



Brewster Ladies' Library

BLL Book Reviews – October 2011

Brewster Ladies Library
1822 Main Street
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The Most Dangerous Thing

by Laura Lippman

reviewed by Suzanne McInerney

As the author of this thought-provoking novel has pointed out in an interview on NPR, we know from the first pages who the victim is and how he died, so the usual suspense of a mystery book is missing. The victim is a young man named Gordon (nicknamed Go-Go). In order to keep on reading, says Lippman, we need to care deeply about Go-Go and to learn what brought him to his fate.

Thanks to the author's eye for telling details we learn much about Go-Go, his brothers Sean and Tim, and his friends Gwen and Mickey (a girl). Some of it we unconsciously store away to refer to as the mystery unravels. But the center of the book is always the five friends and what they mean (and meant) to each other in the early season of their relationship, which starts when they are on the cusp of adolescence. Compared to children that age today, there was much more freedom in the 1970s, when the book's action begins, to roam the streets and woods and to make up their own games. The title of the book, though, may suggest that, while parents didn't watch every move their children made and instead encouraged a life of independence while always watching out for dangers, caused them--because of their inexperience--to miss hidden, more subtle dangers.

In this story, during a regular visit to a nearby woods where they have developed a friendship with an old bearded man, something deadly changes everything. Suddenly faced with the need to make an emergency decision, they bind each other to a dark secret: nobody, not their parents or anyone else, can ever know the real truth of what has happened in the cabin in the woods. The friends are never close again: They don't see each other and for the most part live in other cities and towns.

The last section of the book is heartbreaking in a different way, for we begin to understand the lives of the children's parents. With exquisite and powerful suggestion of sorrow, regret, joy and love we can see how families are formed; how each member influences the other in a way that is probably never apparent to anyone, especially to the parent him- or herself. Someone has written: "We can never know the consequences of our own actions". Lippman's writing is, to my mind, exquisite in its suggestion of how our own lives can be a secret from ourselves and how fortunate we are if we ever catch even a glimmer of our influence.

We are left with the mystery of Jo-Jo's death in a horrible car wreck--was it an accident or suicide? But not knowing is a kind of literary justice. The author has already left so much to our imagination. We complete the world of the children in our own minds. For example, how did holding a burdensome secret finally, in the last analysis, affect each of them? It seems just and proper for us to bear Jo-Jo's defeats and joys on our own shoulders. His mother, Doris, loved him with all her heart and she protected him, as did his father. Jo-Jo may never have known this for certain, but love can come in infinitesimal ways and perhaps in the end that is all we need to know.

Don't Know Much About The Civil War

by **Kenneth C. Davis**

reviewed by James N. McCutcheon

Originally published in 1996 by Avon Books, *Don't Know Much About The Civil War*, was subsequently reissued by Perennial Books in 2001 and 2004, and most recently reissued again in 2011, as a Harper Collins paper back. Not just for people who "don't know much about the Civil War", any American who takes on this 502 page classic will emerge a much wiser and more grateful citizen for the experience.

In August of 1619, a Dutch ship landed 20 West Africans at Jamestown Virginia to be sold as indentured servants, but those 20 poor souls were actually sold as slaves. One might have hoped that these would have been the last. However that was not to be the case. In a few short years the African slave trade would become just too valuable, and involve all of the American colonies with ports on the Atlantic seaboard. Over the following century most of the major countries of Europe enacted formal arrangements for the marketing of African slaves in their South American, Caribbean, and North American colonies. And when the slave trade became illegal, the business continued to flourish outside of the law. In 1725 the African slave population in the North American colonies was about 75,000.

However from the very beginning, the slave trade was not without its opponents, many of whom warned of the danger of continuing a practice so clearly at odds with the Christian faith and later the Declaration of Independence. Rhode Island actually outlawed slavery in 1652. The first serious slave insurrection in America occurred in Stono, South Carolina in 1739. Thirty whites were killed and 44 blacks were put to death in retaliation.

Racial superiority was now firmly fixed in the land. George Washington did not allow African Americans to enlist in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, until after the British permitted black American slaves to become British citizens by enlisting in their forces. Yet still when the Constitution of the United States was written, the only way the 13 states would all sign on was if black African slaves, solely for voting purposes, were counted not as citizens and only as "3/5 of a man".

There were 4,000,000 African slaves owned by slave owners in the Confederate states when the Civil War began. The infamous "Triangle Trade" was in full swing, moving American manufactures and raw materials from such American ports as Richmond, New York, and Boston to the West Coast of Africa, where a shipload of African slaves was picked up, and, after navigating the dangerous Middle Passage, sold to plantation owners in the Caribbean. Meanwhile in the American South, plantation owners had discovered that they could breed slaves more cheaply than buy them from the slavers. So slave families were regularly broken up and only the strongest were allowed to propagate. That was the beginning of the breakdown of black families that remains such a social problem in our land today.

The Western expansion only heightened the tension. Decisions had to be made as to whether new territories would enter the union as free or slave states. The Missouri Compromise and a number of great American statesmen put off the inevitable for a generation but when the 1860 election for President of the United States sent Abraham Lincoln to the White House two and a half centuries of hypocrisy, growing alienation between the smaller, poorer, agrarian South and the larger, industrial, more industrial North exploded. No one thing brought on the American Civil War or made it the four years of bloody slaughter it turned out to be. Abraham Lincoln's original purpose was not to free the slaves but to save the Union. Only after two years of a terrible Civil War did it become clear to him and most other Americans that the Union "could not survive half slave and half free."

The Civil War itself only actually began four months after the first six Southern states had seceded from the Union, when on April 12, 1861 South Carolina troops bombarded Fort Sumter, located in Charleston Harbor into submission. President Lincoln then proclaimed the Confederacy to be in a state of insurrection and called for the raising of 75,000 Union troops.

Don't Know Much About The Civil War covers all of this in its first 178 pages. The rest of the book divides into what happened from the onset of hostilities in 1861 to the Gettysburg campaign in 1863; and from the major battles of 1864 to Lee's surrender at Appomattox in 1865. These much reported events will not be reviewed here although they occupy the last two thirds of this fine book. What Kenneth Davis has done is to make available a supremely readable account of the most important war in our nation's history, written out of the words of those who fought in it, the music they marched by, and the documents they left behind. Besides the author's rare gifts as a historian, *Don't Know Much About The Civil War* is remarkably free of any bias and is devoted, as the author says, to presenting an unvarnished account of all the important facts. This alone should earn it a place on any American's Civil War reading list.

"In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free. Honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last, best hope of earth."

- **President Abraham Lincoln, message to Congress, 1862**

Kraken: The Curious, Exciting, and Slightly Disturbing Science of Squid

by Wendy Williams

reviewed by Jim Mills

Through the centuries mariners have brought back many reports of sightings of strange threatening sea monsters. Cape Cod author, Wendy Williams, in her latest book, *Kraken*, notes that science has provided evidence that certain species of giant squid live at great depths and whose infrequent sightings could account for these reports. In 1873 the remains of a giant squid was found in Newfoundland with a tentacle 19 feet in length. Other sightings of this giant squid species, *Architeuthis*, have been made as recently as 2008.

In *Kraken*, the author describes several other creatures in the mollusk class, Cephalopoda, such as octopus and cuttlefish. Williams provides a descriptive account of the lives of these reclusive creatures. Giant squid spend most of their lives at depths of many thousands of feet and are rarely seen on the surface or on the sea floor. An example of the author's ability to describe the challenges of deep sea life is the following quote: "One of the biggest problems cephalopods face is how to live safely in a 3-D world. When you imagine swimming in the deep ocean, you have to rethink human-oriented concepts of 'up' and 'down.' As rather large surface animals who live on the continental crust, we usually need only be aware of animals living in the same plane as we do... Usually 'up' or 'down' are not words that hold terror for us. We don't fear giant birds swooping down from above to scoop us up and carry us away, and we don't fear giant worms bursting out of the earth's crust to grab us and drag us underground. For the most part, we only need to be aware of enemies that, like us, are firmly rooted to life atop the soil."

Williams describes, with a scientist's sensibility and a reporter's accuracy, current oceanographic work being conducted at centers such as Hopkins Marine Station in Monterey California and Cape Cod's own Marine Biological Lab. in Woods Hole. Much of this research has led to significant medical advances, particularly in neurological studies. This reviewer found *Kraken* to be extremely well written and compelling to read.

The Language of Bees

by Laurie R King

reviewed by Don Boink

Laurie R King has written a series of books called the "Mary Russell novels". These have a unique feature in that Mary Russell is married to Sherlock Holmes. To resurrect Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous character and embroider interesting mysteries involving him I find quite clever. Russell, as Holmes often refers to her, is the principal character and acts as narrator. We get reacquainted with Holmes' brother Mycroft and the irritable Scotland Yard inspector Lestrade.

Additional interest is injected when Damian Adler is introduced and revealed to be Sherlock Holmes' son. Remember the one love of Holmes life was the actress Irene Adler? Apparently they had an affair briefly but broke up. Mycroft knew of Damian's birth but Sherlock didn't. Irene chose not to reveal it to Holmes even though she had fallen on hard times. Mycroft agreed to keep her secret as long as she was alive if she would accept the financial assistance from him to provide Damien a comfortable upbringing.

The source of the title – *The Language of Bees* comes from Sherlock's hobby as a beekeeper. In this regard we are introduced to the *Apis Mellifera* in great detail. Mary Russell proves to be as much a detective as her famous husband, trying to determine the cause of the wholesale evacuation of one of the hives. Damian has an interesting history. He was wounded in World War I. Our story takes place in 1926. The drugs used caused his addiction together with a claustrophobic reaction to his experiences in the trenches.

Damian also is a talented artist. His bouts with drugs and alcohol resulted in his arrest for murder. At this point Mycroft feels it is time to bring Sherlock into the picture since Irene Adler has passed on. When Damian's dilemma is resolved we learn some years later of his Chinese wife, Yolanda, and three-year-old daughter Estelle. Yolanda's interest in various religions leads to involvement with a suspect group called "Children of Lights." Their leader has written a book titled "Testimony" – excerpts of which begin each chapter of the novel.

In *The Language of Bees*' first chapter are casually mentioned several clues to the body of the novel and it is enjoyable to see how they come into play. The writer, in my opinion, is very good at her craft. It is enjoyable to follow her as she collaborates with Holmes, who greatly respects her abilities. She also initiates her own lines of inquiry. Two episodes are perhaps a little corny, – a boating afternoon with an elderly lady professor, formerly her teacher, and the terrifying airplane flight to the Orkney Islands north of Scotland. Of course there is a thrilling climax. I'm sure I would enjoy more of the Mary Russell series by Laurie R King.

Going Home To Glory

by David Eisenhower with Julie Nixon Eisenhower

reviewed by James N. McCutcheon

Going Home To Glory is a uniquely personal memoir about an America treasure, written by two of the people who knew him best. As the top American general in WWII, whose troops put an end to the Third Reich, and as the President of the United States who brought America safely through the opening years of the Cold War, Dwight David Eisenhower ended his life being voted over several consecutive years “The Most Admired Man” in our country. The authors of *Going Home To Glory* are President Eisenhower’s beloved grandson David and Vice President Richard Nixon’s youngest daughter, Julie, who is also David Eisenhower’s wife.

The book’s principal subject is the last 8 years of President Eisenhower’s life, but the narrative frequently returns to earlier times to pick up great moments during the war years and Eisenhower’s two Presidential administrations that followed. This beautifully written memoir is chiefly organized around Eisenhower’s relationships with his successors, especially during the crises in their Presidential administrations and his remarkable relationships with his extended family and closest friends which had been there always but fully flowered only after the General bought a farm, built a home and retired on the border of the battlefield in Gettysburg Pennsylvania.

Harry Truman was not one of his successors but rather Eisenhower’s immediate predecessor in the White House and he never forgave Eisenhower for not running as a Democrat but rather as a Republican in 1952. Truman apparently denied having ever offered to run as Eisenhower’s Vice President in the 1952 campaign but the fact that he had indeed done so turned up in one of his own diaries that had long been buried in the Truman Library. Eisenhower, was elected as a “Peace President” in 1952 and reelected four years later, having ended the Korean War, seen the country through the opening years of the Cold War and presided over an unparalleled period of economic prosperity and expansion.

John F. Kennedy secured a razor thin victory over Richard Nixon, President Eisenhower’s Vice President in 1961, becoming the youngest man ever to be elected to the Presidency. Eisenhower tried to befriend Kennedy but when the Bay of Pigs fiasco failed through Kennedy’s mistakes and Castro became the President of Cuba, Kennedy and his subordinates tried to lay the blame on Eisenhower. This was a lie and soured their relationships right up to the Cuban missile crisis, another Kennedy failure. Eisenhower immediately came to Kennedy’s defense, and the two men were well on the way toward a solid friendship, when in Dallas Texas on November 22, 1963 Kennedy was assassinated.

In the immediate aftermath of Kennedy’s assassination, Lyndon Johnson succeeded to the Presidency. He finished Kennedy’s term and one of his own. However by 1968 Johnson’s Presidency had foundered on the Vietnam War. He announced that he would not run for a second term. He and President Eisenhower had a warm relationship throughout Johnson’s Presidency, and Johnson regularly solicited President Eisenhower’s views on legislative matters and world affairs.

These are just a few of the more interesting Presidential events in a book filled with insider information, some of which not freely available to historians. However, one must understand that David Eisenhower and his wife Julie were not unbiased commentators, and proceed with caution, at many points, in coming to final conclusions.

A number of unexpected things, not all of them happy, colored relationships within the Eisenhower family. The President’s relationships with his son, John, and his grandson David were constantly being troubled by the senior Eisenhower’s inability to express true feelings of affection to the male members of his family, although he never ceased trying, within the limits of what he called his principles, to do so. A number of incidents are painfully described in this book. A lifetime in the military, lived mainly in the company of men, had apparently shaped his personality and character. So the very attributes that made him a successful Five Star General of the Army in wartime had sometimes made him quite difficult to live with those he loved most. Dwight David Eisenhower died in Walter Reed Medical Center after a series of heart attacks in 1969.

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To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914 - 1918

by Adam Hochschild

reviewed by Jim Mills

The First World War, at the time called the “The war to end all wars”, unfortunately never was. *To End All Wars* tells the story of Great Britain’s participation in that war and in particular covers the domestic opposition, as minor a factor as it was, to the war. Few wars have started with greater popular support and anticipation than, what was then referred to as, the Great War. This popularity was virtually universal in all of the major participants Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary. For several years there was no problem recruiting soldiers for the front. Gradually the horrific casualties at the front coupled with the war’s stalemate necessitated the introduction of the draft to replace the endless losses of each country’s youth.

The war started in 1914 with no apparent cause and no irreparable disputes between the participants. The web of alliances brought one nation after another into the war following the assassination of the heir apparent to the Austria-Hungarian throne by a Serbian nationalist. None of the national leaders stopped to think of the potential world changing consequences of their actions. Those consequences changed the shape of Europe and the World irrevocably and led to the establishment of Communism in Russia and an even more devastating World War two decades later. The continual losses in four years of trench warfare produced astronomical fatality rates: 12% of all British soldiers were killed; also killed were 31 % of Oxford’s class of 1913; 35% of all German men between the age of 19 and 22 at the start of the war did not survive it; and one-half of all Frenchmen between 20 and 32 in 1914 were not alive five years later.

The quality of the military leadership, particularly in France, Russia and Britain, was abysmal. The top British generals John French and Douglas Haig lived in the past sending cavalry forces armed with lances to certain death against Germans armed with machineguns. This was despite British experience, in their own colonies, using machineguns against native mounted troops to deadly effect. Each participant ordered continual suicidal frontal assaults across no-man’s land against entrenched defensive forces protected by layers of barbed wire and a dense network of machinegun nests. The attacking forces consistently suffered far greater casualties than the defenders. Despite the drastic losses of their youth and the hopelessness of a stagnant four year conflict, support in Britain remained strong through the war. The few who did protest the war were persecuted and, in some cases, imprisoned by the British government and were ostracized by the British public. A few well know war protesters such as the philosopher, Bertrand Russell, were able to stay above the fray. Many others, however, were exposed to attack from the public and the police. The suffragette Pankhurst family, mother and daughters, were split between support and opposition to the war. One staunch supporter of the war, despite the loss of his son, was the author, Rudyard Kipling.

In *To End All Wars*, the author describes the drastic measures that the British government pursued to maintain public support for the war. Wartime censorship was very stringent with the public essentially unaware of their dramatic wartime losses and reverses. Only much later, in the mid-1920s was there a growing revulsion to what had happened, as the facts became better known. This revulsion was to lead to the pacifism of the 1930s that played into the hands of the, then, emerging dictators Mussolini and Hitler. Adam Hochschild tells a compelling story of this pivotal period in world history, attempting to explain, what, to this day, appears to be the unexplainable.

Give me the money that has been spent in war and I will clothe every man, woman, and child in an attire of which kings and queens will be proud. I will build a schoolhouse in every valley over the whole earth. I will crown every hillside with a place of worship consecrated to peace.

~Charles Sumner – United States Senator from Massachusetts (1851 -1874)

Iberia

by James Michener

reviewed by Don Boink

This book is a travel account by James Michener of his many visits to Spain, published in 1966. As a young man he had a very intense interest in Spain to begin with. While living in Scotland he had the opportunity to sail aboard a Clydeside freighter delivering coal to Italy. His duty was to keep track of the navigation charts. His objective was to satisfy a curiosity about Spain. On the ship's return trip it was to pick up oranges at a few ports in southern Spain. The famous Spanish oranges were returned to Scotland to be made into famous Scottish marmalade. Michener was allowed to go ashore at the first Spanish port and visit several towns before being picked up at a later port.

Spain and Portugal share the Iberian Peninsula, the landmass jutting out from Europe, westward, into the Atlantic. As with all of Michener's books the reader is treated to an interesting discourse on the geography, history, and a detailed description of everything he sees, learns about, and enthuses over. One cannot help but being enlightened about art, religion, politics, and lengthy discourses about food. For example; to learn how marmalade and bull's tail soup are made.

The author is especially interested in people and their lives. How they cope with their status in society and their government at different periods in history. The average American school curriculum does not cover much information about other countries in any depth and consequently there are many interesting details to be learned and appreciated.

The Iberian Peninsula was occupied and controlled by a succession of what I will call "non-Spaniards". The original Iberians were overrun by northern tribes of Celts. By 192 BC the Romans occupied the regions. By A.D. 411 Romans were supplanted by wandering Germanic tribes. By A.D. 453 the Visigoths overran the country and remained till 712 A.D. At that time the Moors of North Africa invaded and brought a highly cultured regime that lasted till 1085 A.D. The Moors were gradually pushed out by Spanish forces. The Muslims were followers of Mohammed who gave them the Koran and declared the goal of Islam was to rule the world. It appears that we are currently experiencing a revival of that effort.

Michener is a great admirer of what the Moors contributed to Spain and feels their expulsion was a severe loss because there has been a great decline in Spanish culture and influence in the world ever since. One characteristic of the Moors residual in Spain is intense cruelty and a few other undesirable traits. Michener's book Iberia is an extended and detailed travelogue. To say that Spain fascinates him is a gross understatement. Every detail he lovingly describes gives one the distinct feeling that you can "taste" the essence of his perceptions. From Western Spain near the border of Portugal the book portrays the rugged existence that Spaniards have in making a living in a mostly nonproductive land.

Michener explains the prevailing attitude Spaniards seem to have about what is proper and acceptable work for the gentle class. It is a highly stratified society. There is great stress upon a person's honor and the least slight is immediately challenged. During his travels and many discussions with people he interacted with it was apparent that the great concern was what would happen after the dictator Franco passed on.

It was frequently expressed during discussions that Spaniards are an ungovernable lot. Being very class conscious and tribal in nature our concept of a democracy would not likely be a viable form of government. This question was not openly published in the newspapers but it was a great topic of conversation in general. Today Spain is a constitutional monarchy under King Carlos. It is also considered socialistic.

Two things were very important to Michener, bullfighting and Flamenco dancing. He never seemed to get just what he wanted in those categories. In every town that was visited the focal point seemed to be the plaza and the adjacent cathedral or church or mission. Spain is an especially Catholic country. During the Moorish invasion it was feared that their churches and especially statues of the Virgin would be destroyed. Consequently many statues were buried. Often the location of the burial was forgotten over the centuries so when one was discovered it was the cause of great celebration.

The book is 939 pages plus an index. In those pages several towns are visited and described in infinite detail. It seemed each cathedral was discussed from the architectural standpoint and its historical significance as well as intimate little stories associated with it. Michener's worldwide roving allows him to discuss comparisons with other structures, local practices, and the relative beauty involved. Everyone has probably read about the famous running of the bulls at Pamplona an event that he describes that in great detail.

The last chapter in the book has to do with Barcelona. Barcelona is located in the northeastern corner of Spain just south of the Pyrenees' mountain range that separates Spain from France. This is in the section of Spain called Cataluña and is on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. I got the impression that Spain is more an agricultural country than industrial and relies very heavily on the tourist trade. In Barcelona the beaches are especially inviting. Here too he introduces the grand pilgrimage that begins in France and ends at Santiago de Compostela. That is on the west coast, known as "The Way of Saint James. There are hundreds of origination points to choose from. According to internet sites the tours can be 7 or 14 days, walking 12 ½ to 15 ½ miles a day. Many people do the tour many times. I greatly enjoyed Michener's writing and found the information enlightening and fascinating.

Wild Bill Donovan

by Douglas Waller

reviewed by James N. McCutcheon

William Joseph Donovan is one of the most perplexing American leaders to march through the history of two World Wars, the Cold War, and the “fact and fiction” that still troubles intelligence gathering in our land today.

He was born to poor Irish immigrant parents on January 1, 1883 in Buffalo New York. At an early age he proved to be a young man of remarkable intelligence, great courage, considerable charisma, unquestionable patriotism and exceptional good looks. After St. Joseph’s Collegiate Institute, he attended Niagara University, and then Columbia University, graduating from Columbia University in 1905 and Columbia University Law School in 1912. While at Columbia University he became the star running back on the University Football Team and collected the nickname by which he would be known the rest of his life – “Wild Bill Donovan.”

In 1916 immediately following his graduation from law school and an “on again- off again” career as a New York City lawyer, which eventually made him a millionaire, he formed a U.S. Cavalry unit, fitted it out and, led it to the Mexican border where it took part in the campaign against Pancho Villa. His obsession with war and particularly becoming a part of the actual fighting, would continue throughout the remainder of his life. Donovan was also an incorrigible womanizer, even after he married Ruth Rumsey, daughter of a Buffalo multimillionaire. His wife’s money would be at his disposal all of his life, and wild Bill was not shy about using it. He was a serious Roman Catholic from the wrong side of the tracks and Ruth’s parents, staunch Presbyterians, never cared for him.

With the onset of WWI Donovan secured a commission in the U.S. Army and organized and led the 1st battalion of the 165th regiment of the 42nd division. At Landres-et-St. Georges in France on October 14-15 1917, he drove his troops through a weak point in the German lines, collecting 2 purple hearts, a Distinguished Service Medal, and the Medal of Honor for his fearless leadership of troops in the face of merciless fire and while seriously wounded.

Between the wars, he tried his hand at politics with varying success. From 1922-1924 he was a very successful attorney for the Western District of New York. However when he ran for Lt. Governor and then Governor of New York he lost badly.

With the beginning of WWII FDR found himself in need of some sort of an intelligence organization, which could give him independent advice. Frank Knox, his secretary of the Navy, recommended Bill Donovan. FDR and Donovan hit it off at once and so on July 1, 1941, Donovan was appointed “Coordinator of Information”, which a year later became “The Office of Strategic Services” or the OSS. This was the beginning of the serious bureaucratic fighting between our country’s various intelligence services, particularly the armed forces, The OSS, the FBI, and some of the senior officers in the Army and Navy, which led to the failure to share intelligence information which was a significant contributor to the national disaster that cost this country over 3000 lives and the destruction of the World Trade Center Twin Towers in New York City on September 11, 2001.

Donovan’s greatest troubles, however, were with J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI. Hoover recognized at once that Donovan and the OSS were mortal threats to his relationship with FDR and he stopped at nothing to discredit him. He floated the story that Donovan was a drunk, even though Donovan never drank, and upon Donovan’s death his agents started the shameful rumor that the leader of the OSS had died of syphilis. However Hoover was successful in keeping the OSS out of South and Central America; and General Douglas Macarthur, who had not cared for Donovan since their days together on the Western Front in WW1, kept the OSS out of the Philippines in WWII. But Wild Bill could not be deterred.

By the end of WWII, Wild Bill Donovan had built the OSS into a world- wide organization of hundreds of thousands of agents, area chiefs, and spies and Donovan was a one star General. He had become a confidant of Winston Churchill and had learned the organizational structures and operating techniques of the British Intelligent Service. He had flown to every major front in the Allied war effort, going in with the troops whenever the occasion permitted. But unlike FDR, who admired, protected, and promoted Donovan, President Truman disliked him intensely. Therefore with Roosevelt’s death and the end of WWII, Truman disbanded the OSS. A decade later and under other leadership, Donovan’s ideas would shape the CIA and launch the intelligence service and espionage practices upon which the safety of the USA so largely depends today.

Wild Bill Donovan died at Walter Reed Medical Center on February 8, 1959. He was 76 years old.

Douglas Waller, an expert on American military history, in *Wild Bill Donovan*, has produced a 389 page tome, which has had mixed reviews mainly because it tends to bog down in details and has very little of the expected cloak and dagger intrigue with which most of his critics are familiar. Nevertheless this reviewer found the book very helpful in understanding the political background of both World Wars and the genesis of the CIA. It will doubtless remain one of the standard texts on these matters as well as on the life of Wild Bill Donovan for years to come.

For All the Tea in China

by Sarah Rose

reviewed by Jim Mills

For All the Tea in China – An expression that entered our lexicon years ago, indicating the ultimate acquisition.

Apparently commercial espionage is as old as commerce. In the mid-19th century Britain, a major tea drinking nation if there ever was one, didn't like being dependent on an independent China for their source of high quality tea. In exchange Britain was importing Opium into China to satisfy Britain's tea fix and China was considering supplying its own opium. The British plan to eliminate this Chinese dependency was to smuggle seeds and seedlings from the major tea growing regions deep inside China to a similar climatic region in the Himalayan highlands in Britain's Indian colony. Britain's East India Company selected a countryman with a background in horticulture and experience in China, Robert Fortune, as their agent on this mission.

Fortune spent several years in China disguised as a native Mandarin. The author describes in detail the adventures he encountered on a mission that could have cost him his life had he been found out. He was dependent on several native aides who spoke some of the local dialects and who frequently cheated him in the disbursement of funds and could have betrayed him at any time. His first visit was to a Green Tea growing area where he was successful in removing hundreds of samples which he was able to transport to Shanghai and then had shipped to India. However, mishandling of his precious cargo after it left his care meant virtual failure to what so far had been a stunning success. Undaunted, Fortune went on an even more remote trip to China's Black Tea producing areas where he spent many months acquiring samples and learning the cultivation and processing secrets of producing fine tea. Returning to Shanghai, Fortune decided to personally accompany his samples on their trip to the Himalayas and also brought experts with him to tend the plants and ensure proper processing. How he was able to do all this without being discovered is hard to understand. His care this time around ensured success and made India a major tea producing country.

The author provides much detail on the complexity of tea cultivation and management. Recent advances in the shipment of seeds and seedlings are described such as the Terrarium concept which were critical to the success of this caper. The telling of this historical oddity should be of interest to all tea drinker and other drinkers as well.



How About A Nice Cup of Tea?

Caleb's Crossing

by *Geraldine Brooks*

reviewed by Suzanne McInerney

We see, hear, and feel this sumptuous story through Bethia Mayfield, the young daughter of a Puritan minister living in a mid-17th century settlement on what we now call Martha's Vineyard. The immediacy of the first person narrative in this account of events in Bethia's life from around the time she is twelve until her early twenties, makes it completely spellbinding. Her language and syntax are not forced into a distant, imaginary being, but rather seem to come quite naturally from a living and breathing presence. Bethia's story is invented, says the author, so that she could let the main character live her own life as it falls naturally in her imagination.

But the true story of her friend, Caleb Cheeshahteumauk, the son of a mighty chieftain of the Wampanoag tribe and who was the first American native to receive a Harvard degree, is the basis for the fictional Caleb, whom she secretly befriends. Caleb is part of a world that bows to many gods, that heals with herbs and special incantations, and celebrates with wild and open dances that contrast sharply with the Puritan restrictions and exacting rules of Bethia's upbringing. The example below of Bethia's reaction to tribal celebration exemplifies the powerful style of the author:

The drums beat in tempo to the rhythm of my heart, which seemed to be swelling at the sound. I felt my soul hum and vibrate in sympathy with his prayers. There was a power here, spiritual power. It moved me in some profound way. I had striven for the feeling, week following week, as the dutiful minister's daughter at Lord's Day meeting (note the phrase for the Sabbath that would have been spoken in Bethia's time). But our austere worship had never stirred my soul as did this heathen's song.

It is interesting to note that a physical attraction underlying the relationship between Bethia and Caleb is only broadly implied and never described as overt. In my opinion this makes it a deeper kind of literature than it might have otherwise been.

Caleb teaches Bethia not only the Indian ways of fishing, picking berries and wild food, walking barefoot and invisible, but—by example—a lifelong lesson in the multitude of ways in which God can be praised.

Bethia, who has listened to and learned from her minister father tutoring her elder brother in Greek and Latin, offers her intellectual resources to Caleb and together they enhance and ennoble each other's lives. Bethia inspires Caleb to do what she, as a woman, cannot: namely, study for and obtain a bachelor's degree at Harvard, which by then had begun slightly to open its doors to Indians, perhaps as a way of spreading Christianity in the New World. Caleb hopes to learn about the English way and how thus to gain knowledge in how he can help his tribe respond to what in Colonial times already looks like a bleak future full of betrayal. Crossing the waters from the island that is his home to Boston also stands for Caleb's crossing from the way of his people to English ways.

As an old lady facing her death, Bethia comes to regret her part in Caleb's decision because of the damage it eventually causes. So many come to terrible ends by ways including childbirth, drowning, murder, and consumption. Yet the heroine of this book is noble in her outlook. In her last diary entry she writes about her feelings regarding her final confessions:

“...it has eased my heart to make this accounting. I am not a hero. Life has not required it of me. But neither will I go to my grave a coward, silent about what I did, and what it cost. So, let these last pages be my death song—even if at the end it is no paean, but as it must be: a dissonant and tragical lament.”



Geraldine Brooks

What Would The Founders Say?

by Larry Schweikart

reviewed by James N. McCutcheon

Some call them “Originalists” others “Strict Constructionists” and still others simply “Fundamentalists”. However by whatever name, what is all too often meant are individuals who advocate solutions to the great problems of our time that would exactly replicate how a handful of giant American statesmen, those we commonly refer to as “the Founders” (Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, Mason et al) handled similar situations in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Dr. Larry Schweikart, a distinguished professor of American history at the University of Dayton, in *What Would The Founders Say?* has taken 10 of the great issues “Originalists” are concerned about in our land today, and in 205 pages of elegant American history, supplied the reader with exactly what “the Founders” actually said. Schweikart writes: “Finding out what the Founders thought is relatively simple and generally clear. Like all men they had disagreements on the proper approach to problems. But all loved America, most fought for her, and some died for her. It is worth remembering that all the signers of The Declaration of Independence became traitors in the eyes of the British government, subject to death. Many paid a heavy price for their courage. At the very least we owe them the courtesy of a virtual consultation about every policy. They earned that much.”

Let us consider just three of the ten great issues that are in heated discussions in all parts of America, in the Congress, the Federal Courts and even in the White House today.

- (1) Universal Health Care. The core of the issue, then as now, is whether Universal Health Care is a private choice or a universal American right. The “individual mandate” and whether an American can be made to purchase a product he or she may not want shapes the present argument. The Founders understood that universal, government sponsored health care would lead to “unprecedented invasions of private choices, activities, and even personal well-being. . . . and for that reason did not even entertain the notion that health care was a right and certainly not a function of government. ‘Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap,’ Jefferson said, ‘we should soon want for bread.’”
- (2) On Bailouts: “The actions of the Founders demonstrate that they rejected the proposition that they should somehow create jobs or be responsible for full employment. Moreover their attitudes toward work and conversely charity for those who could not work also reveal their views that government did not exist to create jobs. . . . Indeed, what stands out is that the Founders came from a generation who worked, often at a variety of jobs and professions. Their work ethic was powerful and they shrugged off setbacks as a part of life. Most important of all, none saw any connection between the government and their work except that --- in the case of taxes—the government could stand in their way of pursuing happiness.”
- (3) On Taxes And High National Deficits: “‘Governments,’ wrote William Penn, ‘like clocks go from the motion men give them, and as governments are made and moved by men, so by them they are ruined too.’ One could say the same for finances and debt: some men and some nations were ruined by it. For others it became a tool. What Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton all knew, was that there existed a rigid association of debt, taxes, and government power.”

Schweikart writes that if *What Would The Founders Say?* might profitably be consulted before every national policy decision. But the 21st century is not the 18th and, for better decisions, other wisdom must be taken into account as well.



Current U. S. Supreme Court