

Author, sociologist speaks about misrepresentations in U.S. History books

By Robert Trishman
Capital Times Staff Writer

The period of reconstruction following the Civil War was when the blacks were given control of the Southern state governments, only to have the whites take over when they screwed up.... WHAT?! Yes, it does sound preposterous, and according to Dr. James Loewen this is pure "B.S." which stands for "Bad Sociology." But this is what Mississippi schools taught in their history classes for years.

Loewen, a sociologist who has written the books Lies My Teacher Told Me and Lies Across America, encountered evidence of this while teaching at a predominantly African-American college in Mississippi. A group of 17 students, all African-American, gave the above answer when Loewen asked them what they knew about the period of Reconstruction.

Loewen gave a presentation Wednesday, Nov. 6 in the auditorium of the Olmsted Building. He spoke of the phenomenon of the "Nadir of American Race Relations," which was the period from 1890-1930, and the errors perpetuated by history textbooks ever since that time.

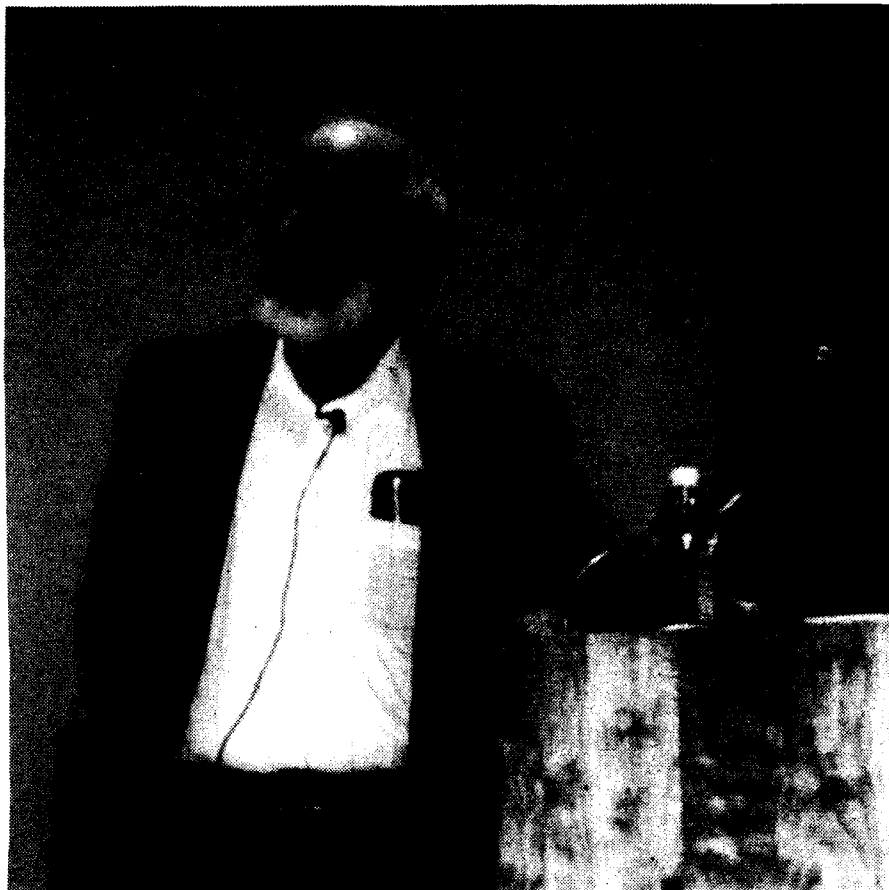
Loewen said that during this period there were prevailing racist attitudes in America, especially the South, and that not even Abraham Lincoln's image was immune to this epidemic. He said that in some accounts, Lincoln is portrayed as not caring at all about freeing the slaves and merely wanting to win the Civil War. "The South won the Civil War in 1890," he said.

He gave examples of how Southern states distorted the history of the Civil War. He said that there are 72 Confederate monuments in Kentucky even though Kentucky had almost nine times as many Union soldiers as Confederates. He also noted how in the South they refer to the Civil War as "The War Between the States."

Loewen and his students met this challenge and issued one of their own. They worked together and compiled a textbook presenting a more balanced view of American History, rather than, as he said, the "Gone With the Wind" version of the Reconstruction. The state of Mississippi refused to use it in their classrooms, so Loewen sued them in federal court and won.

He then talked about "Sundown Towns." These were towns in which, if an African-American was killed after sundown, there would be no repercussions. And they were not just in the South. Loewen held up a map of Pennsylvania on which the "Sundown Towns" were shaded pink. Pennsylvania looked pretty pink. Loewen said, "History can be a weapon and used against you."

Loewen has won the Oliver Cromwell Cox award for sociology. In addition to Lies My Teacher Told Me and Lies Across America, he is also writing Sundown Towns, which is to be released next year.



Dr. James Loewen, author of Lies My Teacher Told Me, lectures over 100 Penn State Harrisburg students about the atrocities in U.S. history books. Photo by Robert Trishman

Former PMI President speaks at PSH about telecommunications recovery in NYC post 9-11

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How did we ever survive without _____?
Fill in the blank: e-mail, cell phones, palm pilots. All of these telecommunications tools are as common as a butter knife today. Telecommunications and the advances thereof are an important component of the lifeblood of society. So what happens when these incredible technological capabilities are temporarily paralyzed? When the lifeblood stops flowing, how do we get it started again?

Frank P. Saladis recently visited Penn State Harrisburg to offer his expertise on the subject. Saladis is the past president of the New York City Project Management Institute (PMI). He is currently the Project Manager for Cisco Systems, Inc. Saladis was the keynote speaker for the PMI Keystone Chapter's "Professional Development Day" held on campus on Saturday, October 19th.

Saladis, titled his presentation "The Ultimate Test and the Challenge of Recovery." His focus was to illustrate the damage done to telecom-

munications services from the attack on the World Trade Center and what the necessary steps are to recover these services after such a disaster. Saladis was aware of the sensitive nature of this topic and presented it in a very professional and tactful manner. Saladis said that PMI is an organization that prides itself on being prepared for disaster. PMI's capabilities and learning took off during the infamous "Y2K" scare. Saladis commented with sarcasm on those who said of that issue, "We spent all this money and did all this preparation and nothing happened!" He stressed that nothing happened because they prepared ahead of time.

First, he talked about the nature of the damage. All television stations in the area were knocked out because a 360-foot mast on top of one of the towers fell. He also mentioned power outages, water main breaks, steam lines, and significant destruction of the Verizon central office in the city. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was destroyed. The first task on hand was to relocate the EOC. The New York Police Academy became the command center, and authorities were able to allocate 100 com-

puters, 2,000 cell phones and 2,000 radios to maintain communication during this time of crisis. They were also able to set up 100 fax lines. This was all accomplished in less than 72 hours, Saladis said.

Saladis said that a cooperative organization formed in 1993 after the bombing of the Trade Center was a big factor in the success of telecommunications recovery. This was the Mutual Aid and Restoration Consortium (MARC). The goal of MARC is that in a time of crisis or disaster, communications companies must cooperate rather than compete to restore services. This preparation paid off as services were restored to government buildings within 48 hours and City Hall by 72 hours following the attacks.

Saladis said the key to recovering from a disaster is being amply prepared beforehand. You need to know your environment, whom to call, and whom you can turn to for support services. You also not only need to have a recovery plan, but to rehearse it. "If you don't rehearse a plan, you don't really have a plan," Saladis said. He also said, "Success depends on ability to adapt to a constantly changing situation. And this ability also saves lives."