

## ***Bill Bennett's Recommended Places to Visit & Books to Read***

*In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, USA TODAY asked Bill Bennett for his list of 10 places to visit to re-instill a sense of patriotism and knowledge of America. Below are the excerpts from that story, printed in the October 11, 2001 issue of USA TODAY:*

Patriotism -- that indefinable blend of pride, love of country, reverence, a sense of being connected and an awareness of duty and responsibility. For many Americans, it was a faintly felt, even anachronistic emotion before Sept. 11. Patriots were people in history books. But the feeling has since swept the nation, and patriotism, in one of its purest forms, can be evoked by a historic or symbolic place. "You go there," says William Bennett, "and you say, 'Once upon a time.' All of these places have a once-upon-a-time quality." The editor of such books as *Our Sacred Honor*, *The Children's Book of America* and *The Children's Book of Heroes*, Bennett offers USA TODAY's Gregg Zoroya symbolic places to feel patriotic.

### Marine Corps War Memorial Washington, D.C.

The 32-foot statue of five Marines and a Navy corpsman raising the American flag atop Mount Suribachi during the battle for Iwo Jima is based on the famous 1945 photograph. "It's an incredible place, filled with memories and significance. "

### Pikes Peak Colorado

With its commanding location in the Rocky Mountains' Front Range, 14,110-foot Pikes Peak offers a view that is said to be the inspiration for Katharine Lee Bates when she wrote *America the Beautiful* in 1893. "Part of our patriotism is a belief that we are specially blessed with the beauty of this country."

### Independence Hall Philadelphia, PA

In the Assembly Room here, the Declaration of Independence was issued, our flag's design approved and the Constitution drafted. "De Tocqueville said the American Revolution was established by thought and reflection, not by force. And this is where it happened."

### Statue of Liberty

New York City, NY

A gift from France to the United States, and dedicated in 1886, the 152-foot figure that stands upon the 150-foot pedestal on Liberty Island is sheathed in copper. On the tablet, in Roman numerals, is the date: July 4, 1776. "It's a recognition by others of what America stands for." *212-363-3200.*

### The Alamo

San Antonio, TX

The Texans preserve it as sacred ground, the stone mission where James Bowie, David Crockett, William Travis and perhaps 180 others fought to the death against the Mexican army of General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna on March 6, 1836. "American courage." An estimated 2.5 million visit every year. *210-225-1391.*

### North Bridge, Minute Man National Historical Park

Concord, Mass.

It was "the shot heard 'round the world." The first skirmish between rebellious Americans and British regulars was from opposite sides of this bridge, today an authentic reproduction of the original. The date was April 19, 1775, "and this was the beginning of our liberty." The site is part of a 900-acre park. *978-369-6993.*

### Lincoln Memorial

Washington, D.C.

Anchoring the west end of the National Mall, the temple-like memorial, dedicated in 1922, faces the Washington Monument and, beyond that, the Capitol. Inside, to the right and left of the seated figure of Abraham Lincoln are the words of his Gettysburg Address and second Inaugural. "I go there three or four times a week. It's a holy place of liberty and equality." *202-426-6841.*

### Mount Rushmore

Keystone, S.D.

The 60-foot carved busts of Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln represent 150 years of American history and took well over a decade for artist/sculptor Gutzon Borglum to cut into the granite of South Dakota's Black Hills. "When I saw it, it just captured my heart." *605-574-3171.*

### U.S. Military Academy

West Point, N.Y.

Gen. George Washington established his headquarters here in 1779, and President Thomas Jefferson signed the law in 1802 that established it as an academy. "It's the oldest continuously occupied military post in America. Duty, honor, country. It stands for readiness." 845-938-2638.

Antietam National Battlefield

Sharpsburg, Md.

Before Sept. 11, the Civil War battle fought here on Sept. 17, 1862, was the bloodiest single day of violence in American history. Fought to a savage standstill before Robert E. Lee withdrew, it left 3,650 dead and more than 17,000 wounded. President Abraham Lincoln used it as a chance to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. "It concentrates the mind, as Lincoln said, thinking about the amount of death that went on in such a short period of time there." 301-432-5124.

*In 1984, as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Bill Bennett asked Pulitzer Prize winning columnist George Will for a list of ten books he thought every graduating high school student should have read-- below is the column George Will wrote on that list, from the August 12, 1984 issue of The Washington Post:*

Even when unbidden, my readers, who bristle with opinions, fly to their pens to riddle me with lists of my errors and shortcomings. When actually invited, as they recently were by me, to sound off, they paw the earth like war horses hearing a trumpet's blast. Herewith a report on my readers' -- and others' -- thoughts on reading.

William Bennett, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, asked me, among others, to list 10 works that every American should read before graduating from high school. Six weeks ago I put my list in a column and invited readers to mail their own lists to Bennett. They and others invited by him have done so. The results are still rolling in from outlying precincts, but the trend (42 states have been heard from) is clear, and encouraging.

The aim was to see if there is a consensus among thoughtful people about educational essentials. There is.

My list was: the Bible (portions), Aristotle's "Politics," Plato's "Apology" and "Crito," Shakespeare's "Macbeth," "The Federalist Papers," Tocqueville's "Democracy in America," the Lincoln-Douglas debates, F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby," Elie Wiesel's "Night," Cardinal Newman's "Idea of a University."

The "Top 30" from persons writing to Bennett are: Shakespeare (especially "Macbeth" and "Hamlet"), American documents (the Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Gettysburg Address), "Huckleberry Finn," the Bible, Homer's ("Odyssey," "Iliad"), Dickens' ("Great Expectations," "Tale of Two Cities"), Plato's "Republic," John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath," Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," Sophocles' "Oedipus," Melville's "Moby Dick," Orwell's "1984," Thoreau's "Walden," Robert Frost's poems, Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby," Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," The Communist Manifesto, Aristotle's "Politics," Emily Dickinson's poems, Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment," Faulkner (several novels suggested), Salinger's "Catcher in the Rye," Tocqueville's "Democracy in America," Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," Emerson (essays and poems), Machiavelli's "The Prince," Milton's "Paradise Lost," Tolstoy's "War and Peace," Vergil's "Aeneid."

The first four were landslide winners listed by 71, 50, 49 and 48 percent of all respondents. Although the novel is the most frequently mentioned genre, aside from Steinbeck, Faulkner and Salinger, contemporary authors were not nominated. Every selection in the first, second and third "10s" is clearly worthy. In the outpouring of responses there are few items pertaining to such contemporary preoccupations as feminism and nuclear weapons.

Peter Jay of the Baltimore Sun wisely argues for a book about war -- the common soldier's experience of it -- such as Stephen Crane's "The Red Badge of Courage" or

Siegfried Sassoon's "Memoirs of an Infantry Officer." Some readers suggested alternatives to Wiesel's "Night" as introductions to totalitarianism. Suggestions included Arthur Koestler's "Darkness at Noon" and Solzhenitsyn's "Gulag Archipelago." Ralph Ellison's novel, "Invisible Man," and Lorraine Hansberry's play, "A Raisin in the Sun," were works mentioned pertaining to black experience in America.

Some respondents, including Robert Penn Warren, believe the list should include something on science. Many suggest Darwin's "Origin of Species."

J. Carter Brown, director the National Gallery of Art, reasonably finds fault with an exclusive focus on the written word. He includes in his list of 10 these four works: the Parthenon and its sculpture, Chartres Cathedral, Michelangelo's ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Bach's "St. Matthew Passion."

The "Top 30" includes five authors of political texts (Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Tocqueville, Marx). It includes no works of analysis or interpretation, although Edith Hamilton's "Mythology" and Robert Heilbroner's "The Worldly Philosophers," a study of great economists, were mentioned.

Bennett notes that any 10 works from the "Top 30" would be a substantial improvement on what is read in many schools. From the responses, he concludes that when literate America clears its head and throat it makes much sense.

There is astonishingly little nonsense in the responses. One reader includes, in an otherwise excellent list, "the U.N. Charter." Come now: There is better fiction at any airport book rack.

Another nutty suggestion -- "Naked Lunch," an unintelligible novel by William Burroughs -- came from a graduating senior at a Massachusetts high school.

In her letter to Bennett that senior said, "Let's not forget that George Will may be a little out of touch with the day-to-day realities of the majority of today's graduating seniors." True. And remaining out of touch is a goal of my life.

But concerning the inner lives of high-school seniors, I note with approval that Philippe de Montebello, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, suggests Marlow's "Dr. Faustus" for high-school students, on the sensible ground that "Dante and Goethe can wait for college, the devil can't."