

American Story by Bob Dotson (2013)

The author interviewed people across America searching for ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

1. He asked a guy what's so special about this off-beat diner & the response was "Me".
2. One man did all this work on a project, but got no credit. He said: if you take credit, the money & power back away.
3. Jacqueline Kennedy saved Grand Central from destruction & got it renovated [they discovered a special boxcar that FDR used [to hide his polio] to deliver him below the Waldorf Astoria with an elevator that would lift his car directly to his suite.
4. 100,000 immigrant orphans were put on "orphan" trains & sent west to be adopted by anyone along the way. In 1922 the 5 Panzer boys fought hard to stay together while most were separated. They went to different farms, but in the same town.
5. A family that took in Vietnamese refugees in the '80's.
6. Some teenage girls were able to save the last movie theater in Petaluma, CA.
7. A woman from Harlem took in hundreds of babies while their moms went to rehab.
8. An old man wanted to learn to play the French horn, but when it got damaged, he had no money to repair it. The children at school collected money & paid for it.
9. A Jewish architect fled Germany to Hawaii prior to WWII, but was soon thrown into an internment camp & lost his home again. Struggled to find work after the war, but then designed the USS Arizona Memorial.
10. WWII POW went back to Japan as a missionary for 30 yrs & the pilot that led the Pearl Harbor attack was touched by his forgiveness & gave up hatred.
11. One lady saved 2500 babies from Nazi death camps.
12. Two injured soldiers [one could barely walk & the other could hardly see] helped each other escape from behind enemy lines.
13. A Japanese soldier showed kindness to a US POW [he remembered from winning a football game in college] while 10,000 US & Philippine soldiers died on the death march.
14. A man visiting Vietnam after the war, bought all the dog tags he could find & tried to return them to the soldier's families.
15. On 9.11, 6000 passengers were stranded in Newfoundland when the skies were cleared & all planes were forced to the nearest airport. The locals opened their homes & hearts. When passengers left, they started a scholarship to give back.
16. A blind girl finishes the Iditarod.

Look for people who need encouragement & encourage them.

Note: Families thrive when they invest in one another & spend time together. Arlington Cemetery was once Robert E. Lee's plantation. The British gave Benedict Arnold 15,000 acres in Canada, but soon went broke & became the most hated man again when he tried collecting debts. Since Britain could no longer send convicts to America, they sent them to Australia. 9.11 was the most tragic single event [not war] [Jonestown was 2nd]. When Andrew Jackson sent the Indians to OK [only to lose land again 55 yrs later in the land rush] on the trail of tears, many black people had to go with them [either as slaves for fugitives]. Buffalo soldiers [their hair resembled buffalo] were black Calvary during the Civil War. In 1938 twice as many people migrated to CA than the 1849 gold rush.

Quotes: “The secret of happiness is not doing what you like, but liking what you do.” “You’d better enjoy the life you have. If you don’t, you’re wasting it.” “Stop whining about what can’t do & figure out what you can do.” “It’s not where you come from or where you’re going, but who you help along the way that makes the difference in your life.” “There is no try. Just do (Yoda).” “Dream of places I’ve never been.” “Live a tale that will be told long after you’re gone.” “Give the world your best & the best will come back to you.”

Books: The Little Engine That Could”