

Book Buzz

With Carolyn Larson

Head Librarian at Lihue Public Library

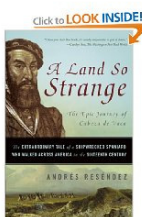
Bringing you the buzz on new, popular and good books available at your neighborhood library.

Book annotations are culled from online publishers' descriptions and published reviews.

AMERICAN HISTORY – July 1, 2009 Column

In honor of Independence Day, this week's Book Buzz covers new American history reads that are available from your neighborhood library. The original Independence Day, 1776, was the day that the Continental Congress declared the thirteen American colonies independent from Britain. The Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson to express the convictions in the minds and hearts of the American people and signed by the Continental Congress is perhaps America's most cherished symbol of liberty. It is currently on display in the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom at the National Archives in Washington DC. Our list today features fun, informative, and thought-provoking publications about formative events, people and times in our nation's history. Remember that the Hawaii State Public Library System provides library cardholders a free service to reserve books that are currently checked out or request books from other libraries in the State.

Happy Reading!



A Land So Strange:

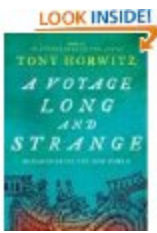
The Epic Journey of Cabeza de Vaca:

The Extraordinary Tale of a Shipwrecked Spaniard Who Walked Across America in the Sixteenth Century

By Andres Resendez

970.16 Nunez

This fascinating epic chronicles the 1528 Spanish voyage to colonize Florida that went wrong...very and repeatedly wrong. After a hurricane and a colossal navigation error finally landed the expedition in Florida a band of three hundred men separated from the ships to explore the interior. The disastrous march across Florida ended with a perilous crossing of the Gulf of Mexico. Many died and the few survivors were the unlucky ones. In the end only four castaways survived, traveling over the vast and dynamic continent to the Pacific to tell their stories. For another history of Pre-Columbus foreign discovery of America try **The Island of Seven Cities: Where the Chinese Settled When They Discovered America** by Paul Chiasson.



A Voyage Long and Strange: Rediscovering the New World

By Tony Horwitz

970.01 Ho

What happened between Columbus's landing in America in 1492 and the arrival of English colonists at Jamestown in the 1600s? This narrative uncovers the stories of that sparsely recorded era with Europeans roaming and rampaging across the states long before the Mayflower landed. An irresistible blend of history, myth and misadventure.

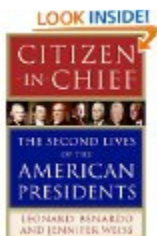


Bitterly Divided: The South's Inner Civil War

By David Williams

973.713 Wi

This fast-paced book provides abundant evidence of just how un-united Southerners were about secession during the Civil War. Slaveholding planters had pushed secession against the wishes of the nonslaveholding majority of white Southerners, who were profoundly skeptical of slavery. They called it "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight." The story details the deep, often murderous divisions in Southern society, and the droves of deserters as Unionists continued to battle secession. In the end the South was a house divided which could not stand. Another new insight into civil war history come in **Slaves' War: The Civil War in the Words of the Former Slaves** by Andrew Ward.



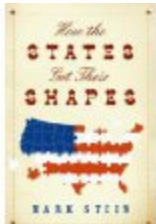
Citizen in Chief: The Second Lives of the American Presidents

By Leonard Benardo and Jennifer Weiss

973.009 Be

This well-researched, opinionated account of postpresidencies examines an influential American institution and fills a surprisingly empty historical niche. Un pensioned early ex-presidents were on their own and only some remained solvent. Congress voted for pensions in 1958, but soon after, riches awaited those willing to speak and write memoirs. The authors dub John Quincy Adams and Jimmy Carter our leading postpresidents. Adams served seventeen years in the

House, a leading antislavery advocate. Carter's diplomatic and humanitarian activities won him a 2002 Nobel Prize.

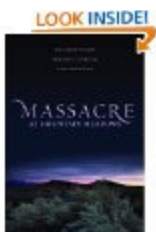


How the States Got Their Shapes

By Mark Stein

917.3 St

A fun and informative reference delivers tales of violent conquest and political gerrymandering along the path to perimeters. The author amasses the story of each state's border, systematically discussing each border—north, south, east, west. Along the way, the narrative illuminates many aspects of American history. It's history, it's geography, it's comedy. More history of states can be found in the fun **Pocketful of History: Four Hundred Year of America—One State Quarter at a Time** by Jim Noles. Another good resource.



Massacre at Mountain Meadows

By Ronald W. Walker, et. al.

979.202 Wa

On September 11, 1857, more than 120 immigrant men, women and children traveling from Arkansas to California were butchered by Mormon militiamen and Paiute Indians at Mountain Meadows in southern Utah. This study of the tragedy by three Latter Day Saints historians finds responsibility almost everywhere else while church president Brigham Young gets a pass. This volume covers the massacre itself, not the coverup that some historians have alleged was masterminded by the LDS Church. This is an absorbing, if unsettling, read and an important contribution. For another aspect of Mormon history in the same era under the same church president try: **Devil's Gate: Brigham Young and the Great Mormon Handcart Tragedy** by David Roberts.



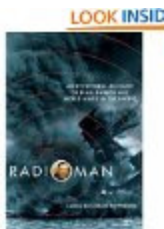
The Muse of the Revolution:

The Secret Pen of Mercy Otis Warren and the Founding of a Nation

By Nancy Stuart Rubin

973.3092 Warren Ru

“History,” John Adams told Mercy Otis Warren, “is not the province of the ladies.” But the ‘Founding Mother’ was ready to take on the ‘Founding Father’ and others. In Nancy Rubin Stuart’s comprehensive biography, the scholar, historian, playwright and mother of five sons Mercy Otis Warren emerges as one of the unsung heroes of the American Revolution, brandishing a mean pen in place of musket or sword. Warren chronicled the Revolution, improved the US constitution, campaigned for the Bill of Rights, and confronted her competitive male-controlled world with frequent success. Try **Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America** by Charlotte S. Waisman and Jill S. Tietjen for a vivid documentation of the breadth and diversity of American women’s achievements throughout U.S. history in the unique form on an illustrated timeline.



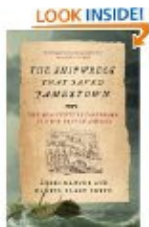
Radioman:

An Eyewitness Account of Pearl Harbor and World War II in the Pacific

By Carol Edgemon Hipperson

940.54597 Dave

This is a biography of radioman Ray Daves, a noncommissioned officer in the U.S. Navy. He could tell what was happening on the bridge of the famous carrier *Yorktown* before it went down and of the secretive relationship between the Russian and American forces in Alaska at the time. Also try the heavily illustrated **Hawai'i Homefront: Life in the Islands During World War II** By MacKinnon Simpson.



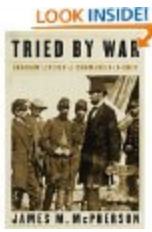
The Shipwreck that Saved Jamestown:

The Sea Venture Castaways and the Fate of America

By Lorri Glover and Daniel Blake Smith

973.21 GI

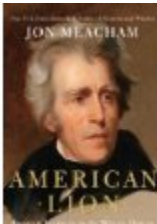
While most accounts of England’s first successful colony in the New World start with the 1607 Jamestown landing, this story focuses on the desperate endeavors to rescue the colony from disaster after its first year. It's a rip-snortin' story of shipwreck, intrigue, horror, courage, risk, luck and will, and the authors milk it for all it's worth. It is the epic tale of the wreck of the *Sea Venture* and its consequences for the survival of Jamestown. The authors persuasively make the case that in saving themselves, the 150 castaways stranded for nearly a year on the remote island of Bermuda ultimately saved English America.



Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief

By James M. McPherson

Far more than four score and seven volumes have been penned about the 16th President of the United States. But as we celebrate this year the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth we are met with at least two more timely contributions. Noted civil war scholar McPherson offers firm evidence of Lincoln's military effectiveness in his typically well-reasoned, well-presented analysis. He shows that Lincoln understood the synergy of political and military decision-making. Lincoln's commitment to linking policy and strategy also made him the most hands-on American commander-in-chief. Lincoln may have been an amateur of war, but McPherson establishes him as America's greatest war leader. For an excellent recent biography go for **A. Lincoln: A Biography** by veteran historian Ronald C. White, Jr. White. Titled after the president's signature, the book reveals an evolving personality and an emerging and curious mind that guided the nation through the four worst years of its existence.



American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House

By Jon Meacham

973.91109 Roosevelt

There is not a lot of new information in this biography of the seventh U.S. president but it garnered the author a Pulitzer Prize for the literary work. Meacham brings a writer's flair to the well-known story leaving out the ideology and position-taking that disfigure more scholarly studies of Jackson. Another new presidential read **Nothing to Fear: FDR's Inner Circle and the Hundred Days that Created Modern America** by Adam Cohen is a narrative of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's famous first hundred days as president. By examining five influential Roosevelt *aides-de-camp* with diverse political views, the author illuminates the ideological complexity and the ultimately leftward course his presidency took. The elegantly argued text brings new insight into Roosevelt's sweeping expansion of the federal government's role in our national life.