

## CUTTING THE TIES THAT BIND US. What a bundle of sticks can tell us.

*"Our strength is our diversity"*, what an asinine (i.e. fatuous, inane, mindless, vacuous, foolish, etc.) idea, and a vicious lie to boot. Americans should never have fallen into the diversity trap, but many did. And now we are seeing the result as the ties that bind us are being cut away. The idea of 'divide and conquer' is as old as warfare and its antiquity attests to its success. That's what the bundle of sticks (Latin 'fascine') tells us; there is strength in unity.



Americans can't go far without running into the old Roman fascine so connected with our civil culture; in the halls of Congress, in our courts, on the Lincoln Memorial, and on our money, along with its motto E PLURIBUS UNUM — OF MANY ONE. In the early days of Rome, a few hundred BC, this became the symbol of the unity of the Roman city states into a nation, a union capable of governing and protecting itself, as shown by the ax head scepter. The sticks individually were weak, but together strong. Less noticeable, but of supreme importance, are the ties binding the sticks together. Without them, E PLURIBUS UNUM becomes E UNUM PLURIBUS — OF ONE MANY. And the pile of loose sticks cannot hold the head.

That heritage of binding ties has been under attack from the beginning of our nation by its natural enemies (enemies of God given "Natural Rights") and their 'useful idiot' followers. Even the fascine symbol is virulently attacked. In looking up the word 'fascine' for spelling and history, I discovered a surprisingly large number of links, about equally divided between genuine (though largely redundant) information and fevered denunciations of America. Why hatred? Because the old Roman fascine symbol adopted in 18th Century America as a symbol of unity was also used by 20th Century Italian and German "Facists" as symbols of their Party unities. Denunciations apparently based upon the supposition that the 20th Century Fascist/Nazi usage retroactively tainted America. The only things tainted, it seems to me, are the minds of some people, and that is tragic.

Most of us, hopefully a majority, can see this assault on our common cultural heritage for what it is. The useful idiots, perhaps not, but their masters know what they are doing. What do I mean by a common cultural heritage? I mean a common understanding of right and wrong, of male and female and their roles in family structure; of common national heroes, and common social goals. I won't go further into those movements 'changing good into evil, and evil into good' that beset us. But I did run across a good illustration of the nature of those cultural ties a few years ago in working on my Old School Book Project.

I collected dozens of 19th Century American public school readers, and a few others as well, to make a set of new readers. The old school readers contained a good bit about the English Civil War, which was a major factor in America's heritage. The public school books viewed the War from the Protestant perspective however, and the Catholic School books viewed the War from the Catholic perspective. Whether the bloody, intermittent century long English Civil War was political or religious is a matter of contention. Technically it was a war for dominance between the quasi-Catholic Stuart Monarchy, favoring Henry VIII's creation, the Church of England, returning to its Catholic roots; and the Protestant controlled Parliament seeking to sever the roots. The Catholics largely sided with the Monarchy, and Protestants, by and large, sided with Parliament. So, was it political, or religious?

Never mind, the point I want to make is that in this country, the English Civil War was left behind in time and space and the conflicts seem alien. In both Protestant public and Catholic School books the American flag was hailed as a symbol of a free people, and George Washington was revered as a hero and father of our country. The history of Catholics in America was recalled to emphasize our collective effort in building this country. In short, there was developing a common history with common heroes, common customs, common attitudes which existed outside the religious sphere. It is true that the Catholics had to institute their own schools, but the American Constitution gave them freedom to do it. And the shared traditions allowed Protestants and Catholics to accept each other as fellow Americans. That transition happened over and over in America's "melting pot".

Unfortunately there are those whose political ambitions prefer a 'stew pot' model that only heats up divisions and grievances.

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