26 Little Things That Changed History Forever - mental_floss List Show (Ep. 234)

List Show
https://youtube.com/watch?v=Nc9YpQ42wlI
https://nerdfighteria.info/v/Nc9YpQ42wlI

Hi, I'm John Green, welcome to my salon, this is Mental Floss on YouTube.

And did you know that one single, possibly mis-interpreted Japanese word may have influenced the decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

The Japanese premier Kantaro Suzuki used the word mokusatsu when reporters asked him about the Potsdam declaration. He probably meant no comment, but the word has multiple meanings, and many translated it to mean "we're ignoring the declaration." That's how it was reported, and soon the atomic bombs were dropped.

And that's the first of many little things that changed the course of history that I am going to share with you today, in this video brought to you by Geico.

The Roman emperor Constantine who ruled from 306 to 337 AD claimed to have seen a cross of light in the sky before a battle, and some geologists believe that Constantine actually saw a meteor, making that meteor responsible for the spread of Christianity.

Speaking of space, in 1999 NASA lost communication with a Mars rover they had launched about a year earlier, because one team working on the mission worked in metric units, and the other used English units.

This cost NASA about 125 million dollars. They should have just used our spaceship, it cost like, 10 bucks.

Every middleschooler's favorite planet, Uranus, might have had a a different name. It was discovered by William Herschel and some astronomers thought it should be named after him, but eventually it was named for the father of Saturn.

The crew of the Titanic wasn't using binoculars, which would have helped them spot the iceberg. Apparently, David Blaire was given the job of second officer on the boat, but he was replaced, and when he left the ship, he took the key to his locker, which contained the binoculars. The ship's lookout later said that with those binoculars, they would have seen the iceberg soon enough to get out of the way.

In 1961, John F. Kennedy sent six American B-26's to Bay of Pigs to help out with the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. They ended up showing up an hour late, and were shot down. Most historians believed that they were confused by the shift in timezone.

Many historians also believed that the American Civil War could have been a short conflict, rather than a four year long one, if it hadn't been for one man, James Wolfe Ripley. Ripley was a general in the Union Army who delayed the army's purchase of modern rifles, so for a long time they were fighting against Confederates who had modern guns that they purchased from overseas.

In 2003 the largest wildfire in California's history, the Cedar Fire, was caused by one person, who got lost while hunting in West Covina, and started the fire to be rescued.

Johann Rall fought against General George Washington in the Revolutionary War, and there's a story that he was warned about Washington crossing the Delaware River into Trenton while he was playing chess or cards, so the warning was given via note, which he put in his pocket, and then forgot about because he was so distracted by his game. George Washington, getting his face onto Mount Rushmore by not playing chess.

Going back a little further in history, the Turks were able to easily capture Constantinople, thus leading to the Ottoman Empire, for a simple reason: someone accidentally left the gate open.

And that was historically important because it eventually lead to Constantinople being renamed Istanbul, which in turn lead to They Might be Giants' only Top 40 hit.

In 1944, Field Marshall Erwin Rommel went on leave so he could return to Germany for his wife's birthday, which made it a little bit easier for the allies to land in Normandy on D-Day.

Bill Clinton had the option to kill Osama bin Laden in 1998, 13 years before bin Laden was actually killed, but Clinton opted not to because 300 innocent civilians would also have died.

In 1816, Physician René Laennec invented the stethoscope on the spot because he was examining a woman and felt uncomfortable pressing his ear to her chest. So he created a simple paper tube, and then later put together a real stethoscope.

Many historians believe that Napoleon lost the Battle of Waterloo because he was distracted by his bleeding hemorrhoids.

Which never would have even happened, I mean, the Battle of Waterloo, not the bleeding hemorrhoids, which were probably inevitable. But anyway it wouldn't have happened if Napoleon weren't French, and he almost wasn't. The island he was from, Corsica, only became a French island 3 months before he was born.

Ok last Napoleon fact, in 1802, General Charles Laclerc was working for Napoleon to suppress the rebellion in Haiti, but the majority of the army, including Laclerc, got yellow fever, a mosquito born illness, and only a few thousand of the 50,000 French soldiers lived. And that's a major reason why Napoleon abandoned the New World, which is a big deal for Haiti, but also for the United States, because he sold us the Louisiana Purchase.

In 1972 security guard Frank Wills noticed that somebody in the Watergate office building put Duct Tape over a door lock to keep it open. He removed it, but it reappeared within 30 minutes, so he called the police, and thus the Watergate burglars were busted.

For this, by the way, Wills received a raise of $2.50 per week. But he got to decide who the next president was. So, if you're a huge Gerald Ford fan like myself, he was only president because of Frank Wills.

Now this isn't confirmed, but many historians believe that Robert Clive tried to commit suicide when he was 19 years old, but he lived and went on to establish the East India company in Bengal.

In 1933, Giuseppe Zangara attempted to assassinate FDR, who was giving a speech. Zangara was a shorter man, so he had to stand on a chair, which started to wobble, he shot 5 times, and missed FDR all 5 times.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914, of course, sparked World War One, and it was only made possible when Ferdinand's driver took a wrong turn right in front of Gavrilo Princip, who then shot at the car.

Modern life wouldn't be as good without safety glass, you know, the kind on your car windshield. It was actually invented by accident when French chemist Edouard Benedictus dropped a glass flask containing cellulose nitrate. The glass shattered, but it didn't break.

In 1913, Emily Davison became a symbol of the British Woman's Suffragette Movement when she stood in front of King George the

Fifth's horse at the Epson Darby. It was viewed as a powerful suicide that led to thousands of suffragettes attending her funeral, but she probably didn't intend to die; she bought a return train ticket home.

If Joseph Stalin hadn't had such a strict security policy, he might not have died when he did. His security guards were not allowed to bother him unless he'd OKed it, and on the day he died, they noticed that he was sleeping much later than usual, but they didn't enter his room until 10 O'clock, because, you know, fear of death. By then, Stalin had been dead for around 4 hours.

In 1899, British inventor Percy Pilcher had designed and built a motorized hang glider, but before he was able to show it off, he decided to fly another one for demonstration; he crashed and died. One year later, the Wright Brothers started experimenting in Kitty Hawk.

9 months before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery Bus, high school student Claudette Colvin did the exact same thing, and the NAACP knew about it, but they ended up using Rosa Parks as the face of their bus boycott, because Colvin was a teenager who had gotten pregnant by a married man.

And finally, I return to my salon to tell you that the world might be very different today if Adolf Hitler hadn't been rejected from the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. He applied to a drawing class in 1907 when he was 18, and then again in 1908 and still didn't get in. So he didn't become an artist.

Thanks for watching this episode of Mental Floss on YouTube, which was brought to you by Geico, and made with the help of all of these nice people. Don't forget to check out our other shows, thanks again for watching, and as we say in my hometown, Don't Forget To Be Awesome.