



Top 10 Historical Facts About Hemp.

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Hemp is becoming more popular over the past few decades. Many people are only now learning about all the benefits that the hemp plant has to offer. One thing that many people don't know about **hemp is that it has played a really big role in the history of mankind**. Today we will take a look at 10 interesting facts about hemp that you probably didn't know before.

1. When did we use hemp for the first time?



Hemp has been cultivated for around **10.000 years**. It is thought that the cultivation of hemp originated in **Central Asia**. The first traces of hemp were found in around 8.000 BC in Asian regions. These traces are **findings of pottery and hemp seeds and oil that were used as food in China**. However, it's important to give credit to not just China. Ancient use of hemp has been traced to many countries besides China. For example **Egypt, Russia, Greece, and Italy**.

2. Hemp paper was very popular.



Until 1883 around 75% to 90% of all paper in the world was made from cannabis hemp fiber. Around this time things like **bibles, maps, paper money, stocks and bonds, and newspapers** were all written on paper made from hemp. This is because hemp paper is of great quality and lasts longer than paper made from cotton. Two famous books that were written on hemp paper are **The Gutenberg Bible** (15th century) and **The King James Bible** (17th century). Even **Alice in Wonderland** was written on hemp paper! Another belief is that **the Declaration of Independence** was written on hemp paper but this is only partly true because only the two first drafts were written

on hemp paper. On July 19, 1776, Congress ordered the Declaration of Independence to be copied and engrossed on parchment (a prepared animal skin).

3. America's connection with hemp.



The colonists that entered America had a difficult time adapting to the new environment. To make ends meet the colonists made a lot of their products out of hemp. During the **Virginia Assembly in 1619, a law was passed that required every farmer to grow a certain amount of hemp**. Hemp was even made into a kind of currency because of its importance.

Even figures like **Christopher Columbus** and **George Washington** used hemp and understood its worth back in the days!

4. Diesel was made to run on hemp.



Rudolph Diesel made his debut in the history books because of an invention that would shape the world. His **diesel engine** became the standard of the world for that type of engine. Rudolph Diesel had the vision of his diesel engine to run on **vegetable oils**, one of which was, you guessed it, **hemp oil**. The only problem with this was that the big oil corporations of that time didn't agree with his vision. This is the reason why the diesel engine never got a chance to become the eco-friendly machine that it was supposed to be.

5. Henry Ford's hemp car.



Nearly everyone has heard of the famous **Henry Ford**. However, one thing many people don't know about him is that **in 1941 Henry Ford presented a groundbreaking invention, the Hemp Car**. Henry Ford was working on this project for 12 years and he used his time well. This alternative car was made from **cellulose plastic** which included hemp and was also **hemp fuelled**. This all-plastic car was **300 pounds lighter than comparable models and had 10 times the impact resistance compared to steel!** Henry Ford told the public that this car would be lighter, safer, and less expensive than other cars. He believed that one day he would "**grow automobiles from the soil**".

6. The Chernobyl disaster.



Just four years after the **Chernobyl disaster in 1990**, the Soviet administration asked the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to make a report about the environmental status of the situation. Within 30 km of the disaster, **high concentrations of toxic metals were found in the soil**. To counter this, **in 1998 it was decided that the best way to regenerate the soil was to fill this surrounding area with hemp plants**. Slavik Dushenkov, a research scientist with Phytotech, one of the organizations behind the hemp plantings, stated that “hemp is proving to be one of the best **phyto-remediative plants*** we have been able to find”. However, Ukraine isn't the only country to use this strategy. Many other countries use hemp plants to clean the polluted soil left behind by mankind.

***phyto-remediative plants** = plants that reduce soil contamination

7. Bridges?



In **France**, you can find a bridge that was partly made from hemp. You can find this bridge in **Saint Céneri le Gérei**. This stone and mortar bridge crossing the river point was constructed by the **Merovingians** who ruled the area around **500 AD**. The reason why this bridge has been able to survive for this long is because of the hemp that was used to build it. Because **10% hemp was used to make the mortar**, this bridge has survived longer than any other building in the village, even with the heavy current pushing against it! The bridge has been used for around **1.500 years** now.

8. Art was made on hemp.



You don't need to know a lot about art to know names like **Van Gogh** or **Rembrandt**. These painters were famous for paintings they made in the **17th century**. However, one thing you may not know is that painters like Van Gogh and Rembrandt had been using **hemp canvases** for their paintings. To make things even more interesting, the word "**canvas**" is derived from the word **cannapaceus**, a Latin word that literally means "**made from hemp**". How about that for a history lesson.

9. The destruction of hemp.



We will keep this fact short, not because it is insignificant but because it deserves an entire book about it. In the future will make an article about this destruction of an important part of our history.

In **1937 the Marihuana Tax Act** was implemented in the US. With this decision, marihuana was made illegal. But what the people that pushed this bill through the senate also did was **knowingly confuse hemp with marihuana**. They knew the immense benefits of the hemp plant and the threat it posed to their massive businesses and decided to disguise the hemp plant as a threat to the US.

10. Thanks, Obama.



In **2014 President Obama** signed the **Farm Bill** into law, allowing research institutions to start piloting **hemp farming programs**. This bill legally separates hemp from marihuana and finally legalizes the **cultivation of industrial hemp for research purposes**. It was finally recognized that the plant that contains less than 0.3% can't make you high and can only be used to make a great variety of products that benefits every country.

This brings us to the end of this article. We truly hope that you learned something today about how hemp played an important part in our history.

Feel free to do some extra research because we only scraped the surface of information about the history of hemp.

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