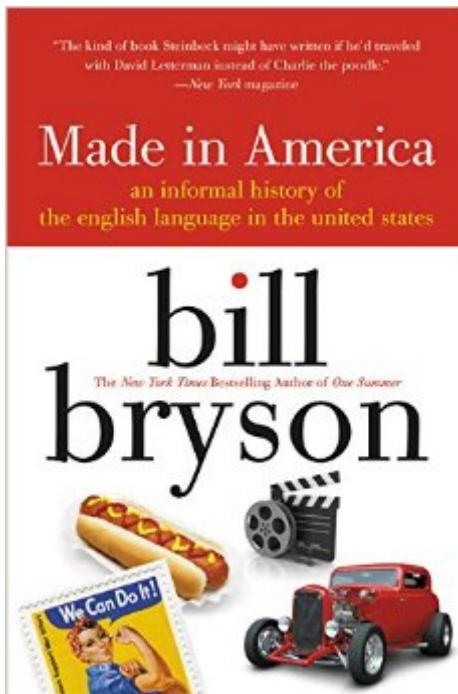


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Made In America: An Informal History Of The English Language In The United States



Synopsis

Bill Bryson, bestselling author of *The Mother Tongue*, now celebrates its magnificent offspring in the book that reveals once and for all how a dusty western hamlet with neither woods nor holly came to be known as Hollywood . . . and exactly why Mr. Yankee Doodle called his befeathered cap "Macaroni."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book leaves me a bit puzzled as to how characterize it best. It's full of some of the liveliest and most engaging writing about the development of the American tongue, and at the same time it's just riddled with errors of etymology and history. Bryson relies on some of the classic references - Mencken, Flexner et al- to the extent that he has never checked any of the newer references. Hence he still repeats the etymology of "OK" as the mid-19th century "Oll Korrect", despite the more recent scholarship that points to a great number of cognates in West African languages as the more likely source. His historical treatments are similarly spotty. He notes at least one Native American document that appears to have influenced the language of the Constitution, but is blissfully unaware of the numerous state constitutions and articles of confederation and other historical documents from which ideas and language were lifted. His reading of the first and second amendments are laughingly ahistorical. In discussing the songs associated with wars, he remarks that unlike the Civil War and WWI, WWII had no memorable songs! He also states that "bought the farm" is a phrase from the Vietnam War, something that would surprise anyone who's ever seen a film about the RAF in WWII. (I believe the phrase is actually a bit older than that). And he thinks "pilot" came from early

aviation, when it's a very old nautical term.

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