

'Badass' = Great history

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History is a subject approached by many college students with dread. When I talk about history with people on campus, they usually recall memories of boring textbooks and lectures from high school.

Ben Thompson, who has degrees in history and political science, runs the Web site www.badassoftheweek.com. Since 2004, his approach on the Web site has been to discuss the exciting and violent characters in history and fiction.

Thompson's new book "Badass" takes a look at historical figures from the ancient Egyptian ruler Ramses II to martial artist Bruce Lee. Thompson discusses many larger-than-life people who refused to surrender, even when the odds were against them.

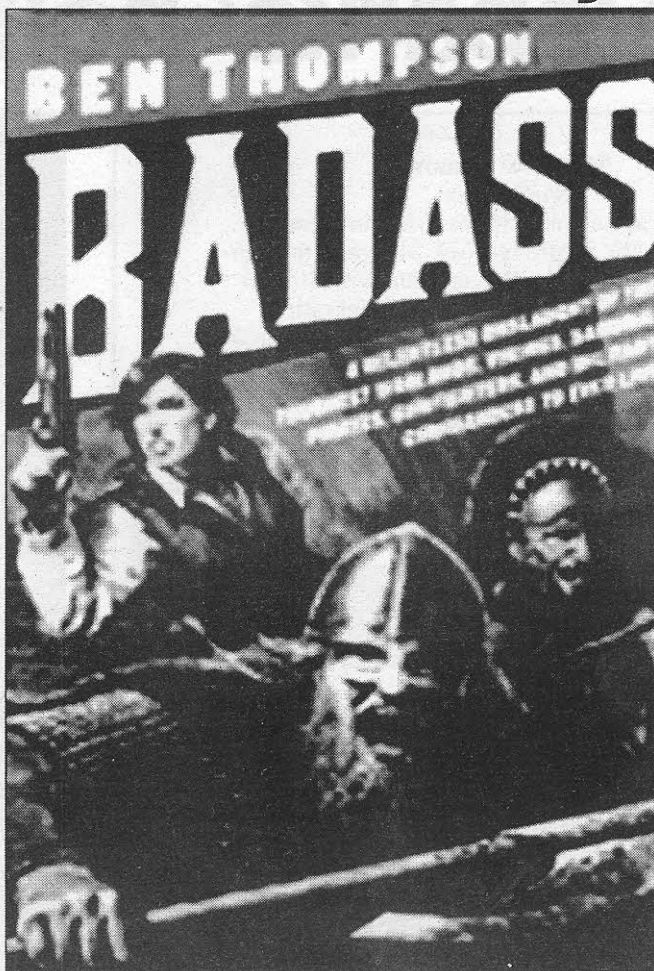
Well known people like Alexander the Great and George S. Patton are discussed. However, the book is filled with many lesser-known, truly fascinating, historical figures.

Henry Lincoln Johnson, a member of the "Harlem Hellfighters" during World War I, was attacked by German soldiers. After suffering from 21 injuries, including multiple stab wounds and two gun shots to his chest, Johnson killed or wounded 16 German soldiers.

Jack Churchill, a British soldier stationed in France during World War II, fought Nazis with a longbow and a broadsword, while riding a motorcycle.

Thompson also covers many women in history that he considers worthy of the title "badass." Pirate Anne Bonny and Russian aviator Irina Sobrova are just a few of the many women the author praises for their courage and tenacity.

The book is entertaining and educational from the first page to the last. Thompson's approach,



as the title indicates, is to present the information with colloquial language. Thompson does use offensive language in the book, but this fits the characters he writes about.

"Badass" is illustrated with graphic novel style art that captures the eye and the imagination.

This fun, sometimes hilarious, book is a great way to learn more about history.