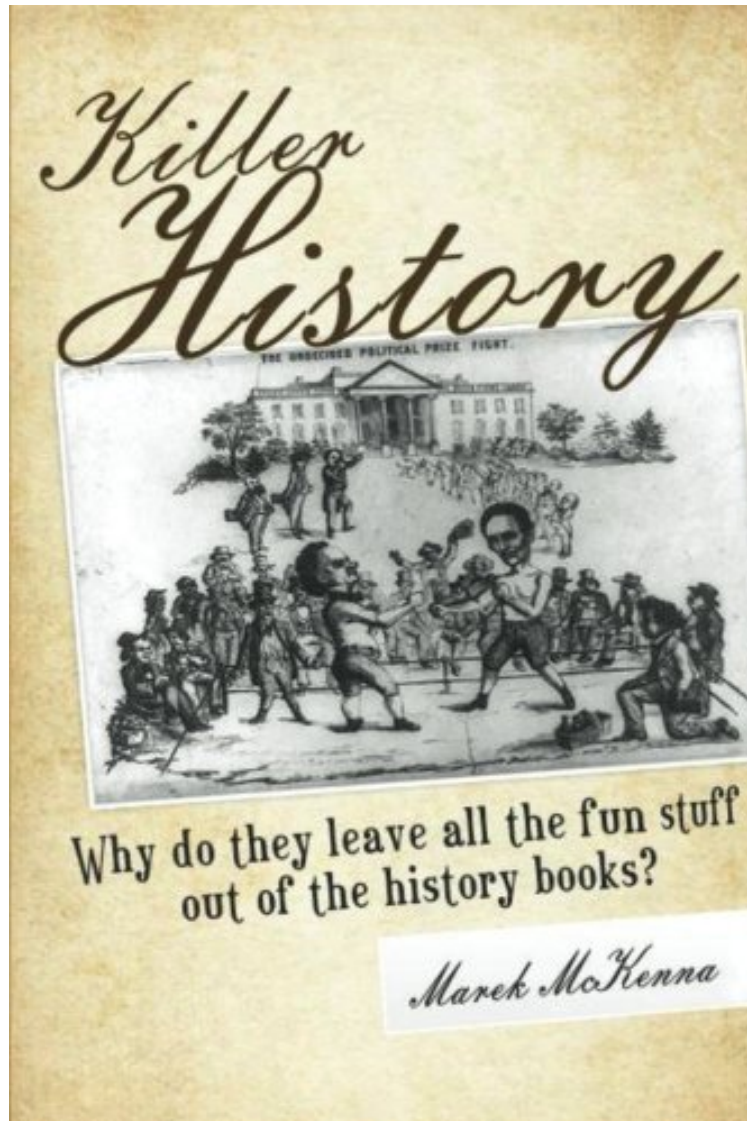


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Killer History: Why do they leave all the fun stuff out of the history books (Volume 1)

Marek McKenna

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Marek McKenna : Killer History: Why do they leave all the fun stuff out of the history books (Volume 1)
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Killer History: Why do they leave all the fun stuff out of the history books (Volume 1):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Two StarsBy dutchNot very interesting19 of 21 people found the following review helpful. First-draft material: If you love well-crafted writing, look elsewhereBy TCR puzzlerThe

review by A. Abbondante titled "Poorly edited, sometimes offensive"

(http://www..com/review/R2KEE55A574CE2/ref=cm_cr_pr_viewpnt#R2KEE55A574CE2) is on target. I am 81 pages into the book, and I'm putting it down. I can read no more. I teach college writing, but I'm not at all a reading snob. I pick up fun novels (for instance, Terry Pratchett's Discworld novels and Helen Fielding's Bridget Jones' Diary) and nonfiction (such as Elizabeth Gilbert's Eat, Pray, Love). I fully enjoy them. Such works are the staple of my pleasure reading. I appreciate writing that is conversational and engaging rather than academic. I had hoped to find a treasure in this book. Yes, McKenna's work is conversational, but that strategy would be effective only if he had a command of written English or if he employed a good editor. I feel like I'm reading a rough draft of a freshman essay, and the reading is painful. Rather than just repeat Abbondante's solid critique, I'll offer a few concrete examples of the writing problems that are likely to make readers who appreciate a good book put this book in their discard piles. Here are three short examples I pulled from many, many of the problems. "I am going to spare you all the juicy details of the illicit language in the letters" (p. 30). Does he mean explicit language? Or does he mean illegal language, which is what he has written? "Gilles de Rais was a fifteen-century French nobleman" (p. 11). An editor would have caught the need to change "fifteen" to "fifteenth," and McKenna has numerous typos throughout the work. "It was a good think for the American revolutionary caused that Adams did not have business acumen" (p. 35). Proofread, please. Pretty please. Are you ready for a long, painful-to-read example? "While it is so easy to look at this devastating event and say sure if I was in that position I would hold up my hands and shout as loudly as possible, 'I have had enough.' This sort of reaction seems logical when faced with the most destructive bomb ever built was just unleashed on your country and you have no way of fighting back against it. Oh heck yeah, I am throwing in the towel. That is not what happened on August 7, 8, and 9, 1945" (p. 56). In my own classrooms, I don't critique conversational language used in discussions. Spoken English, unless it is scripted, usually isn't error free because speakers' thoughts shift mid-sentence. But I don't expect a book to read this way. I don't mind the occasional problem, the once-in-a-while typo, but I don't expect page after page of freshman mistakes. You don't need to know the nuances of grammar--to know what a clause or modifier is--to appreciate good writing or recognize bad writing. For those who are curious, though, I'll explain one of several writing problems in the longer passage above. McKenna starts the paragraph with a dependent clause--an introductory part of the sentence that needs another part, the independent clause, to complete it--and doesn't get to the independent clause until the fifth sentence in. In other words, people usually write, "While it is easy . . . , that is not what happened . . ." all as one sentence. The second part completes the first. Imagine someone telling you a story and stopping after the "while" part. You would ask, "And then?" Also, the sentence that begins with "This sort of reaction" is awkward; I could go into why, but he's not my student, and I don't want to bore you. The poor writing is hard to follow. If you're a reader, you'll recognize it too, no matter your profession and expertise. And frankly, if someone can't write effectively, I begin to question the content. I had hoped for more, but McKenna's work disappointed me. If you haven't already read Abbondante's review, please do: Abbondante deftly addresses other problems with the book too. labels this book as volume 1. I hope McKenna corrects the problems for a second edition before he writes volume 2. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Why can't liberal academic demagogues shake it? By George Scott I think they call it "false consensus effect", through amongst academics that description may faulted, given their overall delusional leanings. Cleverly written, if you can stomach the slant, however. One passage claimed Hillary to be the only "viable" female presidential candidate in history. Nauseating, but humorous, given the source.

Killer History provides a funny and irreverent look at the past. We explore the more human side of the historical events and history makers. Killer history examines how excessive presidential drinking nearly caused World War III, a mass murderer's trial that was too obscene for Jesus, the scandals of the Grant Administration, the baby daddy scandal that did not sink a US presidential election.

About the Author Marek McKenna has made history fun and entertaining for students for the past decade. He is a graduate of the University of Iowa and lives in the woods of North Carolina with his co-conspirator Kim and dog Elliot. He facilitates undergraduate history courses at the University of Phoenix. You can find him online at: <http://killerhistory.com> <http://marekmckenna.com> <http://www.youtube.com/killerhistory>. Follow him on <http://twitter.com/killerhistory>.