

Good Books about History, 2015-16

Reviews by members of the OLLI-GMU History Club

Compiled by Tom Hady

Compiler's Note: With our decision a few years ago to include historical fiction, the question of what to call "history" has become more difficult. I view my role as limited. I will occasionally ask a contributor whether this belongs in a history compilation, but I generally accept their conclusion. Other than that, I compile the reviews, put them in a common format, and do a very limited amount of editing.--TFH.

Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years; The Peopling of British North America—The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675* (2013), reviewed by Jim Crumley

In this book, Mr. Bailyn takes a look at the early settlers in America, focusing on the colonization of Virginia, Massachusetts, and New York, though he also discusses the early years of the Maryland and Delaware colonies. Even someone steeped in Virginia history and very familiar with the Jamestown colony will find new information in this book. It's a somewhat ponderous volume and not read quickly or easily, but it's packed with information, including statistics on the extraordinarily high mortality rates among the colonists.

Marina Belozerskaya, *To Wake the Dead: A Renaissance Merchant and the Birth of Archaeology* (2009), reviewed by Tom Hady

In 1407, fourteen-year-old Ciriacus Pizzecolli or Ancona was apprenticed to learn the trade of a merchant. As a merchant, he travelled widely in the Mediterranean, and he became interested in the ancient ruins that lay all over that part of the world. As he got older, he continued his hobby of what became archeology and became welcome among scholars and rulers alike. He had visited places they only knew second-hand, and interest in ancient Greek civilization was rising in the west. His descriptions survive of buildings that were well preserved in his day and have since succumbed to earthquake, quarrying for later buildings and other hazards, and they are still useful. This is that story. Belopzerskaya does a good job of capturing what must have been the milieu in which Ciriacus lived, and describing his activities.

A. Scott Berg, *Wilson* (2013), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is an exhaustive biography of Woodrow Wilson. While it certainly covers his period as President, I found his pre-Presidential life the more interesting. Always interested in politics, and desiring to achieve great things in that arena, he spent the greater part of his life as an academic, as a professor, and eventually as President of Princeton University, where he turned a notorious "party school" into one of the most respected arenas of learning in the nation.

In fact, he did not turn to politics until he was 54 years old and was all-but drafted into the position as Governor of New Jersey. Despite less than a year in office, he was nominated by the national Democratic Party to be their standard bearer for the office of President, which, of course, he won.

During his first term, he was able to pass an unprecedented list of liberal agenda items and was not reticent in his preference for a Parliamentary form of government to that which he now headed. While his legislative agenda was not that popular with the voters, he won a second term based on the theme, "He kept us out of War." One month after his second inauguration, he requested that Congress declare war.

Much of the latter part of the book covers the death of his first wife, his remarriage, and his unsuccessful effort to get the Senate to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. He refused any recommended alterations to the Treaty and it was defeated by a bipartisan majority primarily based on an article which took away the Congress' right to declare war and gave that to the League. Hard to believe anyone would have supported that.

Anyway, it's an interesting book which also takes a hard look at Wilson's lengthy illness which allowed his second wife and his doctor to essentially run the executive branch during his incapacitation.

Scott W. Berg, *38 Nooses: Lincoln, Little Crow and the Beginning of the Frontier's End* (2013), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is the story of this nation's first great armed conflict with the Sioux. Called the Dakota War, it was fought in Minnesota in 1862 during the American Civil War. Essentially, the Dakota Sioux, after years of being lied to and having treaties "re-interpreted," chose to go to war. Little Crow, their leader, tried to dissuade the younger "hot heads," but when that failed, he led their efforts.

This is a tale of unimagined brutality on both sides and understandably, considering his attention to the War in the East, not President Lincoln's finest hour. Several generals, most notably John Pope (the arrogant "anti-hero" of Second Manassas), come across very poorly. In the end, of course, the Native Americans were defeated and 303 of their number were "tried" (sometimes several at a time in less than five minutes), convicted, and sentenced to death. Each case required a personal review by Lincoln who eventually commuted all but 38 of the sentences (hence the book's title). For his part, Little Crow escaped to Canada. But, six months later, on July 3, 1863, the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg, he returned to Minnesota to forage. Spotted by a white father and son, he was killed in the resulting fight. The state legislature then authorized payment to the father and son for his body and scalp. Tough times!!

Richard Brookhiser, *Gentleman Revolutionary: Gouverneur Morris—The Rake Who Wrote the Constitution* (2003), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is a book about Gouverneur Morris, generally considered in the second tier of our Founding Fathers. Of interest, his first name came from his mother's maiden name and is not, as some might suppose, an 18th century spelling of the title, "Governor." And while James Madison is justly regarded as the "Father of the Constitution," Morris is actually the one who took all of the decisions of the Constitutional Convention and put them to paper, authoring such phrases as "We the people." Severely burned in his youth, he had virtually no use of his left arm and lost a leg in a carriage accident while still in his 20's. Nonetheless, he evidently was quite the ladies man (countless affairs) and did not allow his injuries to affect his political or business life. An ardent Federalist, he hated the "Virginia Dynasty," Madison more than Jefferson, and Monroe more than Madison. Interestingly, Madison wrote many positive things about Morris and may not have known of the latter's enmity (uncovered after his death in diaries).

Morris was a representative to France during the French Revolution, generally supported the king and Marie Antoinette, but also loaned Madame de Lafayette money (never repaid) when her husband was imprisoned. A bachelor until he was 57 years old, Morris eventually married Nancy Randolph of the Virginia family not long after she was involved in a horrific scandal. Giving birth to a son by her first cousin, she and the father left the newborn child out in the cold to die. Defended by the "dream team" of the ages (Patrick Henry and soon to be Chief Justice John Marshall), the pair were acquitted.

Morris won and lost several political posts throughout his career and eventually died at the age of 64. He fathered his only child at age 61.

Thomas Cahill, *Mysteries of the Middle Ages And the Beginning of the Modern World*, (2006), reviewed by Tom Hady

The fifth volume in Cahill's Hinges of History series, this book covers the high Middle Ages. The book is worth reading, but a bit too much literary history for my tastes.

Thomas Cahill, *Heretics and Heroes: How Renaissance Artists and Reformation Priests Created our World* (2013), reviewed by Tom Hady

The sixth volume of Hinges of History. My comments on volume five apply here, too. Art and religion certainly played an important part in the formation of our world, but so did economic and political institutions, to which Cahill pays little attention. I learned a lot about art and religion of the period, though.

Miranda Carter, *George, Nicholas and Wilhelm: Three Royal Cousins and the Road to World War I* (2011), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is an interesting take on the lead up to World War I. The author views events from the perspective of the three first cousins (through Queen Victoria), who came to rule Great Britain, Germany, and Russia in the early 20th century. It goes into how their interpersonal relationships and rivalries changed over time. Their kinship and mutual interest in maintaining hereditary rule in each of their countries was not able to avoid the politics that drove the world to war.

The book, for its length and detail, is a relatively easy read with excellent source data and a fine bibliography that might encourage additional research by the interested. It is not, however, for the casual reader.

Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (1997), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is a somewhat dated, but very interesting, book about one of the relatively unreported travesties of World War II. The book is NOT for the

squeamish as it contains very graphic descriptions and even a number of pictures of some of the most gruesome scenes one can imagine. Many of the most detailed and lengthy histories of World War II do not even mention the massacre that occurred at Nanking. But, according to the author (and many cited sources) as many as 300,000 civilians were murdered at Nanking by soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army. This is more than the combined fatalities at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or at any city in Europe during the German or Allied bombings. Tens of thousands of women were raped and the brutality of the entire operation is almost beyond description.

The author attributes the relative neglect of this event to the competition between the Nationalist and Communist Chinese immediately after the war and the desire of the United States to enlist Japan in its post-war anti-communist agenda.

In the last pages of the book, Ms. Chang goes into some detail regarding efforts of Japanese politicians well into the 1990's to claim that the Nanking massacre never happened. And, in the end, Japan has never paid reparations on a scale anything like that forced upon Germany.

Lynn Cheney, *James Madison: A Life Reconsidered* (2014), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is the latest and, in my view, one of the better biographies of James Madison. Most such books don't cover his early years nearly as well as Mrs. Cheney. Although very serious, slight of build, and sickly, he was apparently an excellent shot and a very good horseman. He became very caught up in the anti-British movement and went so far as a very young man to recommend that Loyalists be "tarred and feathered."

The book covers his entire life but the period around the Constitution and his efforts during the first U.S. Congress are probably the most interesting. His influence on the constitution and his dogged determination during the first Congress to pass a Bill of Rights are, of course, the highlights.

Discussions on how to elect a president are particularly interesting since various forms were considered including popular vote and election by the House of Representatives, both of which were criticized by the small states as giving them no voice. Finally the Electoral College was decided upon, but the small states were still concerned. Eventually they discussed each elector having two votes but they could not be for candidates from the same state. Then the concern was that electors would "throw away" their second vote to give more weight to their "true" favorite. To combat this Madison suggested

making the second vote “count” by having it go for a “Vice President,” a position that had not yet been discussed. The major concern then was, “what would the Vice President do other than stand by for the death of the President.” Some might suggest that concern hasn’t changed in over 200 years.

The Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, the threat of New England seceding from the union, and Madison’s post-Presidential life are all covered very well in my view.

Paul Collins, *The Birth of the West: Rome, Germany, France, and the Creation of Europe in the Tenth Century* (2013), reviewed by Tom Hady

Collins’ thesis is that the events of the ninth and tenth centuries in Europe produced the framework of modern Europe. Whether or not this is true, his is one of the more readable and complete accounts of this period. It is strengthened by his efforts to put events in the context of social organization and peoples’ beliefs at the time.

John W. Dean, *Warren G. Harding* (2004), reviewed by Jim Crumley

Due to a number of scandals during his administration, Warren G. Harding is generally considered one of the worst President’s in American history. John Dean, former counsel to President Nixon, and one who should know something about Presidential scandals, attempts in this book to point out that much of what we know of Harding is simply wrong. In many ways, I think Dean succeeds.

After graduating from college at age 17, Harding got into the newspaper business, which gained him visibility throughout his home state of Ohio. He became a State Senator at age 34 and, four years later, he lost his bid for the Governorship. Evidently an excellent speaker, Harding gave the nominating speech at the Republican National Convention in 1912 for President William Howard Taft, then running for reelection. This performance led, in 1914, to his election to the U.S. Senate as the first popularly elected Senator in Ohio history (the state legislature had elected Senators until this time).

With Democrats controlling the Presidency and both Houses of Congress, Harding (a Republican) had an unremarkable Senate career, but his popularity led to his being the Chairman of, and giving the keynote address, at the 1916 Republican convention. Eventually, in 1920, he ran for and won

the Presidency in the largest landslide to that time in American history, becoming the first sitting Senator to be elected President. (As an aside, John Kennedy and Barrack Obama, like Harding, undistinguished Senators, are the only other two in the nation's history.)

Harding was very popular with women, partly because of his "good looks," but more because of his strong support of women's suffrage. Since 1920 was the first election in which women had the franchise, this was very important.

Harding was also the first president in the 20th century to advocate equal rights for African Americans, and he forced the steel industry to reduce the standard work day from 12 to 8 hours. He cut income tax rates, reduced government spending, cut runaway unemployment by 10%, and negotiated major arms reduction pacts with major European powers and Japan. He also introduced the Bureau of the Budget and the Government Accounting Office to better control federal spending.

He put together one of the most distinguished cabinets in U.S. history with Charles Hughes (State), Andrew Mellon (Treasury), Herbert Hoover (Commerce) and Henry C. Wallace (Agriculture). Unfortunately, two of his appointments, Albert Fall (Interior) and Henry M. Daugherty (Attorney General) were involved in major scandals that, despite Harding's lack of complicity or knowledge, ruined his reputation.

He died after only 28 months in office of an apparent heart attack (Mrs. Harding refused an autopsy), but doctors at the time and since have argued the case to no real consensus.

Daniel Defoe, *The Storm* (1704, Penguin Books 2005), reviewed by Don Ferrett

This non-fiction book is the first full length work published by an author currently best known for his novels *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*. Defoe was in London on the night of November 26 and 27 and witnessed the greatest storm in the history of England to this day. He saw the devastation wrought by the extreme winds, clearly of hurricane force, that included toppled chimneys, steeples, and entire buildings. Some of the stories he heard, though, were clearly untrue. Thus, he decided to write to persons throughout the country whom he deemed to be reliable sources, and collect a volume to preserve a factual account of this incredible event. The book covers England from Land's End to the North Sea coast, and includes

substantial documentation from naval sources concerning the terrible toll taken on maritime commerce and the British Navy.

This was not an easy read for me. Defoe's spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure were, of course, those of his time, but they are not of our time. The editor of the Penguin edition, Richard Hamblyn, preserved Defoe's original text. The introduction to this edition contains two helpful maps, not in the original edition, which show the paths of the series of storms leading up to and including the great storm.

Joseph J. Ellis, *His Excellency, George Washington* (2005), reviewed by Jim Crumley

In this book, Joseph Ellis tries to answer the question, "Why is George Washington the 'foundingest' of our 'Founding Fathers'," considered first among many. He starts by asserting that recent historians have chosen to dismiss Washington and other "founders" as racist, imperialistic, elitist, and patriarchal; that academia in particular won't even countenance any other verdict. This, he contends, is an overreaction to earlier idolization.

The book follows Washington's life, concentrating on his role as Commanding General of the Continental Army and his Presidency. While his defeats (some ignominious) greatly outnumber his victories, Washington actually won the war. And it can be argued that he was the only one in the country who virtually everyone would accept as the commanding general. That he declined any public office following the war, when he was virtually a king, added greatly to his status and the principle of civilian authority over the military.

Although he made few inputs at the Constitutional Convention, his presence and unanimous selection as President of the Convention probably led to the attendance of many of the very capable men who devised our supreme law. And, as the unanimous selection by his countrymen to be our first President, he was clearly the most admired man in our nation at the time. Washington was not the most educated nor intelligent of our founders, but by their actions they clearly viewed him as first among equals.

Joseph J. Ellis, *Revolutionary Summer: the Birth of American Independence* (2013), reviewed by Jim Crumley

In this fairly recent book, Joseph Ellis covers the political and military events of the summer of 1776. In the Continental Congress, he focuses on John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, attributing lesser roles to Thomas Jefferson and John Dickinson. On the military side, George Washington has the lead role, supported by Nathaniel Greene. The British are represented by Admiral Richard Howe and his brother, General William Howe.

The Howe's never seem to realize the passion for independence of the American leadership, while people like Adams and Franklin continually view the final result as inevitable. Even Abigail Adams gets into the act proclaiming after Washington's terrible defeats in New York, that if all of Washington's army were to be killed or captured, the Howe brothers would have to contend with "a race of Amazons in America." One feisty lady!! I thought this was one of Ellis' better books as he does a good job of tying the political "goings on" with the battlefield strategy and results in the field.

Anthony Everitt, *The Rise of Rome: The Making of the World's Greatest Empire* (2013), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This book covers the history of Rome from the legendary/mythical experiences outlined in Virgil's Aeneid through the story of Romulus and Remus and the Tarquin kings, culminating in Tarquin Superbus, through the more historically documented period leading up to the end of the Republic. It pays a great deal of attention to the many wars, particularly the Second Punic War battles with Hannibal of Carthage. It also contains many interesting facts about the Roman Legions and the various penalties for misbehavior. For example, the death penalty was provided for sleeping on guard duty, homosexuality between an adult and child, perjury, theft, and several other "crimes." There is also quite a lot about the politics of the period and the ever changing strategy and tactics of the legions and their commanders, particularly Scipio Africanus. The last years of the Republic under Julius Caesar and the transition to his adopted "son" Octavius (Augustus) are pretty thin and are covered much better elsewhere. Nonetheless, the book is a great place to start on gaining an understanding of the early Republic and the politics of the various Generals, Consuls, and Tribunes.

John Ferling, *Independence: The Struggle to Set America Free*
(2011), reviewed by Jim Crumley

I think this is a "must read" book about the period leading up to American Independence. The basic story is there as presented by literally hundreds of books. But, the author does a great job of presenting the personalities involved and how their views changed over time. John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Dickinson's positions evolved tremendously. Robert Livingston, an early supporter of appeasement and Joseph Galloway, a loyalist, who eventually returned to England are included. And the author does not neglect the British side, describing the attitudes of King George, Lord North, and, possibly most interestingly, The Earl of Dartmouth, a strong supporter of American rights as the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Lord George Germain, Dartmouth's successor, and a villain (from the American point of view) is discussed. As is Edmund Burke, Charles Fox, and the 4th Earl of Sandwich (better known for a culinary invention), who all opposed Lord North and the King regarding their handling of America. Good book, even if you know a great deal about the period.

George Feifer, *Tennozan: The Battle of Okinawa and the Atomic Bomb* (1992), reviewed by Don Ferrett.

Okinawa, the last major battle of World War II, was the largest combined arms operation in history. The battle raged in the air, on and under the sea, and on and under the land. More people died here than in Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined, yet the battle's impact on the Okinawan people, landscape, and culture is seldom acknowledged today. Most other books on the Okinawan campaign are told from either a top-level overview of troop movements and casualty figures, or from the point of view of only one individual's experiences. The author spent almost ten years interviewing participants from the U.S., Japan, and Okinawa, and presents their parts in the battle in this engaging 600 page book.

Feifer attempts, and I believe succeeds, to describe the historical and cultural background that led the Japanese to begin their war against the U.S. Their, what we would call fanatical, battle spirit, and unwillingness to surrender, appear logical after reading the author's account. His description of the Okinawan temperament, one of nonviolence, and its clash with that of the Japanese who annexed them in 1879, is also well done -- as is the almost complete destruction, through actions of both the Americans and Japanese, of every historically significant structure on the island of Okinawa.

Both the U.S. and Japan continue to maintain a large military presence in the Ryukyus. One gets the impression from this book that the Okinawans

would like both of the former combatants to just go away and leave them alone.

Robert Ferguson, *The Vikings: A History* (2009), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This book essentially discusses the "Viking Age" from 793 AD, when Viking marauders attacked the British island of Lindisfarne, to the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The historical record is so confused and replete with myths and half-truths that the author is forced to give multiple views of the same events and provide caveats for many of the presumed activities during the age. Nonetheless, he imparts a great deal of information on the period from archaeological findings, particularly the "Oseberg Ship," and various burial sites. I found the discussion of the culture of "Northern Heathendom" the most interesting chapter, though the one on the Vikings' dealings with Charlemagne and his three sons is also illuminating.

Ken Ford and Steven J. Zaloga, *Overlord: The D-Day Landings* (2009), reviewed by Jim Crumley

There is nothing particularly new about this book. In fact, it is a compilation of four previously published works bringing together the entire campaign. However, it has a wonderfully detailed, almost minute-by-minute chronology of the activities on D-Day, many terrific maps and photos, and excellent overviews of the order of battle for each side, and each beach. The authors provide short biographies on most of the major commanders and the description of German defenses are more complete than I've seen in most other places. Be warned, however, the print is quite small in some cases and I found good lighting and reading glasses to be necessary.

Gary Gallagher, *The Union War* (2012), reviewed by Jim Crumley

In this book the author, clearly one of the leading experts on the Civil War, supports the thesis that the war was fought to retain the union rather than to emancipate slaves, as some recent historians have insisted. While the South clearly seceded to protect the institution of slavery, Gallagher asserts that the vast majority of citizens in the "free states" (and four slave-holding states that did not secede) supported the retention of the union, regardless of their view of emancipation. These are two different propositions and Gallagher attempts to separate them.

He cites numerous polls of the time that suggest even in the north a degree of racial prejudice not found in the United States for the past 150 years. He also points out the numerous speeches by Lincoln describing the goals of the war as retaining the union without regard to the future of slavery.

I don't think this is one of Gallagher's better books and some of his "points" seem to be a little "fuzzy." For example, he spends a great deal of time discussing the "Grand Review," in which the victorious Union Army marched through Washington over a two-day period. Despite the fact that roughly 10% of the Army was made up of African Americans, none were to be found in the review. The suggestion is made that this showed a degree of racial prejudice that could not support a war for emancipation. That appeared to be a very "thin reed" to me.

Nonetheless, Gallagher does present a wide variety of writings and opinions that support his thesis and the unique view of "union" among our forefathers. He uses Lincoln's own words, spoken on many occasions, to support his view that saving the union was the primary goal of the war from the northern perspective.

John Gribbin, *The Scientists: A History of Science Told Through the Lives of Its Greatest Inventors* (2002), reviewed by Tom Hady

From the Renaissance to (nearly) the present, Gribbin tells the story of the development of science in 600 pages. He includes an amazing amount of detail and tells the story well. Dr. Gribbin is a scientist (an astrophysicist trained at Cambridge), so he has the background to understand the science he is writing about. He also has the ability to write intelligibly for lay readers. The combination leads to an outstanding book. This book is destined to stay on my shelves for reference.

S. C. Gwynne, *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History* (2011), reviewed by Jim Crumley

While this book covers far more than the title suggest, it is primarily a story of the Comanches, who the author describes as the most powerful, bloodthirsty, and warlike of all the Native Americans. They evidently were great horsemen and the first to actually fight from horseback, rather than dismount to join the fray.

Much of the book covers the lives of the Parker family, starting with the Fort Parker massacre in which Comanche warriors killed virtually all of the men

and many of the children in the fort, while taking the women as captives. Rachel Parker Plummer later wrote a book of her 21 months of captivity by the Comanche. It is a horrific tale of torture, rape, and the murder of her seven week old baby by being dragged through the brush by a horse.

One of Rachel's cousins, Cynthia Ann Parker, survived the rapes and torture to actually become the wife of a Comanche chief and mother of Quanah Parker, the last chief of the Comanche. Cynthia Ann refused to leave the Comanche and her children when given the opportunity. When she was finally captured by "whites" and returned to the Parker family, she refused to speak English and continued to observe Comanche customs.

Her son, Quanah, despite being half "white" became a great chief, leading his people in battle and finally into peace.

Allen C. Guelzo, *Gettysburg: The Last Invasion* (2014), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is the latest book on the battle of Gettysburg, probably the most written-about military engagement in U.S. history. And while I think it is an interesting retelling of the battle, the author seems to engage his personal biases more than I'd like. Jeb Stuart, for example, clearly failed in the time leading up to and through the battle of Gettysburg, but the author tries to make him a failure throughout the entire war. That's a hard sell.

While the battle clearly was a major victory for the union, the author accurately points out that the war lasted almost two more years and that the more important result was the confederate loss. Had Lee won at Gettysburg, the tenuous support Lincoln enjoyed in much of the North may well have collapsed and pressure to negotiate a peace, including Confederate independence, could have resulted. That's hard to confirm, but it's an interesting thought.

Beyond the recitation of the battle, the author provides some interesting discussion of muskets, rifles, and bayonets and some very fascinating statistical comparisons between the American armies of the Civil War and the forces of Napoleon and Wellington at Waterloo and other campaigns. If you've read a great deal about Gettysburg, you probably won't find much new here, but like most such books, I have found that I always learn a few new things.

Peter R. Henriques, *Realistic Visionary: A Portrait of George Washington*, (2008), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is a relatively short "portrait" of George Washington written by a former George Mason professor a few years ago. The book doesn't really provide any new information and draws heavily on the works of previous biographies with a smattering of "true" primary sources. It certainly isn't a complete work, but it focuses on ten areas of the subject's life, dividing them into ten chapters of roughly 20 pages each. Along with Washington's experiences in the French and Indian War, as Commanding General of the Continental Army, and as President, the book focuses on a number of personal areas in his life. These include his relationships with Sally Fairfax, Martha Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton. The author also delves into some detail (as much as possible in 20 pages) of Washington's views of slavery and religion and wraps up the volume with the hero's suffering and eventual death.

One interesting, and I thought novel, addition to the book is found in the "notes on sources." Along with specific footnotes, the author gives an overview of his references for each chapter, giving the interested reader some direction on where to find additional information on the subject for further study.

Arthur Herman, *Freedom's Forge: How American Business Produced Victory in World War II* (2013), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This book delves into the incredible effort by American Business to support the War effort in WWII. It goes into some detail on the "Dollar a Year Men" who served FDR on their "own nickel," focusing on William Knudsen, who was a former GM and Ford executive. Officially "advisors" they served more as a "cover" for the President who initially spurned their advice and made them the "scapegoats" for failures of the "decision makers" in his administration. Initially, the President comes across as somewhat "wishy washy" as he tries to compromise his personal belief in the power of the central government and the obvious lack of capability of some in providing the needs for a massive world war. To his credit, he overcomes the many objections of some of his cabinet and makes the required effort to unleash industry to the task. Labor leaders like Walter Reuther of the UMW do not come off well at all. The AFL and CIO battled for supremacy at certain shipyards causing delays as they fought "turf wars" to the detriment of the final result. Several unions even called for crippling strikes to further strengthen their post-war bargaining positions. And their opposition to women workers in the national crisis was unconscionable. By the way, the women did a GREAT job. For those whose primary focus on WWII has

heretofore been the battles, the strategy, or the politics, this volume can fill in some needed blanks.

Roger Hesketh, *Fortitude: The D-Day Deception Campaign* (2000),
reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is a very detailed account of Allied efforts to persuade Hitler and the Nazi regime that the D-Day invasion of Europe would take place at the Pas de Calais rather than Normandy and would not take place for several weeks after the actual planned invasion. The book was written shortly after the war as an internal "after action" report by Roger Hesketh, a member of the deception team that actually planned "Operation Fortitude." It was not released for public consumption until almost 50 years later.

This is a very dry book with loads of data, unit designations, and details that are difficult to retain, though the story itself is quite remarkable. Except for a researcher on the subject, I would probably recommend Ben Macintyre's book, "Double Cross" (reviewed elsewhere), to get a solid picture of the operation and the personalities involved. Unfortunately, Hesketh's report, while worthwhile to a scholar on the subject, doesn't get into any depth on the truly fascinating people who "pulled off" this operation.

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (1999), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is the chilling story of Belgian domination of Central Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It depicts King Leopold II of Belgium as a despotic villain, interested in expanding his own wealth. Unable to gain the kind of power he desired in his home country of Belgium, he personally became the sole owner of an area he called the "Congo Free State" (in what later became known as the Belgian Congo and now, the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Leopold raped the land of its resources, forced millions into slavery, and tortured, mutilated, and murdered millions more. The tragedy only ceased when international pressure became too great and the area was taken away from him and put under control of the Belgian government at his death. Independence came much later.

J. C. Holt, *Robin Hood* (1989), reviewed by Tom Hady

If you are looking for rollicking tales of Robin Hood and his Merry Men, go elsewhere. Prof. Holt was a respected medievalist and the book is about the

origins and gradual development of the Robin Hood stories, which almost certainly originated before 1300. He does that in great detail and with an academic historian's careful documentation.

Will Irwin, *The Jedburghs: The Secret History of the Allied Special Forces, France 1944* (2005), reviewed by Don Ferrett.

Never heard of the Jedburghs? That's probably because most of the material on them was classified for many years after the end of WWII. Jedburghs were the prototypes for today's special forces teams that are inserted behind enemy lines. The author follows this small group of men through their selection, intensive training, insertion into France, and operations with the local underground (French Forces of the Interior or FFI) against the Germans. These operations included cutting communications wiring, blowing up factories or trains, destroying--or protecting--bridges, and ambushing German troops.

Of the 93 three-man teams he has identified, Irwin selected six teams to study in detail. For those individuals he includes biographical material from before they became Jedburghs, descriptions of their behavior as team members, and post-war activities--for those who survived the action.

Each team was composed of two officers and radio operator, who may or may not have been an officer. Since the operations were all in France, at least one member had to be a native Frenchman. There also had to be at least two nationalities represented on the team. The other two members could be French (but not both), American, British, Dutch, or Australian. A complete roster of 93 Jedburgh teams is presented at the end of the book, along with notes, a bibliography, and an index. The book also contains a number of photographs, including one of the more influential Jedburghs, William Colby, who later became director of the CIA.

R. V. Jones, *The Wizard War: British Scientific Intelligence, 1939-1945* (1978), reviewed by Don Ferrett.

Most of the books I have read about intelligence during WWII have dealt with the spying aspect of the field, concerned primarily with troop movements and battle plans. This one is told from a different aspect--that of determining the enemy's technical capabilities, both currently fielded systems and those in the field test phase. Dr. Jones headed up the office responsible for informing the British senior military staff members, and occasionally Churchill himself, of weapon system capabilities and possible

countermeasures for them. The brilliant work of Jones and his small staff on German radar bomber control contributed greatly to Britain's survival during the "Battle of Britain." Their later work significantly reduced aircraft and personnel losses during the massive allied bombing raids over Nazi-held territory. The team was very effective in analyzing German rocket capabilities, and even worked on assessing the threat of a possible German nuclear bomb.

The book is written in a very readable style, and includes a fair amount of personal information about Jones, his team members, and many high-ranking individuals in the upper echelons of the British war effort. There are also many photographs, maps, and diagrams to assist the reader in understanding the technical materials involved. On the whole, this is a must read for anyone interested in the details of the radars and rockets used by the Germans during WWII, and the countermeasures devised to defeat them.

Michael Lee Lanning, *The Military 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Military Leaders of All Time* (1996), reviewed by Jim Crumley

I ran across this book in the library and thought it would be interesting. In it, the author spends 3-5 pages on each of his 100. While some on his list such as Napoleon (2), Alexander the Great (3), Genghis Khan (4), and Julius Caesar (5) would probably be put on anyone's list, others are questionable in my mind and the ordering is even more suspect. With due respect to the "Father of our Country," placing George Washington as the #1 most influential military leader of all time seems a stretch. The author defends this choice by saying Washington's legacy, the United States, is greater than anyone else's. I bow to that view.

Americans are certainly well represented with George Marshall (16), Ike (18), Douglas MacArthur (20) and Winfield Scott (32) placing ahead of U.S. Grant (33) John Pershing (41), and Omar Bradley (46). Norman Schwarzkopf (49), and Sam Houston (57) also ranked ahead of Robert E. Lee (60). Some of these inclusions and rank ordering appear silly to me.

Military theorists such as Clausewitz (21), Sun Tzu (23), Jomini (26), Mahan (38), Moltke (39), and Douhet (74) are represented, as are dictators and revolutionaries such as Hitler (14), Mao (48), Saddam Hussein (81), Fidel Castro (82), and Kim IL Sung (86). Again, some of these later ones left me shaking my head.

Naval forces are represented by Lord Nelson (35), Chester Nimitz (61) and Yamamoto (77) among others.

The list also includes a very broad cross-section of leaders from many nations including Nguyen Giap (40), Shaka (59), Moshe Dayan (69), and Saladin (91), who might be surprised to find he was ranked behind Richard the Lion Hearted (58). Joan of Arc (43) is the only representative of her gender included.

Finally, George Patton barely squeezed onto the list at #95, which placed him behind 15 other Americans as well as Bernard Montgomery (63), Heinz Guderian (75), and Erwin Rommel (79) from WWII. Old "Blood and Guts" would have been very unhappy.

Anyway, it's an easy book to read and, despite what I think are faults in many of the selections, it can provide a little information about some of the great military leaders and minds of history. Lanning is a retired military officer.

Christopher Lee, *1603: The Death of Queen Elizabeth I, the Return of the Black Plague, the Rise of Shakespeare, Piracy, Witchcraft and the Birth of the Stuart Era* (2003), reviewed by Tom Hady

The title summarizes the book. Queen Elizabeth finally dies. Robert Cecil, her chief minister, has been preparing for this eventuality and dispatches a messenger to James VI in Scotland, James comes south and is crowned James I, King of what he is the first to call Great Britain. Other chapters discuss the first year of his reign (and some events of future years) including the King James Bible, peace with Spain and discontinuance of privateering, (piracy), Raleigh, Ireland and other subject. A well-written book, marred slightly (in this reviewer's opinion) by a tendency to quote original 17th C writings at unnecessary length.

Marcus Luttrell, *Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of Seal Team 10* (2013), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is the book upon which the major motion picture, "Lone Survivor," was based. Unlike the movie, the book spends a great deal of time dealing with the author's training to be a SEAL. Learning about the rigors of that training is probably worth the read, even if you've seen the movie. The actual "Operation Redwing" is a "bonus." Luttrell's near deification of Navy SEALs

may be expected but his arrogance regarding his and their capabilities in all things, however, is a little off-putting I'm sure to many. His views of the media and liberals in general are also pretty "stark," believing that atrocities against Americans are overlooked and failings by U.S. forces are blown all out of proportion; that media who are inadvertently injured are treated as hero's and our military are "second guessed" by people with no knowledge of the situation. He's particularly upset that the media continuously reported his death without any evidence, greatly upsetting his family and loved ones. It's an interesting read which might be particularly enlightening (and possibly disturbing) for those with no military background. Regardless, it's a terrific true story of courage and determination.

Stephen Kinzer, *Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles and their Secret World War* (2013), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is a very readable joint biography of, outside the Kennedys, probably the most powerful and influential siblings in American history—one being Secretary of State and the other the Director of the CIA in the Eisenhower administration. The author, Stephen Kinzer, is a long time correspondent for the New York Times. And, following the tone of his previous books and writings, he takes exception to the brother's view of "American exceptionalism" and anti-communist beliefs, and more broadly America's role in the international community of the 20th Century. For example, Foster Dulles made a speech at an international conference in Amsterdam in which he cautioned against the dangers of communism and the excesses of the Soviet government. Seemingly disregarding the millions who were murdered under that regime, the author calls Dulles' speech "a gross mischaracterization." He goes on to cite another speech at the same conference which claimed Soviet Communism was both "inevitable and necessary" as the more reasoned view.

He cites the brothers as the cause of virtually every American policy that he deems a failure, even accusing them of being responsible for over two decades of disasters in Vietnam even though both brothers were off the national scene years before President Kennedy sent the first "advisors" to that country.

But, after calling one or another of the brothers "ignorant" (both were Princeton graduates), "stubborn," "intransigent," "cowardly," "reckless," "frivolous," and too many other names to cite in this short review, he wraps up his book by saying "it wasn't all their fault." He goes on to claim that the majority of Americans are that way.

Dominique LaPierre, *A Rainbow in the Nights: The Tumultuous Birth of South Africa* (2009), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is a relatively short (320 pages) history of South Africa. It covers the initial colonization starting in 1652 of the region by Dutch Calvinist settlers and concludes in the 1990's with the election of Nelson Mandela as President of the "new" South Africa. While this is an excellent introduction to the history of South Africa, I do not think it is one of Monsieur LaPierre's better efforts.

Interestingly, the first settlers were associated with the Dutch East India Company and came to the southern tip of Africa to raise and provide vegetables for passing Dutch ships. Initially, there was no intent to colonize the area. But, when the Dutch government proposed to tax the settlers, they responded that they were not Dutch, but "Afrikaners." And, thus, it began.

Napoleon's conquest of the Netherlands in 1795, led to the British annexing the "Cape Colony" to help them dominate the seas. And for the next 100 years the British and Afrikaners (now, combined with various other European settlers and called "Boers") battled over the entire area.

The early intent to keep the races separate resulted 200+ years later in the policy of "Apartheid."

LaPierre covers the early wars with the Zulu nation, establishment of the Orange Free State, the Transvaal, The Great Trek, the Boer Wars, and many of the famous leaders such as Shaka Zulu, Cecil Rhodes and the De Beers brothers, Paul Kruger, Jan Smuts, Louis Botha, and, more recently, F.W. de Klerk, Dr. Christian Barnard, Bishop Desmond Tutu, and, of course, Nelson Mandela.

The disgrace of Apartheid is covered well and Mandela is the obvious hero of the piece. But, the strength of the book in my mind is the history of the early years up to about 1900. The weakest part is the author's choice to "recreate" the meeting in which "Apartheid" was initially implemented, including the imagined dialogue which came directly from the author. Additional "conversations" throughout the book are similarly contrived. Other than a lengthy bibliography and quotes from Mandela's autobiography, the book also lacks source information. Still, I learned a great deal.

Ben Macintyre, *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies* (2013), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is the very interesting and frequently exciting story of the Double (and Triple) Agents working for British Intelligence during World War II. It culminates in the successful Fortitude campaign of disinformation that focused Nazi attention on the Pas de Calais rather than Normandy prior to and for several weeks after the D-Day landings. What sets this book apart in my view is how it follows the adventures and misadventures of various double agents—"Brutus" (Roman Czerniawski), "Bronx" (Elvira Chaudoir), "Treasure" (Lily Sergeev), "Tricycle" (Dusan Popov), "Artist" (Johnny Jebsen), and the most important of them all, "Garbo" (Pujol Garcia). "Garbo," in fact, kept the fiction of the attack on the Pas de Calais going until August 30, 1944, when he reported to his "German handlers" that the attack had been canceled. Believing him, as they had from the start, the Germans considered him their most important agent in Britain. For his work, the Fuhrer awarded him the Iron Cross, probably the most important tribute to the success of the "Double Cross" mission. A GREAT read.

David McCullough, *The Greater Journey; Americans in Paris* (2011), reviewed by Tom Hady

In the 1800's, it appears, nearly all the artists and most of the best medical doctors trained in Paris. McCullough chronicles them and the milieu in which they lived. Paris must have been the center of medicine, at least in the earlier part of the century, and of art throughout. The physical and social sciences seem to have been absent.

James McPherson, *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief* (2009), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is a focused biography of Abraham Lincoln written by one of the most respected Civil War historians of recent years. But, "Battle Cry of Freedom," it is not. McPherson attempts to focus on Lincoln solely in his role as "Commander in Chief" of the Armed Forces, which, according to the author has never been done before. This may be true and McPherson certainly examines the various conflicts Lincoln had with his Generals and Cabinet over war aims, strategies, and even tactics. He shows fairly convincingly that the war Lincoln entered to retain the union without regard to slavery's future, changed over time to a war to eradicate slavery throughout the nation. Lincoln's differences on this issue with his soldiers, members of his own party, the loyal (and disloyal) opposition make for interesting reading.

But, someone who has read a great deal about the Civil War will probably not find much new here. It's an excellent read because the author writes so well, but it's probably best suited for someone who wants to know more about Abraham Lincoln and is relatively unfamiliar with some of the issues and problems he faced during his Presidency.

Gordon W. Prange, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (1981), reviewed by Don Ferrett

After 37 years of research, the author passed away before being able to publish his work. It was to be a four volume set, selected from over 3500 pages of manuscript. Two of his students condensed that down to a single volume of 738 pages of text. Even with this reduction the book is massive, and contains what appears to be the best single summary available of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Prange had access to Japanese political and military documents by virtue of his assignment as Chief of the Historical Section in Japan during the occupation. During his time there, and during many subsequent visits to Japan, he met with every living person of import involved in the planning or execution of the attack.

The book contains maps, chains of command, and photographs of key players on both sides. Also included is a thorough listing of all of the U.S. boards of inquiry on the lack of preparedness of the Hawaiian Army and Navy commands. The "selected" bibliography is quite large and includes the names of the many individuals, both U.S. and Japanese, interviewed by the author.

If you're looking for a book on the attack that will support some revisionist theory, such as that Roosevelt had prior knowledge of the attack and let it happen to get the U.S. into the war, you will not find it here. The treatment is even-handed and non-judgmental. Japanese planning, technological development, training, and secrecy led to a brilliantly executed surprise attack.

Edward J. Renehan, Jr., *Dark Genius of Wall Street: The Misunderstood Life of Jay Gould, King of the Robber Barons* (2005), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is a book about one of the most vilified "Robber Barons" in American history. Like John D. Rockefeller and Cornelius Vanderbilt, the two richest men in American history according to one methodology, Gould was born "dirt poor" and through intelligence, hard work, superhuman drive, and a

clear understanding of the then-prevalent “rules of the game” became one of the most important and influential men of the latter half of the 19th century.

That’s not to say that he didn’t play “fast and loose” with the law. An interesting vignette in the book describes a bidding war between Gould and Vanderbilt for votes in the New York state legislature, complete with sacks of \$1,000 bills, all overseen by Tammany Hall’s “Boss” Tweed.

While possibly the most reviled of his contemporary industrialists, Gould was frequently identified as a trader and speculator and only interested in the “quick buck,” a reputation that stayed with him through numerous articles and biographies for decades after his death. Mr. Renehan, the author, takes a different view, while still pointing out Gould’s many faults. He describes him as a family man, excellent father and husband, who dreamed of establishing a railroad kingdom throughout the west. This culminated in long term investments that gave him control of the Kansas-Pacific, Missouri-Pacific, and Union Pacific railroads among many other smaller lines. He gave large donations to charity, much of it anonymously. Yet, at his death, he left virtually all of his wealth to members of his family. Like virtually every villain of history, however, and I’m not sure Gould quite earns that sobriquet, there appears to be good in everyone. In my view, the author presents a very balanced view of Mr. Gould.

Cokie Roberts, *Founding Mothers: The Women who raised our Nation* (2005), reviewed by Jim Crumley

As she notes in her book, Cokie Roberts’ family has been involved in American politics for seven generations, starting with William Claiborne, a friend of Thomas Jefferson and first Governor of Louisiana. Her parents, Hale and Lindy Boggs, served as representatives from New Orleans for a total of 44 years (him for 26 and, upon his death, her for 18 more). So her interest in politics comes naturally and her “Democratic Party” credentials are nearly unmatched.

In this book, she looks at the influence of a number of women who were mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of some of our founding fathers. While she certainly reports on the influence of Abigail Adams, you also meet Eliza Lucas Pinckney, the mother of two significant “founders” and, in her own right, one of the most important agriculturists of the period. Another of the women covered is Sarah Livingston Jay, daughter of the first governor of New York and wife of John Jay. Several others provided various degrees of influence on the founders but are too numerous to detail. Sadly, I think the

book suffers from very poor writing, but, if you, like me, are very interested in the founding of the nation, this might be worth your time.

Alexander Rose, *Washington's Spies: The Story of America's First Spy Ring* (2007), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is the book upon which the AMC series, "Turn," was based. It's a relatively easy read and certainly exciting, though sometime the author jumps around in a way that caused me some confusion.

It tells the story of the Culper Spy Ring, which in many ways came about as a result of the death of Nathan Hale (described early in the book). Benjamin Talmadge, a classmate of Hale's at Yale, convinced General Washington of the need for intelligence from inside the British lines. And his exploits, along with other members of the ring, are well documented and presented in an interesting way. Though a number of spies have their moments, the other major player in the story is Abraham Woodhull. Washington named the ring after Culpepper, Virginia, and Woodhull took the alias of Samuel Culper as his "cover." Culper's fears of discovery and Washington's increasing demands are a central theme of the book and the close calls add tension to the entire drama.

The Author also spends some time discussing the art of spy craft with some interesting revelations about various types of invisible ink available at the time and a fairly lengthy description of cryptography and code breaking.

Overall, I thought this was a good read about a subject, I, at least, knew very little about.

William Rosen, *The Third Horseman; A Story of Weather, War and the Famine History Forgot* (2014), reviewed by Tom Hady

From the jacket: *In May 1315, it started to rain. For the seven disastrous years that followed, Europeans would be visited by a series of curses unseen since the third book of Exodus: floods, ice, failures of crop and cattle, and epidemics not just of disease, but of pike, sword and spear.* Rosen's thesis is that the end of the Medieval Warm Period led to an unusually violent period in northern Europe. He tells the story well, but concentrates mainly on English history of the period. Clearly, the reign of Edward II was not a happy time in England. Whether the shift in climate was the primary cause is less clear, at least to this reviewer.

John F. Ross, *War on the Run: the Epic Story of Robert Rogers and the Conquest of America's First Frontier* (2009), reviewed by Jim Crumley.

This is a biography of Robert Rogers, often cited as the "Godfather of Special Forces." In fact he was a very successful colonial frontiersman who raised, trained and led a guerrilla band known as Roger's Rangers during the French and Indian War. He equipped his group with his own money and by the end of the war was totally broke. A couple of "get rich quick" schemes failed and he ended up in debtor's prison from which he escaped.

Rogers' success as a British officer during the war became legendary and eventually he sailed to England to pursue his "back pay" and write a book about America. Solvent again, he returned to America.

From there his life became very complicated. He was issued a commission by King George III to search for a Northwest Passage, ran afoul of the British General Gage, who brought him up on what now appear to be "trumped up" charges of treason against the crown. Although acquitted, he was once again broke and sailed again to England where the King declined to interfere any more on his behalf. He spent some more time in debtor's prison before returning to America.

His activities during the American Revolution were even more controversial as he seemed to change his position continuously, volunteering for Washington's Army (he was denied a post) and then choosing to fight for the King. At one point he aided in the capture of Nathan Hale. Due to Hale's execution and the recognition that Rogers had raised troops to fight the colonials, he has been considered one of the greatest traitors in American history. He died in London, an alcoholic, destitute man living in obscurity.

While a great combat soldier-- inventive, courageous, and aggressive-- many of Rogers personal qualities leave much to be desired. The strength of this book is the coverage of his French and Indian War days.

Amity Shlaes, *Coolidge* (2014), reviewed by Jim Crumley

In this book, the author attempts to provide a broader understanding of Calvin Coolidge, the man, than most of us are aware. A small town lawyer from Vermont, Coolidge moved to Massachusetts and progressed to higher and higher political jobs in that state, starting with state legislator, then Lt. Governor, and finally, Governor. He supported women's suffrage, opposed prohibition, and backed American involvement in WWI. His "name" was

made as governor when the police department of Boston went on strike and the city fell into chaos. When the Police Commissioner and Mayor failed to act, Coolidge stepped in, fired all the striking policemen and recruited their replacements. When Samuel Gompers, of the AFL, wrote him in protest, Coolidge's response ("There is no right to strike against the public safety by anyone, anywhere, anytime.") thrust him into the national spotlight as a man of integrity and decisiveness.

As governor, he supported a bonus of \$100 for Massachusetts war veterans, and passed legislation limiting the work week for women and children. He cut the state budget, and among his many vetoes, vetoed a 50% pay raise for the legislature.

All this led to his selection as the Vice-Presidential candidate on Warren G. Harding's ticket in 1920. After winning election, Coolidge became the first Vice-President invited to attend cabinet meetings and, when Harding suddenly died among numerous scandals within his administration, Coolidge became President.

His was an extremely successful Presidency and he was elected to his own term in 1924 by a wide margin. During his tenure, he cut taxes, cut spending, supported commerce ("the chief business of the American people is business"), and made valiant efforts on behalf of African Americans and Native Americans. Possibly more important, he "cleaned up" all of the scandals of the previous administration and even opponents recognized him as honest and courageous.

He chose not to run for a second term and one can only guess what might have been had he done so.

Evan Thomas, *Ike's Bluff: President Eisenhower's Secret Battle to Save the World* (2012), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is a well written story concerning the Presidency of Dwight Eisenhower. There is not a lot "new" here, and the author overstates the "bluff" and the "secret battle." Essentially, the "bluff" was that Eisenhower might use nuclear weapons and by relying on them could cut other military spending. In truth, he actually increased military spending (as a percent of GNP) from the pre-Korean War levels, and, as most know, President Kennedy almost immediately altered the military structure to give him "more options" than simply the nuclear one.

Thomas spends a lot of time on Ike's golfing, his various illnesses, and highlights his speech warning of the "military industrial complex." Although

acknowledging Ike's concerns about the communist threat, the author seems to attack anyone else as "red baiters" who had similar views. It seemed inconsistent to me. But, the author gives Eisenhower a great deal of credit as a strategic thinker, something that is not universally understood, and makes the case that what appeared to be a "hands off" approach to government was, in reality, a steady "hands on" style of leadership.

Ian W. Toll, *Pacific Crucible: War at Sea in the Pacific, 1941-1942* (2012), reviewed by Don Ferrett

Ian Toll, author of *Six Frigates*, has written another page-turner. This one, on an entirely different topic, covers the naval battles in the Pacific during the first six months of WWII. There is a significant amount of background material on both the US and Japanese Navies, which greatly aids the reader in understanding why some of the major decisions were made by each. Although both Navies were trained to follow the doctrines established by Alfred Thayer Mahan, they were entering a new world where the aircraft carrier, not the battleship, would dominate the seas. The Japanese were quicker to learn how to use this new force. As a result, the Americans struggled greatly during the early stages of the war. Between Pearl Harbor and Midway, the US Navy came to understand that new tactics, training, and materiel were urgently needed, or it was going to be a long war.

This is an easy book to read, and contains about 500 pages of text, 15 maps, and a number of illustrations. There are also end-notes, an extensive bibliography, and a comprehensive index. Very interesting.

Harlow Giles Unger, *The Lion of Liberty: Patrick Henry and a Call to a New Nation* (2010), reviewed by Jim Crumley

I think this is the best of the several biographies I have read by Mr. Unger. Unlike many biographies, Unger provides both the good and bad of his subject. Patrick Henry was a mercurial man, possibly the greatest speaker of his (or any?) age. He won court cases on the back of his oratory, not necessarily his facts. He convinced people of his cause through his eloquence, fire, and determination, and not necessarily with the "correctness" of his argument. He held grudges and punished opponents. His relationships with some of the other great Virginia founders such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison became "strained" to say the least, as they disagreed on many of the great issues of the time.

He fought for liberty for our nation against the British and fought just as hard against the Constitution of this country which he thought gave too much power to the central government and too little to the states and local communities.

Unger recreates the setting of Henry's "Give me Liberty or Give me Death" speech in a way that puts the reader in the room. He also questions the accuracy of the "if this be treason" speech with some interesting contemporary reports that suggest Henry didn't really say those famous lines.

Regardless, Patrick Henry is one of the more interesting and important of our founders and worthy of study. As the father of 16 children, one could even suggest that he, not George Washington (who was childless), was the "Father of our Country."

Douglas Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage* (2011), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This is a book about the life of Bill Donovan, war hero, successful lawyer, Republican politician, near-legendary womanizer, and America's primary Intelligence figure of WW II. Born of second-generation Irish immigrants, Donovan was very intelligent, eventually graduating from Columbia University where he was a star football player (nicknamed "Wild Bill" for his style of play). He also was named to Phi Beta Kappa and, after graduation with a law degree, became a successful Wall Street lawyer. He formed a cavalry unit in the New York militia and was activated to chase Pancho Villa around Mexico just prior to WW I.

During the World War, as a battalion commander, he became the most decorated American officer of the war, earning the Silver Star, Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal with two oak-leaf clusters, two Purple Hearts, and the Congressional Medal of Honor. When he received his Medal of Honor sometime after the war, before a reunion of his unit, he took it off, hung it on a podium, and said it did not belong to him but to the comrades who died, were wounded, or survived the war; it belonged to all of them. This was received with wild applause from "his troops." After the war, he was a successful international lawyer and through his world travels became personally familiar with many of the issues and personalities important over the next several decades.

As a Republican politician (he unsuccessfully ran for Lt. Governor and Governor) in New York, he frequently collided with FDR on various issues,

but was greatly respected by the President. Despite the objection of J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI, and George Marshall, Chief of Staff of the Army, both of whose views were probably parochial and possibly even selfish, Donovan convinced the president of the need for a U.S. intelligence service leading up to and throughout the war. Donovan became chief of the service, eventually called the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

His various exploits and schemes, both successful and unsuccessful, are well documented and make up the bulk of the book's interest. Throughout the war, Donovan worked closely with FDR and the President approved virtually all of his budget requests to the chagrin of the Budget Director and his many enemies within the government. When FDR died, however, his days were numbered and shortly after the war ended, President Truman closed down the OSS. Under President Eisenhower, he was given several important tasks but was never able to run his "brainchild," the CIA.

I thought this was an interesting and balanced, "warts and all," portrayal of an important and controversial figure in 20th century America.

Michael Wallis, *David Crockett: The Lion of the West* (2012), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This book dispelled much of what I learned about "Davy Crockett" from watching Fess Parker many years ago. He didn't "kilt him a b'ar when he was only three;" wasn't "born on a mountain top in Tennessee," and rarely wore a coonskin cap. According to the author, he also went by "David," not "Davy." So much for the Disney version!

Despite the author's early claims to the contrary, this is a pretty straightforward chronological biography. It's an easy read and a well-documented life of an entertaining and important character from the early 19th century America. An outdoorsman, Congressman, and eventually a martyr for Texas Independence, Crockett's life included many "ups and down." Scrupulously honest, he nonetheless abandoned his family for long periods of time, frequently drank to excess and, despite his popularity with his constituents, was an ineffective Congressman, where his unwillingness to compromise alienated other members. When finally defeated for re-election to his fourth term, Crockett told his constituents, "You may all go to hell, and I will go to Texas." Of course, not long afterwards he was killed at the Alamo, sparking great speculation at the time and since about the specifics of his death. The author tends to support the version in a diary written by a Mexican Soldier not long after the event in which he claimed Crockett and six other men were captured at the conclusion of the battle and put to death on the orders of Santa Anna. This conflicts with the versions of the two survivors of the

Alamo, a slave and a woman, who claim to have seen Crockett's dead body surrounded by a group of dead Mexican soldiers. As the author notes, however, "who really cares?" Crockett was a heroic figure and an interesting character.

Donald Cameron Watt, *How War Came: The Immediate Origins of the Second World War, 1938-1939* (1989), reviewed by Don Ferrett.

This book was selected as a New York Times Best Book of 1989. It is a thorough diplomatic history of the events of the year preceding the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. The author describes in great detail the personalities of all of the leaders of the European states who were on a collision course to a second Great War, as well as their key foreign office negotiators--and some non-professional ones as well. Much of the information in the book was new to me, such as the fact that Ribbentrop and Goering were bitter enemies, with the former, who was strongly in favor of war, having the Fuhrer's ear. Watt apparently had access to information that had not been previously available, including many state documents and personal papers of those directly involved. It is clear from this book that much of political history is made by individuals with large egos and small or petty minds. There were many instances of officials either lying to or misleading their leaders, with ultimately tragic consequences.

The book is well written, although the sentence structure is at times quite convoluted. There are many end-notes, a substantial bibliography, and a good selection of photographs of the key players in this drama.

Tom Wiener, ed., *Voices of War: Stories of Service from the Home Front and the Front Lines* (2004), reviewed by Don Ferrett.

This compilation of war stories from WWI through Operation Desert Storm is a product of the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project. Included are a variety of stories taken from interviews, letters home and diary entries. There are also a number of photographs, drawings, and propaganda posters from the period. Former Senator and Administrator of Veterans Affairs Max Cleland and former Senator and Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel were instrumental in the development of the VHP. Cleland wrote the introduction to this book and Hagel wrote the afterword.

The stories follow citizen soldiers from their enlistments, through boot camp and further training, to the battlefield, and finally the trip home and outprocessing. They include reminiscences from soldiers old and young,

male and female, black, white and Asian, as well as from their loved ones manning the home front. Most tales are from survivors, though some are letters from soldiers who didn't make it back alive. Some came home on a stretcher or with significant mental problems.

The copy of the book I read was autographed by the editor for my late father when Dad came to D.C. to see the WWII Memorial. Reading it was a moving experience.

Joseph Wheelan, *Jefferson's War: America's First War on Terror 1801-1805* (2004), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This book essentially covers the history of the Barbary pirates (Muslim raiders from Algiers, Tripoli, Morocco, and Tunis) who attacked European shipping for several hundred years, killing and ransoming those Christians they did not take for slaves. During the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, these "corsairs" captured hundreds of thousands of Europeans, had their own ports and cities devastated several times in retaliation, but always returned to pirating. By the end of the eighteenth century, most European countries, including England and France, paid annual "tribute" to the pirates to ensure their ships would not be attacked. The book tries hard to provide a link between the Barbary War and the modern "War on Terror" with limited success. While the Barbary pirates were Muslim's who believed all others were "infidels" who should be killed or enslaved, they were willing to forgo these views for cash, prizes, and other tributes. Still, it is an interesting and relatively detailed account of the economics, politics, and military confrontations of the period.

When Thomas Jefferson became President in 1801, hours after John Adams had sold off 17 of the U.S. Navy's 30 ships, he faced the critical problem posed by the pirates. He chose to fight the pirates and officers such as William Eaton and Edward Preble became famous. After much back and forth a treaty was signed in 1805 that didn't do all that Jefferson had wanted in that some "tribute" was still to be paid. Nonetheless, with the outbreak of the War of 1812, the Barbary States reneged on the treaty and again began to take U.S. ships.

Following the war, in which America's navy had "grown up" a great deal, President Madison sent Stephen Decatur and a large Armada to the Mediterranean to "punish" the pirates. Decatur brooked no foolishness and achieved new treaties with each of the states without any U.S. tribute and large "reparations" from each of them. True to form, upon Decatur's departure the pirates reappeared only to be destroyed by a new flotilla sent forth by President Madison, who wrote that "the settled policy of America ... (is) that peace is better than war, and war is better than tribute."

Simon Winchester, *The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary* (1998), reviewed by Tom Hady

The story of the OED and one of its main volunteer researchers. An interesting tale for what it tells of the process of putting together the OED. The sensational title does not do it service, though it probably sold books.

Gordon S. Wood, *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different* (2007), reviewed Jim Crumley

In this book, Gordon Wood sets forth the thesis that the founders were treated as demi-Gods for over a century and then, various historians, academics, and politicians made a concerted effort to knock them down from their lofty status, and finally, in more recent years, to demonize them for their failures and inconsistencies based on modern morality. In his first chapter, he describes their heritage and the environment in which they lived to provide a more balanced view of these human beings, concluding that, as a group, they were truly extraordinary. He then devotes a chapter each (expansions of his previous writings in magazine and periodicals) on Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, Adams, Paine, and Burr. A short, easy read.

Gordon S. Wood, *The Idea of America: Reflections on the Birth of the United States* (2012), reviewed by Jim Crumley

This book is actually a collection of previously published essays and lectures given by the author over a period of thirty or more years. They have all been updated and generally take on the relatively recent view that the American Revolution was fought for economic and practical reasons. Wood makes the case that the revolution was actually fought for principles like liberty and equality. One of the chapters discusses the view of the founders that politicians should be "disinterested" in the problems and issues that come before them. According to Wood the term "disinterested," which today is generally considered a synonym for "uninterested," was not the view back then. To the framers of the constitution, "disinterested" meant not influenced by the potential for personal gain. In this way they were attempting to construct what Wood calls a "virtuous" republic. The author is clearly one of the leading experts on the Revolution, the Constitution and the thoughts presented by the Founding Fathers. His discussions are well worth thinking about.