



## THE BOOK NOOK

From the Library of Bob Brooks (far right bookshelves, when entering, below "Recent Arrivals")

This excellent memorial collection comprises world history, British history, American and military history, literature and language, science and science fiction

### **Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Discoverers: A History of Man's Search to Know His World and Himself***

"History with a human touch." —*Newsday*

"A grand and exhilarating voyage, a bold attempt to circumnavigate the intellectual globe." (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*)

"An original history of man's greatest adventure: his search to discover the world around him. In the compendious history, Boorstin not only traces man's insatiable need to know, but also the obstacles to discovery and the illusion that knowledge can also put in our way. Covering time, the earth and the seas, nature and society, he gathers and analyzes stories of the man's profound quest to understand his world and the cosmos."

"Perhaps the greatest book by one of our greatest historians, *The Discoverers* is a volume of sweeping range and majestic interpretation. To call it a history of science is an understatement; this is the story of how humankind has come to know the world, however incompletely ('the eternal mystery of the world,' Einstein once said, 'is its comprehensibility'). Daniel J. Boorstin first describes the liberating concept of time—'the first grand discovery'—and continues through the age of exploration and the advent of the natural and social sciences. The approach is idiosyncratic, with Boorstin lingering over particular figures and accomplishments rather than rushing on to the next set of names and dates. It's also primarily Western, although Boorstin does ask (and answer) several interesting questions: Why didn't the Chinese 'discover' Europe and America? Why didn't the Arabs circumnavigate the planet? His thesis about discovery ultimately turns on what he calls 'illusions of knowledge.' If we think we know something, then we face an obstacle to innovation. The great discoverers, Boorstin shows, dispel the illusions and reveal something new about the world."

"An outstanding book—one of the best works of history to be found anywhere." (*John J. Miller*)

### **Hammond, *The World Almanac* (2008)**

Features facts and statistics about the countries and regions of the world, and includes color maps, photographs, diagrams, and illustrations.

"This almanac is a magnificent achievement to be savored and repeatedly enjoyed." (*Bookpleasures.com*)

### **Robert McCrum, William Cran, and Robert Macneil, *The Story of English***

“The first book to tell the whole story of the English language. Originally paired with a major PBS miniseries, this book presents a stimulating and comprehensive record of spoken and written English—from its Anglo-Saxon origins some two thousand years ago to the present day, when English is the dominant language of commerce and culture with more than one billion English speakers around the world. From Cockney, Scouse, and Scots to Gulla, Singlish, Franglais, and the latest African American slang, this sweeping history of the English language is the essential introduction for anyone who wants to know more about our common tongue.”

### **Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by Robert Fagels**

“Robert Fagles, winner of the PEN/Ralph Manheim Medal for Translation and a 1996 Academy Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, presents us with Homer's best-loved and most accessible poem in a stunning modern-verse translation. ‘Sing to me of the man, Muse, the man of twists and turns driven time and again off course, once he had plundered the hallowed heights of Troy.’ So begins this magnificent translation of the *Odyssey*, which Jasper Griffin in the *New York Times Book Review* hails as ‘a distinguished achievement.’”

“If the *Iliad* is the world's greatest war epic, the *Odyssey* is literature's grandest evocation of an everyman's journey through life. Odysseus's reliance on his wit and williness for survival in his encounters with divine and natural forces during his ten-year voyage home to Ithaca after the Trojan War is at once a timeless human story and an individual test of moral endurance.

In the myths and legends retold here, Fagles has captured the energy and poetry of Homer's original in a bold, contemporary idiom, and given us an *Odyssey* to read aloud, to savor, and to treasure for its sheer lyrical mastery. Renowned classicist Bernard Knox's superb introduction and textual commentary provide insightful background information for the general reader and scholar alike, intensifying the strength of Fagles's translation. This is an *Odyssey* to delight both the classicist and the general reader, to captivate a new generation of Homer's students.”

### **Aaron Lansky, *Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued a Million Yiddish Books***

“Incredible . . . Inspiring . . . Important.” (*Library Journal*, starred review)

“A marvelous yarn, loaded with near-calamitous adventures and characters as memorable as Singer creations.” (*The New York Post*)

“What began as a quixotic journey was also a picaresque romp, a detective story, a profound history lesson, and a poignant evocation of a bygone world.” (*The Boston Globe*)

“Every now and again a book with near-universal appeal comes along: *Outwitting History* is just such a book.” (*The Sunday Oregonian*)

“As a twenty-three-year-old graduate student, Aaron Lansky set out to save the world's abandoned Yiddish books before it was too late. Today, more than a million books later, he has accomplished what has been called ‘the greatest cultural rescue effort in Jewish

history.' In *Outwitting History*, Lansky shares his adventures as well as the poignant and often laugh-out-loud stories he heard as he traveled the country collecting books. Introducing us to a dazzling array of writers, he shows us how an almost-lost culture is the bridge between the old world and the future—and how the written word can unite everyone who believes in the power of great literature."

### **Simon Schama, A History of Britain**

A three volume work written by Simon Schama, English historian and television presenter, to accompany a series of documentaries he presented for the BBC.

The volumes are:

A History of Britain: At the Edge of the World? 3500 BC–AD 1603

A History of Britain: The British Wars 1603–1776

A History of Britain: The Fate of Empire 1776–2000

"Schama explained why, at the time of its making, it was right to produce another historical documentary on Great Britain. At that moment, he argued, Britain was entering a new phase of its relationship with Europe and the rest of the world, and where it would end up depended a great deal on where it's come from. He stated that the stories needed to be told again and again so that future generations could get a sense of their identity. Furthermore, he believed that Britain's history comprised a number of tales worth telling: 'No matter how much you tell them, you never quite know ... how compelling and moving they are.'"

### **David Hilliam, Kings, Queens, Bones & Bastards: Who's Who in the English Monarchy from Egbert to Elizabeth II**

"Who invented the 'House of Windsor' as a royal name? Who founded Westminster Abbey? Which King had 21 illegitimate children? This engaging volume offers a continuous history of the English monarchy that shows how nine dynasties rose and fell, and uncovers the more unusual incidents of royal history. From Egbert—crowned in 802—to Elizabeth II, the histories of each monarch's reign, as well as the extraordinary lives of their spouses, consorts, mistresses, and bastard children, are all addressed."

### **Alison Weir, The Wars of the Roses**

"Lancaster and York. For much of the fifteenth century, these two families were locked in battle for control of the English throne. Kings were murdered and deposed. Armies marched on London. Old noble names were ruined while rising dynasties seized power and lands. The war between the royal houses of Lancaster and York, the most complex in English history, profoundly altered the course of the monarchy. Alison Weir, one of the foremost authorities on British history, brings brilliantly to life both the war itself and the larger-than-life figures who fought it on the great stage of England. *The Wars of the Roses* is history at its very best—swift and compelling, rich in character, pageantry, and drama, and vivid in its re-creation of an astonishing period of history."

"Dr. Alison Weir is the biggest-selling female historian (and the fifth best-selling historian) in the United Kingdom since records began in 1997."

### **Alison Weir, *The Life of Elizabeth I***

*NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER • An intimate, captivating portrait of Queen Elizabeth I that brings the enigmatic ruler to vivid life, from acclaimed biographer Alison Weir

“An extraordinary piece of historical scholarship.” (*The Cleveland Plain Dealer*)

“Perhaps the most influential sovereign England has ever known, Queen Elizabeth I remained an extremely private person throughout her reign, keeping her own counsel and sharing secrets with no one—not even her closest, most trusted advisers. Now, in this brilliantly researched, fascinating chronicle, Alison Weir shares provocative new interpretations and fresh insights on this enigmatic figure.

Against a lavish backdrop of pageantry and passion, intrigue and war, Weir dispels the myths surrounding Elizabeth I and examines the contradictions of her character.

Elizabeth I loved the Earl of Leicester, but did she conspire to murder his wife? She called herself the Virgin Queen, but how chaste was she through dozens of liaisons? She never married—was her choice to remain single tied to the chilling fate of her mother, Anne Boleyn?

An enthralling epic, *The Life of Elizabeth I* is a mesmerizing, stunning chronicle of a trailblazing monarch.”

### **Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far: The Classic History of the Greatest Battle of World War II***

“*A Bridge Too Far* is Cornelius Ryan's masterly chronicle of the Battle of Arnhem, which marshalled the greatest armada of troop-carrying aircraft ever assembled and cost the Allies nearly twice as many casualties as D-Day.”

“In this compelling work of history, Ryan narrates the Allied effort to end the war in Europe in 1944 by dropping the combined airborne forces of the American and British armies behind German lines to capture the crucial bridge across the Rhine at Arnhem. Focusing on a vast cast of characters—from Dutch civilians to British and American strategists to common soldiers and commanders—Ryan brings to life one of the most daring and ill-fated operations of the war. *A Bridge Too Far* superbly recreates the terror and suspense, the heroism and tragedy of this epic operation, which ended in bitter defeat for the Allies.”

“Easy to read but with very rich detail and narrative and a lot of well-crafted research every step of the way.”

### **John Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy: From D-Day to the Liberation of Paris, June 6 – Aug. 5, 1944***

“Acclaimed military historian John Keegan’s investigation into World War II and the Normandy Invasion”

“The armies of six nations met on the battlefields of Normandy in what was to be the greatest Allied achievement of World War II. With dramatic, driving power, John Keegan describes the massed armies—American, Canadian, English, French, German, and Polish—at successive stages of the invasion. As he details the strategies of the military engagements, Keegan brilliantly shows how each of the armies reflected its own nation's values and traditions. In a new introduction written especially to commemorate the 50th

anniversary of D-Day, he contemplates the ways the events at the battle of Normandy still reverberate today."

"The best military historian of our generation." (Tom Clancy)

"John Keegan writes about war better than almost anyone in our century." (*The Washington Post Book World*)

"Very dramatic... Very well done... a book which conjures romance from some very hard fighting." (A. J. P. Taylor, *The New York Review of Books*)

"The story of this vast, complex, and risky amphibious assault, and the campaign which followed, has been told many times, but never better than by John Keegan." (*The Wall Street Journal*)

### **Hampton Sides, *Ghost Soldiers: The Epic Account of World War II's Greatest Rescue Mission***

NATIONAL BESTSELLER • "The greatest World War II story never told" (*Esquire*)—an enthralling account of the heroic mission to rescue the last survivors of the Bataan Death March—from the author of *Blood and Thunder*.

"On January 28, 1945, 121 hand-selected U.S. troops slipped behind enemy lines in the Philippines. Their mission: March thirty rugged miles to rescue 513 POWs languishing in a hellish camp, among them the last survivors of the infamous Bataan Death March. A recent prison massacre by Japanese soldiers elsewhere in the Philippines made the stakes impossibly high and left little time to plan the complex operation.

In *Ghost Soldiers* Hampton Sides vividly re-creates this daring raid, offering a minute-by-minute narration that unfolds alongside intimate portraits of the prisoners and their lives in the camp. Sides shows how the POWs banded together to survive, defying the Japanese authorities even as they endured starvation, tropical diseases, and torture. Harrowing, poignant, and inspiring, *Ghost Soldiers* is the mesmerizing story of a remarkable mission. It is also a testament to the human spirit, an account of enormous bravery and self-sacrifice amid the most trying conditions."

### **Brian Kilmeade, *George Washington's Secret Six: The Spy Ring That Saved the American Revolution***

"Thrilling and accessible.... one of the more significant, compelling, and fascinating pieces of the country's history."

"When George Washington beat a hasty retreat from New York City in August 1776, many thought the American Revolution might soon be over. Instead, Washington rallied—thanks in large part to a little-known, top-secret group called the Culper Spy Ring. He realized that he couldn't defeat the British with military might, so he recruited a sophisticated and deeply secretive intelligence network to infiltrate New York. Drawing on extensive research, Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger have offered fascinating portraits of these spies: a reserved Quaker merchant, a tavern keeper, a brash young longshoreman, a curmudgeonly Long Island bachelor, a coffeehouse owner, and a mysterious woman. Long unrecognized, the secret six are finally receiving their due among the pantheon of American heroes."

### **Daniel J. Boorstin, Hidden History: Exploring Our Secret Past**

"In thirty interrelated essays, the eminent Pulitzer Prize-winning historian explores the hidden history of America and the secret pitfalls and virtues of American democracy"  
"In his 70s, Boorstin recently retired as Librarian of Congress, a position that he had held since 1975 that capped his career as one of America's eminent historians. In this collection of essays the author of *The Discoverers* and the trilogy *The Americans* writes with the breadth and vitality that mark all his books. His title has deliberate meaning: Boorstin implies the historian's need to probe socio-political patterns from philosophical and unclichéd angles. Here he recaptures his 'historical adventures,' ranging from a study of the historian's discipline (his insight into Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* as an 'intimate' work is rich and subtle) through a look at America as a 'By-Product Nation' not greatly driven by theories, but rather formed by action under stress (he sees FDR's four-term presidency as an example). And finally, a series of segments from his writings present his views of America's 'unsung' political experiments. Boorstin's closing emphasis on our unacknowledged dominance by the 'kingdom of the Machine' leads readers to hope for his further expansion of this theme."

### **Autobiography of Mark Twain**

"Samuel Langhorne Clemens, known by the pen name Mark Twain, was an American writer, humorist, and essayist. He was praised as the 'greatest humorist the United States has produced,' with William Faulkner calling him 'the father of American literature.'  
"A written collection of reminiscences, the majority of which were dictated during the last few years of the life of American author . . . and left in typescript and manuscript at his death. The *Autobiography* comprises a collection of anecdotes and ruminations. Twain never compiled the writings and dictations into a publishable form in his lifetime. Despite indications from Twain that he did not want his autobiography to be published for a century, he serialized selected chapters during his lifetime; in addition, various compilations were published during the 20th century."

### **Ian Marshall and Danah Zohar, Who's Afraid of Schrodinger's Cat? All the New Science Ideas You Need to Keep up with the New Thinking**

"Offers a clear, concise explanation of the latest theories in quantum physics, exploring how the science of physics is changing the ways in which scientists look at human behavior and the place of humankind in the cosmos."  
"Essentially a mini-encyclopedia of the new science for the educated general reader. While old science portrayed a physical universe of separate parts bound to one another by rigid laws of cause and effect, this new paradigm gives us the vision of a complicated universe where all ideas are interconnected. The major portion of the book consists of 200 extended definitions of terms used in the physical sciences; medical terminology is excluded."

### **Robert A. Heinlein, Expanded Universe: The New Worlds of Robert Heinlein**

"A 1980 collection of science fiction stories and essays by the American science fiction author, aeronautical engineer, and naval officer sometimes called 'the dean of science

fiction writers,' who was among the first to emphasize scientific accuracy in his fiction, and was thus a pioneer of the subgenre of hard science fiction. His published works, both fiction and non-fiction, express admiration for competence and emphasize the value of critical thinking. His plots often posed provocative situations which challenged conventional social mores. His work continues to have an influence on the science-fiction genre, and on modern culture more generally."

"Heinlein used his science fiction as a way to explore provocative social and political ideas and to speculate how progress in science and engineering might shape the future of politics, race, religion, and sex. Within the framework of his science-fiction stories, Heinlein repeatedly addressed certain social themes: the importance of individual liberty and self-reliance, the nature of sexual relationships, the obligation individuals owe to their societies, the influence of organized religion on culture and government, and the tendency of society to repress nonconformist thought. He also speculated on the influence of space travel on human cultural practices."