

recruiting, training and deploying against us? Does the U.S. need to fashion a broad, integrated plan to stop the next generation of terrorists? The U.S. is putting relatively little effort into a long-range plan, but we are putting a great deal of effort into trying to stop terrorists.”

Implied but not asked in Rumsfeld's memo are fundamental questions about combating terrorists: Who are they? Does it matter who they are, or is it

enough to know what they do? What drives them? We don't seem any closer to the answers than we were on September 10, 2001, but at least now, with the help of work such as that represented in *The Making of a Terrorist*, we're beginning to ask the questions. ■

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## IN BRIEF

### HISTORY

## The Gospel of You Can Do It

BRUCE BARTON WAS AMONG THE last major figures of the 20th century without a full-scale biography. Richard M. Fried, a history professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has finally closed this gap. Why'd it take so long?

After all, Barton (1886–1967) was well known in his own time for three reasons that still resonate. First, he was a major force in advertising, not just in writing copy but in organizing one of the first multinational ad agencies. The agency became known as BBD&O and is still going strong as part of the worldwide holding company Omnicom.

Next, he was among the first popularizers of the idea of Jesus as one of us, out in the marketplace growing His Father's business. Barton wrote a best-selling book called *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925), which is still being read for its depiction of the Rotarian Jesus of the modern megachurch, the church of Let's Grow and Prosper.

And, finally, Barton was a politician who sold himself and his worldview with the consummate skill of—you guessed it—an adman. From 1937 to 1941 he was a congressman from Manhattan, and

he was almost elected to the U.S. Senate in 1940. His innovations in selling a political vision through clever use of media, especially images, are still emulated by today's spinmeisters.

If he did all that, why have we been so slow to pay him the heed he deserves? Part of the answer, as Fried makes clear, is that we have been slow to see that consumer goods, religion, and politics have something in common: In the modern world, they all have to be sold. Selling is what Barton knew.

After World War I, a market situation developed that hadn't been seen before. The West developed surpluses. There were surpluses of mass-produced items such as soap and cigarettes. There were surpluses of religion—yes, religion—as the multiple denominations of post-Reformation Christianity continued splintering into competing brands with scant differences. And, in a sense, there were even surpluses of political ideas, such as socialism, communism, and good ol' apple-pie democracy.

Sorting out these surpluses, generating distinctions where often little difference existed, exploiting consumer choice—these were the roles of the modern salesman. How did Barton do it? By telling stories with a promise of betterment.

Bruce Barton learned the power of the gospel of You Can Do It early in his career. Fried relates the famous tale of how, after college, Barton was working as sales manager of P. F. Collier and Son, publisher of books and magazines. As an issue of the magazine *Collier's* was about to go to press in

#### THE MAN EVERYBODY KNEW:

Bruce Barton and the Making of Modern America.

By Richard M. Fried.  
Ivan R. Dee.  
286 pp. \$27.50

1912, a quarter-page still hadn't been filled. Barton knew that the company had a surplus of Dr. Eliot's Five Foot Book Shelf, a compendium of great books marketed under the celebrity title of the president of Harvard College. So he ripped out a picture of Marie Antoinette being carted off to her beheading, centered it on the empty space, and wrote a caption: "This is Marie Antoinette Riding to Her Death. Have you ever read her tragic story?" In the copy below, Barton spun the books' unique benefit to readers—cultural enrichment in less than 15 minutes a day. The surplus sold.

What's important about this seemingly trivial act is that Barton sold product by telling a story with the implied promise that one would be a better person for possessing it. He was to tell such stories about General Electric, Jesus, and Dwight D. Eisenhower. In a scary way, the stories are almost interchangeable.

Bruce Barton was the guy selling us the goods, the man everybody knew but no one could name. In a provocative sense, that's why we had to wait so long for his biography. It's been worth the wait.

—James B. Twitchell

## Ye Olde Yankee Encyclopedia

BEFORE I TORE THE WRAPPER off *The Encyclopedia of New England*, I made a list of 10 subjects that I thought a reasonably well-researched encyclopedia of the region should include:

1. The first Harvard-Yale crew race, held on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire in 1852.
2. At least one of three U.S. senators: George Aiken, Margaret Chase Smith, and Claiborne Pell.
3. The reason Connecticut is called "The Nutmeg State."
4. Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska, founder, in 1862, of the New England Hospital for Women and

Children in Boston.

5. William Loeb, editor and publisher of New Hampshire's *Manchester Union-Leader*.
6. Boston Latin School.
7. Connecticut Valley cigar wrappers.
8. Vermont's anti-development law of 1969, Act 250.
9. The Radiation Laboratory at MIT, which helped perfect radar during World War II.
10. The 1970 Bobby Seale trial in New Haven, Connecticut.

Editors Burt Feintuch and David Watters, both English professors at the University of New Hampshire, score a solid 80 on this arbitrary test. Take away my fondness for rowing arcana—to their credit, they do include a meaty entry on the Head of the Charles regatta—and they get a 90.

Still, call me an old fuddy-duddy, but I think leaving out the Boston Latin School is worse than an oversight. Founded a year before Harvard College, Boston Latin is America's oldest school ("Sumus primi" is its motto, to drive home the point). Its students have included Cotton Mather, Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edward Everett Hale, Leonard Bernstein, and—though for some reason he goes unmentioned on Boston Latin's Web site—Louis Farrakhan.

One could play the exclusion game endlessly (racquetball and not squash?), but there's plenty to celebrate in this massive tome. It begins with one of the loveliest pieces of writing about New England that I've ever read, an elegiac foreword by the poet Donald Hall. He's the sort of ur-New Englander who can toss off a sentence like this with real authority: "New England is empty mills, new inventions, wooden scythes . . . and contrails from Logan and Pease Air Force Base streaking the blue air above the cellar hole of a farmer who came north after the Revolution to build his land."

What New England really is is six states, all of them pretty darned old by American standards: "the first old civilization . . . in America," as historian Bernard De Voto wrote. Generally speaking, Feintuch and Watters don't get suckered by the

### THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF NEW ENGLAND.

Edited by Burt Feintuch and David H. Watters.  
Yale Univ. Press.  
1,564 pp. \$65