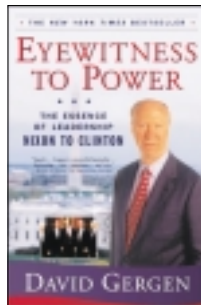
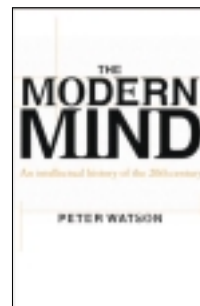
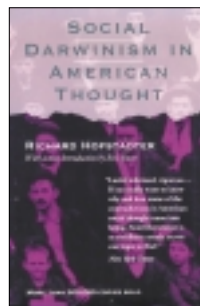
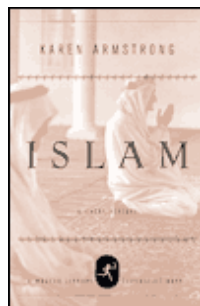
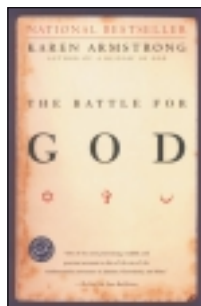
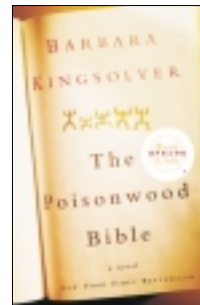


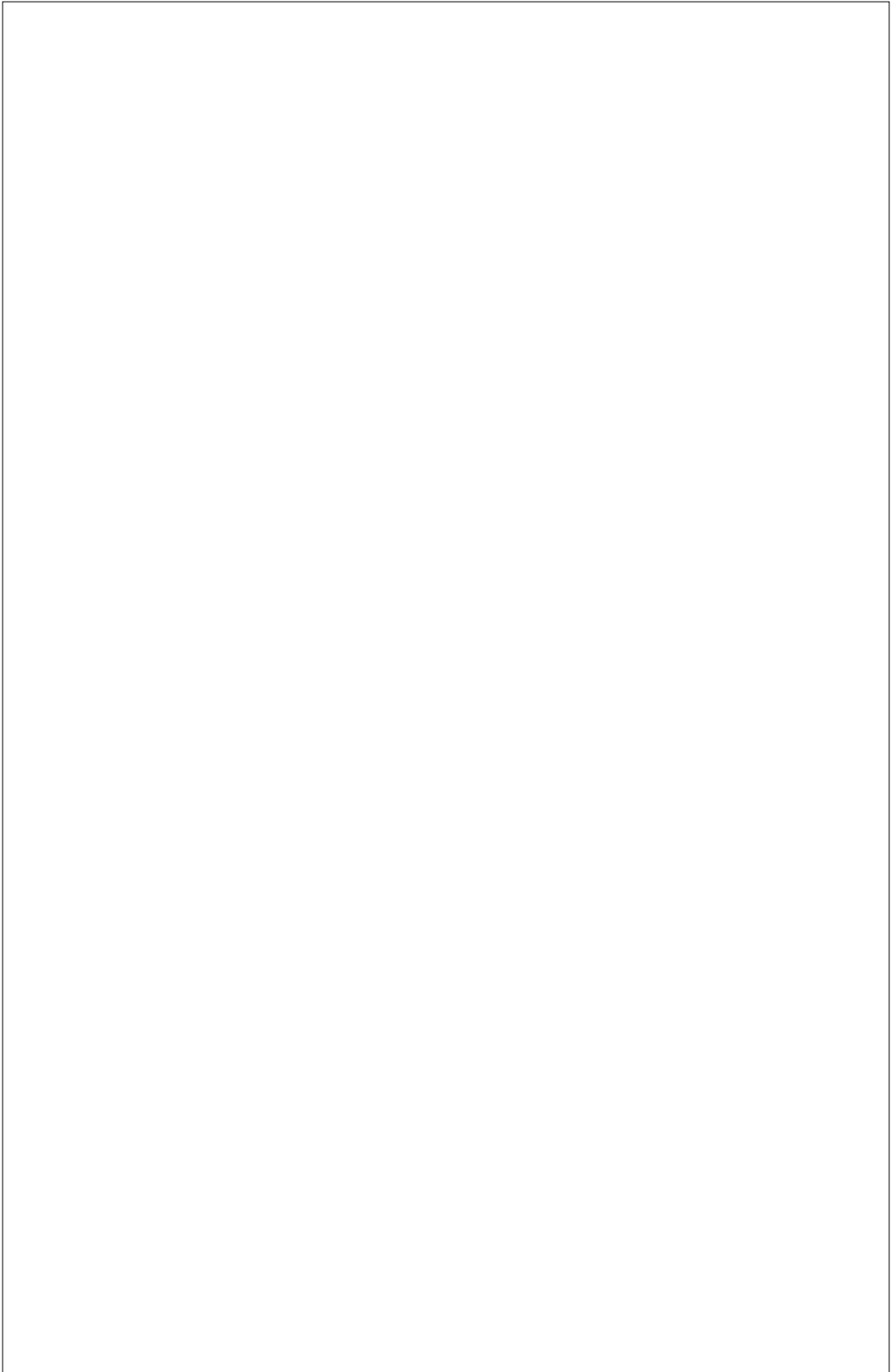
# BOOK LIST

## 2002



Richard P. Nathan





## INTRODUCTION

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This year's *Book List* is organized differently from past editions. Rather than integrating new books into the existing list, it begins with an essay followed by individual descriptions of books added for 2002. A list of books recommended in previous years follows the new section.

As in the past, there is a theme for the new list, although not all of the new books recommended reflect it. The theme this year is "culture wars," referring to the debates among intellectuals about whether there is, or should be, a canon of great books passed down as a body of literature central to Western Civilization. I got interested in this controversy by reading a book of a *genre* I particularly like — surveys of people and ideas that bring historical events to life. The new book that got my attention this year is *The Modern Mind, An Intellectual History of the 20th Century*, by British journalist and author Peter Watson, published in 2001. The aim of Watson's book is to focus on major bodies of ideas. The name of each author is printed in bold face, so Watson's book provides both essays on a wide range of subjects and a useful reference tool for finding out about a particular theory or thinker.

The part of Watson's book, Chapter 41, that led me to this year's theme of "culture wars" begins by describing a September 1988 conference at Duke University on the future of liberal education. The conference featured liberal academics in the humanities angered at cultural conservatives, the "enemy in chief" being Allan Bloom, whose widely-read book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, was published in 1987. According to Watson, it "had broken out of the scholarly ghetto for which it was intended and had made Bloom a celebrity (and a millionaire)." Alan Bloom's book about lost values is not an easy read, and is not recommended, although it stirred up a hornets' nest in higher education.

I read Allan Bloom and his unrelated sidekick, Harold Bloom, and scanned other books criticizing political correctness and the alleged aimlessness and deteriorated condition of college and university teaching. This included books by Roger Kimball,

Dinesh d'Souza, and Gertrude Himmelfarb, with Himmelfarb complaining that theorizing about literature has displaced reading, a point well taken and illustrated by hard-to-love books on both sides — left and right — of the political divide of the culture wars.

Watson's chapter on "culture wars" led me to the book described next — my special favorite for this year, although some readers I've recommended it to are less enthusiastic than I am. Watson said "the most original response to the culture wars" is David Denby's *Great Books*, published in 1996. Denby, then movie critic for *New York* magazine and now for the *New Yorker*, who lives in Manhattan, said he read with growing amazement of the debate about higher education. After working himself up to a "high state of indignation," he said that his wife, a novelist, who had "grown tired of my outrage," challenged him to return to Columbia University where Denby had been a student in 1961 to re-take the University's two year-long required courses on "Literature and Humanities" and "Contemporary Civilization." These courses date back to the 1930s and are still required at Columbia, although they have changed over the years. They are taught in small discussion groups and feature readings of original texts with the overarching purpose being to stimulate critical thinking.

Denby is no Allan Bloom. He is a liberal and yet an unabashed fan of the Columbia program and of its twin required core courses as a way "*of making a self.*" The approach in Denby's book, rather than stilted literary commentary, is to describe in rich, strong prose the instructors, fellow students, books read, and his own reflections about returning as a student to Columbia. Denby's descriptions of the class discussions of Homer, Rousseau, Plato, The Bible, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Shakespeare, Marx, Nietzsche, Hume, Conrad and Woolf, to mention some of the leading characters, are choice.

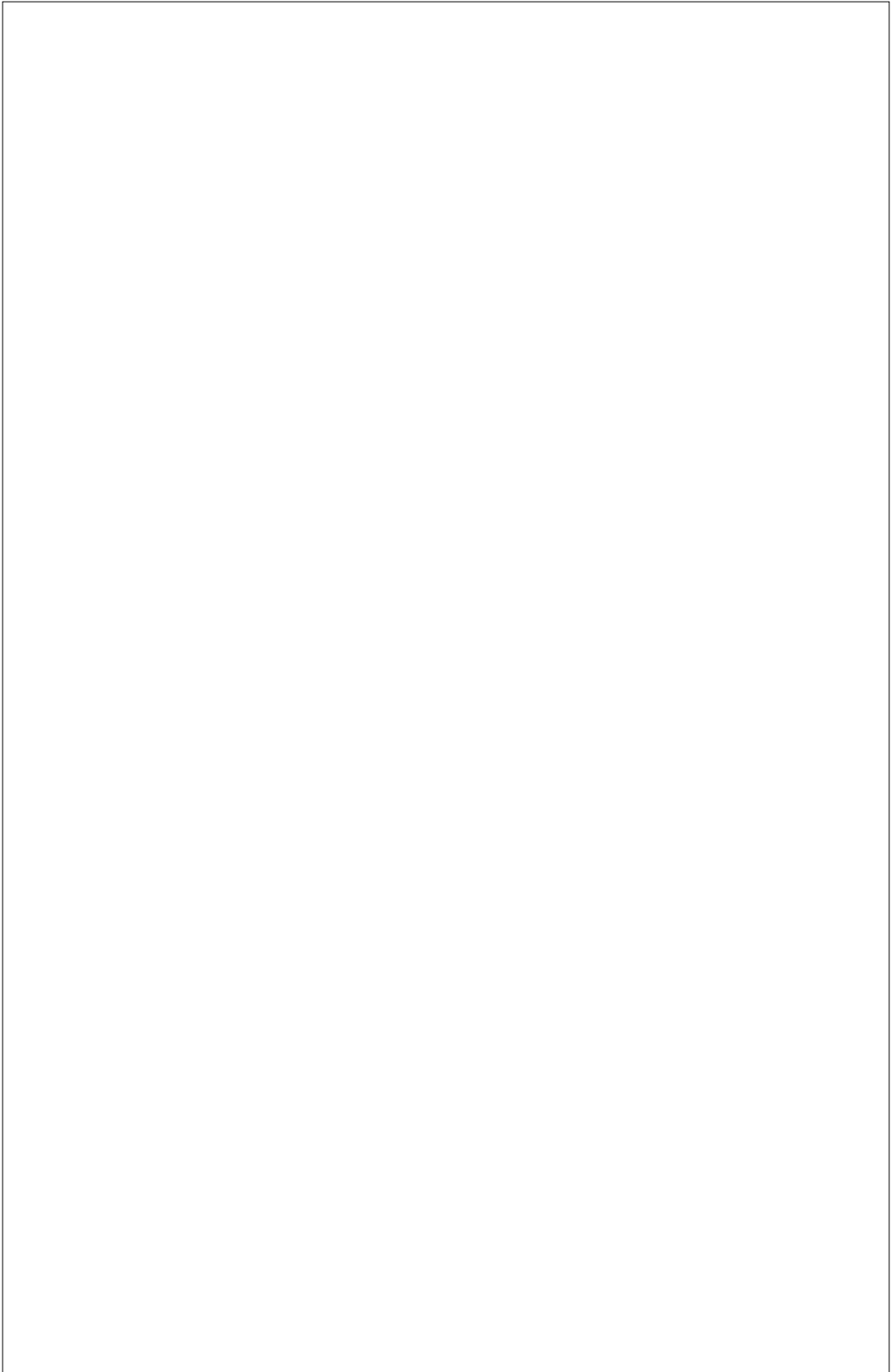
These books — or any such representative selection — speak most powerfully of what a human being can be. They dramatize the utmost any of us is capable of in love, suffering, and knowledge. They offer the most direct representation of the possibilities of civil existence and the disaster of its dissolution. Reading and discussing the books, the stu-

dents begin the act of repossession. They scrape away the media haze of secondhandedness.

Denby's conclusion is that there isn't a canon in the sense that these authors have shared and similar ideas that have evolved over time. Their works are fundamentally in conflict. Rather than being cohesive and formulistic, the two courses, says Denby, are "*the most radical in the undergraduate curriculum.*" I delighted in this book, and found myself going back more than once to favored sections.

My own undergraduate education at Brown came at a time when the University was experimenting, under a Carnegie Foundation grant, with a program for freshman and sophomores called "IC," *Identification and Criticism of Ideas*. Like the Columbia curriculum and that of the University of Chicago, "IC" involved small group discussions, reading original texts, and above all was meant to encourage critical thinking. It changed my life. And it influenced my taste for spirited literary criticism (something of an oxymoron), history, and biography — nonfiction generally. There are few novels on my list, although there is one, a very good one, on the new list this year.

Reading defines the self — not just in college, but for a lifetime. If I had a foundation of my own, I would award competitive grants to universities and colleges for courses like Columbia's and Brown's "IC" program — courses, whatever their focus, that involve small-group discussion, reading original texts and critical thinking. Among the books named above, many are worth consulting, but only two make the list this year — Watson's and Denby's. The other ten books for 2002 are listed alphabetically below, followed by a list of favorites from previous years. *Good reading!*



## Recommended Books

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2002

Karen Armstrong, *ISLAM: A SHORT HISTORY*. The author is a wise, insightful interpreter of the world's religions. A former nun (her first book is a seven-year memoir of that experience), she has lectured widely. This book on Islam, in the Modern Library series, is a compact historical summary of 1,400 years, and is a useful book in these times. At 1.6 billion adherents, Islam is the world's second largest religion. The Prophet Muhammad "did not envisage a violent rupture with the past." A moderate, indeed an incrementalist, he built important parts of his oral teachings for the Koran (he could not read) on Christian and Jewish texts. Muhammad favored the emancipation of women. It was not, says Armstrong, until the Enlightenment and the rise of Europe in the 19th century that many Muslims became angry and resentful, with the eventual explosions of violent groups and leaders.

Karen Armstrong, *THE BATTLE FOR GOD*. This book compares fundamentalist ideas and movements in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. It is up-to-date and readable. A worthy supplement to Armstrong's book on Islam.

Paul Berman, *DEBATING P.C.: THE CONTROVERSY OVER POLITICAL CORRECTNESS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES*. This book contains a cross section of commentary and a good and balanced introductory essay on the controversy about political correctness. Berman's position: "The debate over political correctness has managed to raise nearly every important question connected to culture and education — the proper relation of culture to a democratic society, the relation of literature to life, the purpose of higher education. Naturally to raise a question is not to settle it, which means the crisis in education goes on. But only in medicine are crises a sign of impending death. In intellectual matters, crises are signs of life."

David Denby, *GREAT BOOKS, MY ADVENTURES WITH HOMER, ROUSSEAU, WOOLF, AND OTHER INDESTRUCTIBLE WRITERS OF THE WESTERN WORLD*. The story of this book is told in the introduction to this year's list. Here is a sample from Denby: In describing Oedipus, as "never realizing that his success has already hurt him," Denby comments about powerful people, "I had rarely met a powerful person who knew himself." On the Book of Job, Denby says, "Believer or not, you had to be strong enough to live with that knowledge [that there is no safety]. In the end, the mighty Book of Job is an appeal not to fear but to courage."

Shakespeare's King Lear causes Denby to reflect,

I thought the play — and the students' resistance to it — was also about something so obvious that everyone was loath to talk about it: the anguish that ensues when the ravages of time invert the accustomed relation between parent and child.

In many ways, the most important class discussions described by Denby were of Friedrich Nietzsche and David Hume. Allan Bloom, in *The Closing of the American Mind*, blamed Nietzsche for relativism (anything goes) becoming the core value of "political correctness." Referring to Nietzsche, Columbia instructor Anders Stephanson told the students this wasn't fair. Students, he suggested, should "give up on the notion that if you're not an absolutist, you're a relativist, or vice versa.... Just because you can't do it in a *theoretical* sense, in an absolute sense, you can still posit a universal norm."

Denby liked that. He found the same point central to the writing of David Hume. Denby said, "the idea you can't judge is an egregious error," and used this lesson to chastise what he called "the canon-bashing left." Not in Denby, but somewhere I read that at a conference on literary criticism people sported tee-shirts saying, "*Nietzsche is Peachy*." Denby concluded this was a mis-reading of the grouchy, eccentric philosopher who died at the turn of the twentieth century in 1900.

On Machiavelli: "After reading so many writers chasing virtue, so much spiritual striving and metaphysical endeavor,

I was thrilled by our first wicked text, a book so close in its way to the mental atmosphere of our own world."

David Gergen, *EYEWITNESS TO POWER: THE ESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP, NIXON TO CLINTON*. This is an engaging self-analysis of an incredible career of high White House responsibilities under four presidents — Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Clinton. Gergen's most penetrating treatments are of his two book-ended presidential-aide experiences, with the flawed and complex personalities of Nixon and Clinton. There is lots of good gossip along the way in this clearly and well-written account, which also tells a lot about the author.

John A. Farrell, *TIP O'NEILL AND THE DEMOCRATIC CENTURY*. I'm not sure what the sub-title means, but the book is "A plus." It is a rich, fast-paced story of the life and times (particularly the times) of a big, warm, strong leader in American government, Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives for ten years. His life story, his jockeying with Ronald Reagan and Newt Gingrich, his warmth and down-home political smarts make him a good protagonist. And Farrell does a terrific job of jogging our memories about the major national and international events we lived through in the lifetime of Tip O'Neill.

Martin Gilbert, *CHURCHILL: A LIFE*. Gilbert is Churchill's official biographer, succeeding Churchill's son, Randolph. This book, a condensation of eight volumes, is a huge and sympathetic treatment. Churchill's indomitable will and courage, his tirelessness, his pure spunk are well captured. I also read some of his own works. "I have faith in my pen," he said, and it was well placed. To check for other views, I read about Churchill in Truman's biography by David McCullough. He quotes Truman as saying on first meeting Churchill, "He gave me a lot of hooey." Hooey or not, Churchill was one of a kind. And this is a good account of his very full life.

Richard Hofstadter, *SOCIAL DARWINISM IN AMERICAN THOUGHT*. This is an old book (1959) that I bought for a dollar at a used-book sale. It focuses on a period and line of thinking often left out of American history — the high-flying post-Civil War years of rapid industrial development and political and

social conservatism. "Survival of the fittest" was the rage in the writings of Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner, both of whom were immensely popular, especially with the great tycoons of the day. The simplistic Darwin-Spencer-Sumner view was challenged by William James, John Dewey and others, whose role and writings Hofstadter also describes.

Barbara Kingsolver, *THE POISONWOOD BIBLE*. My friends, Jane and Arthur Mason, once teased me about not reading novels, so I asked, which ones should I read, and this is a book they especially recommended. And rightly so! It is a beautiful, flowing, often hard, epic of the lives of a missionary family in the Congo/Zaire. It is told in the alternating voices of a mother and four daughters. The villain is the Baptist minister father, Nathan Price, who is described in all five voices — mother's and daughters'. Each is a well formed character. Nathan's sin of self-righteousness is powerful and destructive, a reminder in these times about the danger of being carried away by one's own worldview and mindset.

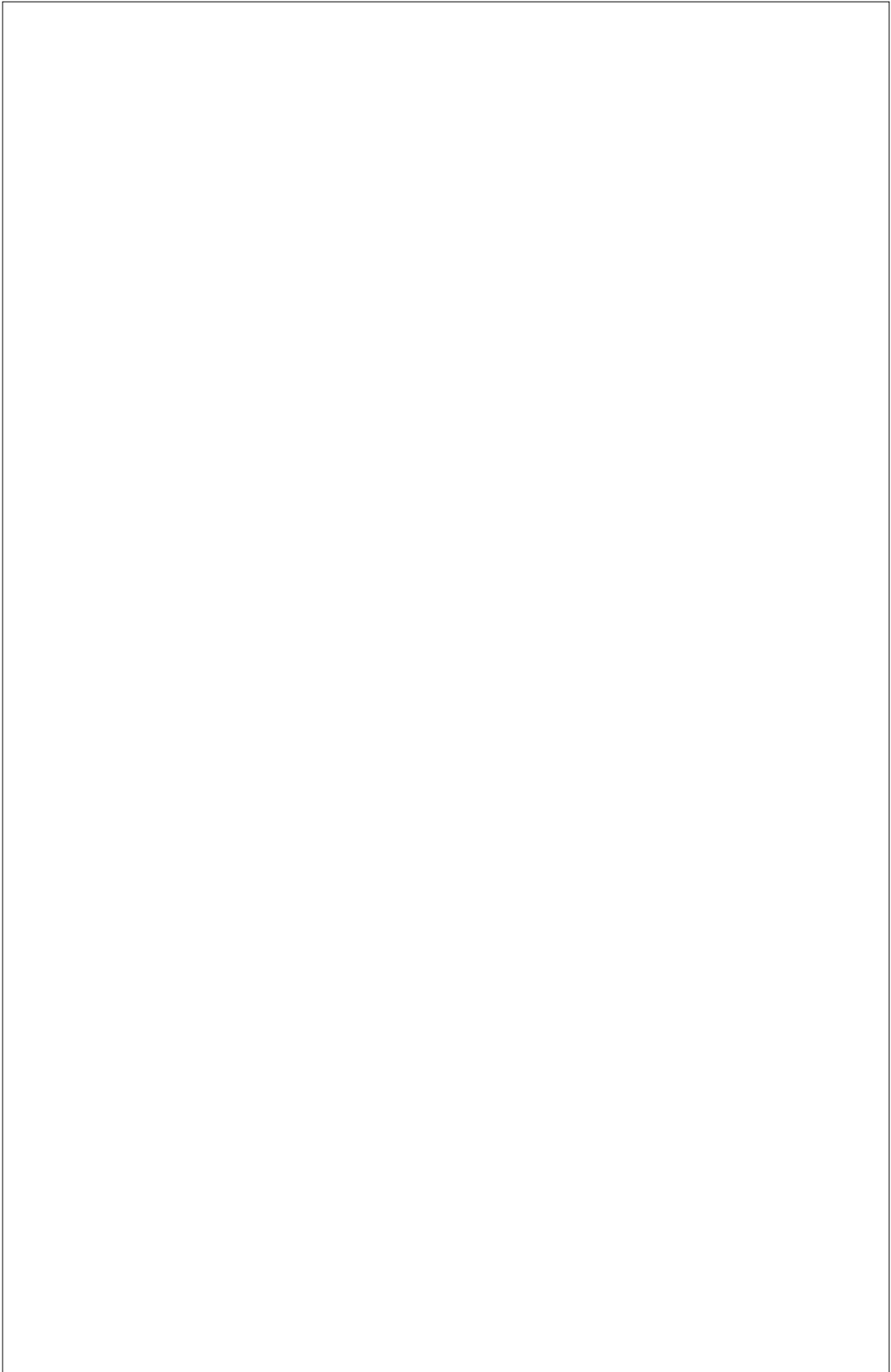
David McCullough, *JOHN ADAMS*. My wife and I and her sister read this book and visited the Adams' homesite in 2001. McCullough as a biographer has a way of falling in love with his subjects, in this case even more with Abigail Adams than with John Adams. Gordon Wood in *The New York Review of Books* said of McCullough that he is America's greatest historical popularizer. This fine book reads like a romantic novel in many places, and is a wonderful tribute, not just to Adams, but to the Founders and the country. Everywhere we went in 2001, we saw people reading this book. It is an inspiration for patriotism, which of course emerged in full force in 2001 after the World Trade Center disaster.

Joseph E. Persico. *ROOSEVELT'S SECRET WAR: FDR AND WORLD WAR II ESPIONAGE*. Persico's knowledge of espionage during World War II is used here to describe Franklin Roosevelt's close, personal, and manipulative involvement in this aspect of the war. It is chock full of great stories. Persico is a fine writer. What he sees in Roosevelt is a lot of what we know, but FDR is made even craftier and, dare I say it, even more high-handed in Persico's treatment.

Peter Watson, *THE MODERN MIND: AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF THE 20TH CENTURY*. This book, already described above, is not an easy-read cover-to-cover, but contains strong insights to be read selectively over time. As noted, Watson's description of the "culture wars" had a major influence on my reading in 2001.



*The Prize*. Last year's "Book List" had a contest. The question was, who said, "He who wins his freedom and his life takes them every-day by storm." The prize — a \$100 Barnes and Noble gift certificate. The answer is Goethe's *Faust*. The winner was University at Albany professor Gerald Marschke. Congratulations Gerald.



## PREVIOUSLY RECOMMENDED BOOKS

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Dean Acheson, *PRESENT AT THE CREATION: MY YEARS IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT*. A personal account of the birth of the institutions that bound the West together against the political and military threat of Stalin's Soviet Union. Acheson deserves major credit for what was accomplished. His book contains wonderful memories of Truman and Marshall.

Henry Adams, *THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS*. This is an old book, yet a wise and interesting one that I have been re-reading in 2001. It is a classic. In many ways it is a profoundly sad book, especially read with McCullough's biography of John Adams. *THE EDUCATION* is the personally and intimately described life of John Adams' great grandson, Henry, who living into the 20th century. It is the confessional of a person who could not come to terms with America in a changing world.

I particularly like what Adams had to say about both Roosevelts. When his friend T.R. became President, Adams reflected that it would never be the same again. He said, "A friend in power is a friend lost."

Later when Adams befriended the young FDR and his wife, he is reported to have said to them when FDR was assistant secretary of the Navy, pointing to the White House across the street from where he (Henry Adams) lived (now the hotel), "Young man, I have lived in this house many years and seen the occupants of that white house across the square come and go and nothing that you minor officials or the occupant of that house can do will affect the history of the world for long." (As told by Nathan Miller in his biography of FDR.)

Stephen E. Ambrose, *UNDAUNTED COURAGE: MERIWETHER LEWIS, THOMAS JEFFERSON, AND THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN WEST*. I'm not a special admirer of Ambrose because he writes so much and obviously so fast, but this is a fine

book and a story he really knows, loves, and has lived vicariously.

David Haward Bain, *EMPIRE EXPRESS: BUILDING THE FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD*. This is not an easy read, but it packs a wallop. When Brian Lamb interviewed the author on C-SPAN, he got the story into focus. He showed pictures of the founders of the first transcontinental railroad (Huntington, Hopkins, Crocker, Stanford, Rep. Oaks Ames, et al.) and asked about each of them, "Was he a crook?" Bain's answer invariable was, yes, all of them were — which eventually culminated in the great *Credit Mobilier* scandal with its pay-offs to leading politicians. Everyone was on the take!

Carlos Baker, *ERNEST HEMINGWAY: A LIFE STORY*. This is the definitive biography of Hemingway by Carlos Baker about a "man's man . . . proud of his manhood" who lived an amazing life, says Baker.

Carlos Baker, *EMERSON AMONG THE ECCENTRICS: A GROUP PORTRAIT*. Along with recounting the life of Emerson and the transcendentalism movement, Baker has a lot to say about Emerson's friends — Thoreau, Hawthorne, Whitman, Melville, and other writers associated with the cultural flowering of New England. My dictionary defines transcendentalism as "the 19th century New England movement stressing the presence of the divine within man as a source of truth and a guide to action."

Leonard Baker, *JOHN MARSHALL: A LIFE IN LAW*. This big book won't interest everyone. Baker's description of Marshall's contribution to the development of American government is exceptional.

Irving Bartlett, *DANIEL WEBSTER*. His huge ego is a story in itself. This book ably describes Webster's turbulent times (he died in 1852), which by itself is worth the price of admission.

W. Jackson Bate, *SAMUEL JOHNSON*. Not Boswell's Johnson biography, but that of Harvard Professor Bate published in 1975. This life of England's leading literary scholar of the eighteenth century won the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. Bate recounts

Johnson's wit as well as his accomplishments as an influential man of letters, describing his many essays, his edition of Shakespeare's works, and his *Dictionary of the English Language*.

Andrew Scott Berg, *MAXWELL PERKINS, EDITOR OF GENIUS*. Maxwell Perkins discovered Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Thomas Wolfe. This is a fine account of the development of the modern American novel. Interestingly, it is one of the books that has been on the list longest, and is one of the first biographies that I found to be the kind of book that captures life experience in a flowing, intelligent account not only of a person — but also of the times. I revisited this book recently, and it still sparkles. It was Berg's first book, begun as a Senior Thesis under Prof. Carlos Baker when Berg was an undergraduate at Princeton.

Books like this one about Maxwell Perkins should engage you all the way through, and leave something with you. In the case of this book, it portrays a landmark change in American Letters beginning in the post World War I period. Perkins' battle with Charles Scribner to print four-letter expletives in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* was a harbinger of things to come.

Benson Bobrick, *ANGEL IN THE WHIRLWIND: THE TRIUMPH OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*. A lively, fast-flowing account of the American Revolution. From victory at Lexington and Concord in April 1775 to the Treaty of Paris nearly a decade later (1783), Bobrick's account of the battles and the "balancing act" by George Washington makes this book worthwhile. Bobrick has a nice touch.

At the end of the war when the Treaty of Paris was proclaimed in Williamsburg, he quotes the order for the procession and celebration of that day: "From the Court House the Citizens are to proceed to the College [of William and Mary], and make proclamation at that Place, from whence they are to proceed to the Capitol and make proclamation there, and from thence to the Raleigh [Tavern] & pass the rest of the Day." Quoting the studious John Adams, Bobrick says that by his early twenties, his constitution had been impaired (so a doctor

told him) by too much study, which had “corrupted the whole mass of my blood and juices.” So, readers, be careful!

Catherine Drinker Bowen, *FRANCIS BACON: THE TEMPER OF A MAN*. Bowen is a supreme biographer, and Francis Bacon, who is quoted on the back cover, is a fascinating subject. He was a scheming politician of the Elizabethan period, best remembered for his sideline as a philosopher. The *Novum Organum* (1620), laying the groundwork for empiricism and induction in the scientific method, is seen by many as the beginning of modern science. Not so, said Bowen, “Bacon was not a scientist but the propagandist of science. He was the prophet who urged men out of sterile scholasticism into the adventurous, experimental future.”

Catherine Drinker Bowen, *MIRACLE AT PHILADELPHIA*. The story of the writing of the Constitution, an exciting, easy-to-read description of the origins of our governmental system. Fifty-five white Protestant men met in strict secrecy for four hot summer months in Philadelphia, with the delegates elected by the states, and voting *en bloc*. At the end of the proceedings, thirty-nine delegates were present, with not all of them participating actively. George Washington presided in a dignified, aloof manner, and was habitually silent. Bowen describes the scenes, the issues, the plans (New Jersey’s, Virginia’s, and Connecticut’s), saying forthrightly that her book “celebrates” this “grand national experiment.” She notes that both Washington and Madison in letters to friends about the Convention called it a “miracle,” although at times they despaired of its occurring.

Taylor Branch, *PARTING THE WATERS: AMERICA IN THE KING YEARS, 1954-63*. An engrossing story of the rise of Martin Luther King. The Kings vs. the Kennedys is the central plot line of this eye-opening account.

Fawn M. Brodie, *THADDEUS STEVENS: SCOURGE OF THE SOUTH*. Stevens has to be one of the most irascible, controversial figures in American history. He cared not a wit whether anyone liked him, and was way ahead of his times in powering through civil rights laws and Constitutional Amendments to provide equal opportunity. He had a mulatto mistress and a

clubfoot, wore an ill-fitting wig, was detested by Southerners, and pioneered free public education in Pennsylvania. Brodie's book, written long before her psychological biography of Thomas Jefferson, was published in 1959. Although out of print, this book is well worth finding. After all, what are used bookstores for?

J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlich, *THE WESTERN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION, FROM LEONARDO TO HEGEL*. This book has legs and an interesting history. Bronowski (author of the famous book and TV series on *Civilization*) teamed up in 1960 with MIT humanities professor Bruce Mazlich to write a book that would come to life as a way to teach engineering students about the intellectual history of the West. They decided to use the lives of important figures and major events to dramatize ideas and periods in a way that would provide a plot and give some zip to a subject that is often portrayed in dry terms. The leading figures are familiar ones — Leonardo, Machiavelli, Thomas More, Luther, Calvin, Erasmus, Francis Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Jefferson, Jeremy Bentham, Robert Owen, Kant, Hegel, and Edmund Burke. The authors succeeded so well in blending the stories of these lives and others with great ideas in history that the publisher, Harper, has reissued this book every couple of years and it remains in print. No doubt, it is a good seller. It ought to be.

Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *GOTHAM: A HISTORY OF NEW YORK CITY TO 1898*. Looks and feels like a coffee table book, but is readable, despite being 1,379 pages long. Take it in small bites.

Robert A. Caro, *THE POWER BROKER: ROBERT MOSES AND THE FALL OF NEW YORK*. Caro's account of the life and times of New York's master builder, Robert Moses, is a must-read book for public administrators.

Ron Chernow, *THE HOUSE OF MORGAN: AN AMERICAN BANKING DYNASTY & THE RISE OF MODERN FINANCE*. An excellent portrayal of the rise of an American banking dynasty and of modern finance.

Ron Chernow, *TITAN: THE LIFE OF JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, SR.*  
The title of this book should read *two* lives, rather than one: John D. Rockefeller, as the relentless, swashbuckling creator of the great kerosene/petroleum trust, and later as the monarch of a charitable empire he built in almost four decades of retirement up until his death at the age of 98 in 1937.

Adam Cohen and Elizabeth Taylor, *AMERICAN PHARAOH: MAYOR RICHARD J. DALEY: HIS BATTLE FOR CHICAGO AND THE NATION*. This fine book is a biography of Chicago Mayor Richard Daley. Born in 1902, Daley died in 1976, serving as mayor 22 years. His biography raises profound questions about how Daley sought to balance irreconcilable goals in race and politics in America. An example,

Daley decided to make a strong appeal to the white "backlash" voters in the Bungalow Belt who had begun to desert him in the 1962 bond referendum and the 1963 mayoral election. He would come out more directly against open housing and equal rights for blacks, so there would be no confusion among white voters about where he stood. He intended to hold on to as much of his black support as he could, but he would do that not by his stand on the issues, but through patronage and the work of the black ward organizations.

The most dramatic confrontation came when Martin Luther King, Jr., moved his headquarters to Chicago in 1966. Daley met with King, never Bull-Connored him, and sought to outfox him by showing that their goals were similar. He largely succeeded.

Margaret L. Coit, *JOHN C. CALHOUN: AMERICAN PORTRAIT*. This thoughtful portrait of Calhoun fits with a theme of the 2001 list about the prominence of Congressional leadership in 19th century U.S. political history. Calhoun, the Nullifier, was Andrew Jackson's first vice president. The two men came to thoroughly detest each other. Jackson said he should have hung Calhoun, and he wished he had. Calhoun eventually resigned as vice president and returned to the Senate to harass Jackson and many of his successors.

Peter Collier and David Horowitz. They have done a series of family books — the Roosevelts, Kennedys, Rockefellers, and Fords. Gossipy, but often insightful, with sometimes unkind stories about the relatives, friends, and offspring of America's patriarchs and matriarchs.

Henry Steele Commager, *THE AMERICAN MIND: AN INTERPRETATION OF AMERICAN THOUGHT AND CHARACTER SINCE THE 1880s*. This is an intellectual story of the U.S. from 1880 to 1950 by one of America's great historians. It is dated, but I decided to keep it on the list. Commager's sweeping book reflects almost an innocence about the shifting spirit of America, with the rise of industrialization and urbanism in the first part of the 20th century. Related to these trends, Commager describes intellectual movements towards social science empiricism and ideas about blending pragmatism and activism in American politics. Among the leading characters are William James, Lester Ward, Thorsten Veblen, Herbert Croly, John R. Commons, Henry George, Louis Brandeis, Walter Lippman, Woodrow Wilson, Teddy Roosevelt, Charles Beard, Frederick Jackson Turner, Ezra Pound, and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Evan S. Connell, *SON OF THE MORNING STAR: CUSTER & THE LITTLE BIGHORN*. Why did it happen? The heroism and foolishness of Custer's "Last Stand" reads like a mystery story.

Joseph Conrad, *LORD JIM, NOSTROMO*. His masterpieces. I especially recommend *NOSTROMO*.

Kenneth S. Davis. *FDR: THE NEW YORK YEARS, 1928-1933*. This book is divided into two parts, "*The Test of Albany*," and "*The Rocky Road to the White House*." Both are wise and probing in their description of the extraordinary — almost frighteningly powerful and intuitive — political genius of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as he emerged on the national political stage. His Albany years contained what Davis calls, "*The Genesis of the New Deal*."

Jared Diamond, *GUNS, GERMS AND STEEL: THE FATES OF HUMAN SOCIETIES*. A book that looks at 13,000 years of world history and asks the question: Why did some nations conquer others? Why didn't the Incas conquer the Spanish? You will

never view history in quite the same way after reading this insightful book. I liked the first three parts more than the fourth and final section. Diamond gives this one-sentence description of his book:

“Authors are regularly asked by journalists to summarize a long book in one sentence. For this book, here is such a sentence: ‘History followed different courses for different peoples because of differences among peoples’ environments, not because of biological differences among peoples themselves.’”

Charles Dickens, *HARD TIMES*. Dickens’ political economy novel is my favorite among his books.

David Herbert Donald, *LINCOLN*. Even though you know the story, this is a great read. It is a brilliant book about American politics. Donald, one of the nation’s leading historians, focuses on Lincoln the man, describing him as fatalistic (though by no means lethargic — he was, in fact, very ambitious), pragmatic, dedicated to “a strenuous life of aspiration,” and “reluctant to make bold plans.”

Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *THE AGE OF FEDERALISM: THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC, 1788-1800*. This seminal account of twelve formative years of the United States reads like a novel, bringing to life the personality, roles, and rivalries of the Founders of the Republic.

Joseph J. Ellis, *AMERICAN SPHINX: THE CHARACTER OF THOMAS JEFFERSON*. This is a fascinating book that looks at events in Jefferson’s life and lets the reader decide: What do you think? Ellis is skeptical about Jefferson’s legacy. Anyway, he is no Jefferson sycophant.

Joseph J. Ellis, *PASSIONATE SAGE: THE CHARACTER AND LEGACY OF JOHN ADAMS*. This is Ellis’s companion book on the most crotchety of the Founding Fathers, John Adams. It is based mainly on Adams’s long correspondence with his friend and long-time political adversary, Jefferson.

James Fallows, *BREAKING THE NEWS: HOW THE MEDIA UNDERMINE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY*. His discussion of “buckrakers” and “spinology” depicts a press that is more interested in money and power than getting at hard-to-treat sub-

stantive questions. If anything, the issues Fallows raises are more serious and important now than they were when his book came out four years ago.

David Hackett Fischer, *PAUL REVERE'S RIDE*. It wasn't like you think. Fischer uses this dramatic event in a fast-paced account to show how the battles of Lexington and Concord came about and the Revolutionary War began.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *THE GREAT GATSBY*. Were the twenties really like this?

Eric Foner, *RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA'S UNFINISHED REVOLUTION, 1863-1877*. This is not an easy read, but an important revisionist book by a distinguished historian to refute the Dunning School (historian William Dunning). Foner's villains are the Southern "Redeemers" and "Scalawags" (Southern whites who aided the Carpet Baggers). His heroes are Radical Republicans, with good words along the way for the post-Civil War Freedmen's Bureau. Speaking of Thaddeus Stevens (see Brodie above), author of the 14th Amendment, Foner calls him "a master of Congressional infighting, parliamentary tactics, and blunt speaking." The contested election of Hayes in 1876 effectively delayed the Reconstruction process for 75 years.

Charles Frazier, *COLD MOUNTAIN*. This is my nomination for an American classic. Young people especially should read this book. Its strength is the poignant, insightful way the protagonist vividly sees everything around him on his ill-fated journey home from terrifying, grisly Civil War battles at Cold Harbor, Sharpsburg, Petersburg, and Fredericksburg. Somber but it is somehow hopeful through it all.

Douglas Southall Freeman, *LEE*. A one-volume abridgment, an elegant book.

Lawrence M. Friedman, *HISTORY OF AMERICAN LAW*. Don't be put off by the title. This book is an easy and profitable read. Full of useful ideas and facts. Want to know how tort law got to be the way it is?

Thomas L. Friedman, *FROM BEIRUT TO JERUSALEM*. Friedman is a *New York Times* columnist who covered Lebanon and Israel. An exciting book about the Middle East in the 1980s.

Thomas L. Friedman, *THE LEXUS AND THE OLIVE TREE: UNDERSTANDING GLOBALIZATION*. This is the most important book I recommended in 2000. (Information technology was my theme that year.) Friedman is especially insightful on the changing role of politics in the information age and how it involves weakening government and strengthening the private sector through the international rule of the "electronic herd" that can move businesses anywhere and everywhere with incredible ease in today's global economy. I particularly recommend chapter 5, where Friedman describes the "golden straitjacket of technology," which limits the power of national governments.

David Fromkin, *A PEACE TO END ALL PEACE: CREATING THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST, 1914-1922*. A history of the modern Middle East from Gallipoli to the Settlement of 1922.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Cornel West, *THE FUTURE OF RACE*. This is a powerful book. See especially Gates' lead essay. Needed, he says, is " a way of speaking about black advancement that doesn't distort the enduring realities of black poverty."

Doris Kearns Goodwin, *NO ORDINARY TIME: FRANKLIN & ELEANOR ROOSEVELT — THE HOMEFRONT IN WORLD WAR II*. A wonderfully vivid account of FDR and Eleanor in the War years. Don't miss this book. My mother loved it.

Fred I. Greenstein, *THE PRESIDENTIAL DIFFERENCE: LEADERSHIP STYLE FROM FDR TO CLINTON*. Fred Greenstein was a faculty colleague of mine at Princeton. His book presents a useful six-part framework for evaluating modern presidents. Of six factors, the most important, says Greenstein, is what he calls, "*Emotional Intelligence*," which he defines as "the president's ability to manage his emotions and turn them to constructive purposes." Some of Fred's language describing presidents in these terms is choice. Johnson, Nixon, Carter, and Clinton, says Greenstein, were "*emotionally handicapped*." He calls LBJ "*vesuvian*," and describes him as "subject to emo-

tional mood swings of clinical proportions." Nixon he calls, "the most emotionally flawed" of the presidents he studied. "His anger and suspiciousness were of Shakespearean proportions." Does George W. Bush have emotional intelligence? Fred Greenstein seems to think so.

Paul Grondahl, *MAYOR ERASTUS CORNING: ALBANY ICON, ALBANY ENIGMA*. The O'Connell Democratic organization controlled Albany politics longer than any other old-line city machine, beginning in 1921. Erastus Corning served as Mayor for 42 years! This story of the machine ably and insightfully told by a local reporter is rich and real — about power politics up close, which, as Mr. Dooley said, "ain't beanbag."

Learned Hand, *THE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY*. Former Michigan Governor William Milliken suggested these essays to me. It is a collection that tells about the life of an outstanding jurist (born in Albany, New York, by the way) whose views on the American experience and the importance of tolerance for public civility make it worthwhile to buy this old book, which I did, used, on Amazon.com. The editor is Irving Dilliard.

Thomas Hardy, *THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE*. The best of Hardy.

Roy Harrod, *THE LIFE OF JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES*. Harrod, a colleague of Keynes, is a good storyteller.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *THE HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES*. My favorite Hawthorne.

Robert Heilbroner, *THE WORLDLY PHILOSOPHERS*. Describes the lives and work of the great economists. Not a new book, but a good one.

Gertrude Himmelfarb, *THE IDEA OF POVERTY*. This is the story of social conditions and government in 18th and 19th century England from the poor house to the Poor Law. Himmelfarb's ideas have influenced, not just other members of her distinguished family, but many prominent opinion leaders as social policies shifted in the 90s.

Adam Hochschild, *KING LEOPOLD'S GHOST*. This ugly story is riveting and memorable. Leopold never set foot in a land he pil-

ferred. Re-read Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, afterwards to feel the horror of the Congo. Conrad appears in Hochschild's book, which recounts his steaming up the Congo River. This book ties in nicely as well to Barbara Kingsolver's *THE POISONWOOD BIBLE*.

Richard Hofstadter, *THE AGE OF REFORM*. There are few better books on progressivism in America. The period covered is 1890 to 1940.

Alistair Horne, *HOW FAR FROM AUSTERLITZ?: NAPOLEON 1805-1815*. From Napoleon's greatest victory to his downfall at Waterloo.

William Dean Howells, *THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM*. Try a little Howells.

André Jardin, Robert Hemenway, and Lydia Davis, *TOCQUEVILLE: A BIOGRAPHY*. Tocqueville went to America to re-start his political career — to get away from it all in France. He ended up making a great contribution to literature and history through his writing about the nine months he spent studying prisons in America in 1831 and 1832. Tocqueville believed, says his biographer, Jardin,

"The American institutions thus formed a complex system — one of interlocking wheels, and wheels within wheels, in which the direct line of command of a centralized regime was not to be found."

Henry James, *WASHINGTON SQUARE*. A little James will improve your image. Also suggested, *THE AMBASSADORS*.

Paul Johnson, *MODERN TIMES*. The history of modern times as told from a prickly conservative point of view. Exciting and well done. Full of rich anecdotes.

Paul Johnson, *A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY*. A readable book of great scope. Written before Paul Johnson's conversion — his conversion, that is, to conservatism.

John Keane, *TOM PAINE: A POLITICAL LIFE*. Tom Paine lived an extraordinary and wild life — a friend then foe of George Washington, a member of the French Assembly during the

Revolution, and almost guillotined. He knew Napoleon, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Edmund Burke, and wrote what were arguably the three most influential essays of the eighteenth century — *Common Sense*, *The Rights of Man*, and *The Age of Reason*. Keane's book is an exciting, fast-paced story well told.

David M. Kennedy, *FREEDOM FROM FEAR: THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IN DEPRESSION AND WAR, 1929-1945*. Kennedy's treatment of FDR, the Depression, and the New Deal is exceptional. Even though you know the story, Kennedy puts a new spin on the main events and leading characters.

William Kennedy, *BILLY PHELAN'S GREATEST GAME*. Among Kennedy's Albany books, this is my favorite.

Ralph Ketcham, *JAMES MADISON*. Ketcham's book is not an easy read, but it is a full and good treatment of the life of a great American whose story you should know. A brilliant man who was much more successful as a political philosopher than as president.

Richard M. Ketchum, *SARATOGA: TURNING POINT OF AMERICA'S REVOLUTIONARY WAR*. The plan was for Burgoyne and Howe to meet in Albany and split the colonies. It might have been different if they had. Ketchum brings life to the story of why they didn't connect up.

Russell Kirk, *THE CONSERVATIVE MIND FROM BURKE TO SANTAYANA*. Written in 1953, this hard-hitting, vibrant book states the case for conservatism in a way that still makes one think hard.

Joe Klein, *PRIMARY COLORS: A NOVEL OF POLITICS*. In 1996, I listed this book under "A" as being written by Anonymous, but I never had doubts about who wrote it. It is almost word-for-word a fictionalization of Klein's *New York Magazine* accounts of Clinton's experiences in the 1992 presidential primaries. This is still a good read. Paired with Dick Morris's book (see below), it gives a picture — not a pretty one — of Clinton's attitude towards the presidency.

Richard Kluger, *SIMPLE JUSTICE*. A history of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954, the school desegregation case.

Jerzy Kosinski, *BEING THERE*. This is a funny and compelling book about the modern world of spin doctors, TV spots, and glib politics. Kosinski's book *THE PAINTED BIRD* is also recommended.

David Lamb, *THE AFRICANS*. Though dated, this highly readable and crystal-clear book provides perspective on the grim conditions and prospects of sub-Saharan Africa.

Margaret Leech, *IN THE DAYS OF MCKINLEY*. Leech's book, *REVEILLE IN WASHINGTON: 1860-1865*, about events in the capital city during the Civil War, is also fine, and fits with the 2001 theme focusing on the Civil War period.

McKinley had his heart set on retiring to Canton, Ohio. Said Leech: "In all America there was no mansion so fine and costly that it compared in McKinley's mind with the snug cottage on North Market Street," from which he campaigned for and won the presidency in 1896. But it was not to be. Leech closes by saying: "The nation felt another leadership, nervous, aggressive and strong. Under command of a bold young captain, America set sail on the stormy voyage of the twentieth century."

Nicholas Lemann, *THE PROMISED LAND: THE GREAT BLACK MIGRATION AND HOW IT CHANGED AMERICA*. An account of the effect of the mechanization of cotton picking on the lives of black Americans and on national social policy. Lemann's treatment of social policymaking in Washington in the sixties and seventies is exceptional.

Michael Lewis, *LIAR'S POKER*. On greed on Wall Street as seen by a young Princeton-trained investment banker in the high-flying eighties.

Michael Lewis, *THE NEW NEW THING: A SILICON VALLEY STORY*. This book is a fast-paced new-culture account of the wild life of Jim Clark, founder of three consecutive billion-dollar-plus e-commerce blockbusters, the most famous of which

was Netscape. Lewis tells the story of this impresario of the information age in a way that shows the profound changes that have occurred in the role of all of the players in and around the information economy.

Sinclair Lewis, *MAIN STREET*. Also recommended by Lewis, *IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE*.

Machiavelli, *THE PRINCE*. Lots to ponder: "A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not good. Therefore, it is necessary to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge and not use it, according to the necessity of the case."

Madison, Hamilton, Jay, *THE FEDERALIST PAPERS*. This is the greatest American political science book ever written according to Clinton Rossiter. It is all the more amazing because these were also among America's earliest op-ed articles. Read Nos. 9, 10, 39, 47, 51, 70, and 78. The best edition is the Mentor Edition edited by Rossiter. Papers numbers 10, 39, and 51, all by Madison, are the most important essays.

Nelson Mandela, *LONG WALK TO FREEDOM*. I'm not a fan of autobiographies, but Mandela wins over the reader. He spent twenty-six years in prison and captured his captors with extraordinary political savvy and great human decency.

Robert Massie, *PETER THE GREAT*. Massie's books on Russia are excellent; this is one of my favorite biographies. Also recommended: *NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA*.

Garrett Mattingly, *THE ARMADA*. Reads like a novel on a shaping event of the 16th century.

David G. McCulloch, *TRUMAN*. This is a rich biography and a wonderful read for the flow of the narrative. The author obviously became increasingly and warmly admiring of his subject. "Sweeping and vivid," said one reviewer. It is a big book (1,100 pages). I like big books; they stay with you longer. The qualities of Truman make for a wonderful story and the period covered is an important one.

Forrest McDonald, *STATES RIGHTS AND THE UNION: IMPERIUM IN IMPERIO, 1776-1876*. A new and masterful treatment of states' rights in the first century of American federalism, and a highly readable account of the period covered. It is a must-read book for students of both subjects.

William McFeely, *GRANT*. A favorite biography of mine about a complicated man. Grant himself was a fine writer.

James McPherson, *BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM: THE CIVIL WAR ERA*. This is a masterpiece! Lucid and comprehensive. Don't miss it.

Dick Morris, *BEHIND THE OVAL OFFICE: WINNING THE PRESIDENCY IN THE NINETIES*. You may be surprised that I continue to list this probably highly fictional book by Dick Morris. Despite his self-flagellating account of his downfall with a prostitute, Morris spins a fascinating story of his close relationship with President Clinton to plan strategy for the 1996 Presidential election. Morris's title could have been: *How All Alone I Balanced the Budget and Got Clinton to Sign the Welfare Bill*. His memoir reveals an awful shallowness in American high politics and the ubiquitousness of political fund raising and television campaigning. The book is not a mystery story, but it's scary anyway. *The Washington Post* called the book "a 359-page leak in which Morris takes credit for everything except tracking down the Unabomber."

Edmund Morris, *THE RISE OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT*. Tough guy, amazing life, good book. I plan to read the second volume in this series, *THEODORE REX*, this year. I saw Morris interviewed recently on CSPAN-2 about this new book, and it sounds really good. I'll also try *DUTCH*, his book about Ronald Reagan or parts of it. You can pick it up in paperback for a song now that it's so widely remaindered.

James Morris, *HEAVEN'S COMMAND, PAX BRITANNICA*, and *FAREWELL THE TRUMPETS*. A triptych on the rise and decline of the British Empire. The series begins with Queen Victoria's ascension and ends with Churchill's death.

Charles Murray, *LOSING GROUND: AMERICAN SOCIAL POLICY, 1950-1980*. There is an old joke. Someone asks do you

know such-and-such a book, and the answer is, "Yes, but not personally." To understand what has happened to U.S. Social policy in the '90s, you have to know this book personally.

David Nasaw, *THE CHIEF: THE LIFE OF WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST*. Now here was a BIG man. He wanted it all, and got a lot of it. He won an election as Mayor of New York, only to have victory snatched from him by the Tweed Ring. Actually, he wanted to be President. His relations with both presidential Roosevelts are worth the price of admission to this incredible story. Hearst resented T.R. getting closer than him to combat in Cuba. (Hearst tried, and did get shot at as a correspondent there.) As the nation's leading Democratic publisher, he sparred with FDR, who ultimately bested him and kept him in his place. He lived with Marion Davies for more than three decades, and yet maintained his wife, Millicent (a former chorus girl), and their family (five sons) in luxury and in a dignified relationship with him all through this period.

Peggy Noonan, *WHAT I SAW AT THE REVOLUTION: A POLITICAL LIFE IN THE REAGAN ERA*. She wrote this book in sound bites and captured the modern political spirit for better or worse, mostly for worse I'd say. Her description of America's TV culture is choice. She was a pioneer spin doctor.

Sheldon Novick, *HONORABLE JUSTICE*. The life of an exceptional man — U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., "the great dissenter." He revolutionized the law, stressing the law as experience.

Edwin O'Connor, *THE LAST HURRAH*. Mayor Curley's Boston machine in fine fictional form.

Thomas Pakenham, *THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA, WHITE MAN'S CONQUEST OF THE DARK CONTINENT FROM 1876 TO 1912*. Not a new book (it was published in 1991), but we need to understand this sad story. The greatest villain is King Leopold II of Belgium, the founder and the *owner* of the Congo.

Merrill D. Peterson, *THE GREAT TRIUMVIRATE: WEBSTER, CLAY, AND CALHOUN*. This book about Congressional politics in the 19th century is a reminder that dominant leaders of this period, with few exceptions, were members of Congress.

Colin Powell, with Joseph E. Persico, *MY AMERICAN JOURNEY*. Now, of course, there is all the more reason to look again at this book to size up the man as he faces new challenges. The book is a fine, sensitive, smooth-flowing story of the life of a man of dignity. Powell comes through as someone you would like and trust. I judge him, too, by the fact that my friend and neighbor Joe Persico, who wrote this book with General Powell, came away from the experience with a glowing account of the way he worked with and was treated by Powell.

Arthur Quinn, *A NEW WORLD: AN EPIC OF COLONIAL AMERICA FROM THE FOUNDING OF JAMESTOWN TO THE FALL OF QUEBEC*. This is an elegant book that blends history and poetry in hard-edged stories of our Colonial past. George Will said of this book, and he's right — "Prose that sings and crackles a scrumptious reminder of the pleasures of historical writing that rises to the level of literature."

Robert H. Reid, *ARCHITECTS OF THE WEB: 1,000 DAYS THAT BUILT THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS*. This is the best history I've read of the development of the Internet. The story is well told. And the amazing thing is that it all happened so fast.

William L. Riordan, *PLUNKITT OF TAMMANY HALL: A SERIES OF VERY PLAIN TALKS ON VERY PRACTICAL POLITICS*. A classic that shouldn't be missed by students of American politics, given to me by Bob Ward. Said Plunkitt:

"The fact is that a reformer can't last in politics. He can make a show for a while, but he always comes down like a rocket. Politics are as much a regular business as the grocery, the dry goods or the drug business. You've got to be trained up to it or you're sure to fail."

Plunkitt, a nineteenth century New York City ward leader, state legislator, and political boss, recounted the secrets of machine politics to Riordan, who assembled them for publication in this book in 1905.

J.M. Roberts, *THE PENGUIN HISTORY OF THE WORLD*. This is a perennial on my list. It ranks as one of the best books I have read. Roberts, an Oxford historian, wrote a textbook on world history for an American publisher, and then decided to try his

hand at a readable narrative for a lay audience. His well-written, flowing, sometimes almost whimsical, history of the world from the ice age to the modern age is a *tour de force*. This is a good, though Eurocentric, book to revisit to set important periods and events in history.

Tina Rosenberg, *THE HAUNTED LAND: FACING EUROPE'S GHOSTS AFTER COMMUNISM*. Published in 1995 and winner of a Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction. By the way, a good way to select books is to buy books that win Pulitzer Prizes in history, nonfiction, or biography. Have them around and pick them up when you're in the mood. This is what happened to me with this book, which is a penetrating, thought-provoking account of how four East European satellites adjusted to the end of the Evil Empire. The four countries are the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and East Germany. The author's focus is on re-inventing history in the lives of people across the social spectrum.

Helen Hooven Santmyer, *AND LADIES OF THE CLUB*. A period piece about life in the Midwest in the 1880s, the heyday of Republican presidents from that region. Written late in life by Santmyer from first-hand experiences. Has conviction and authenticity.

Robert A. Slayton, *EMPIRE STATESMAN: THE RISE AND REDEMPTION OF AL SMITH*. This is a relatively new biography of Al Smith, and it's a wonderful story — the vilification of Smith when he ran for President in 1928, his love-hate relationship with FDR, his joining the Liberty League to get even with FDR (repudiating everything Smith stood for as governor), the early years in Tammany Hall and on the East Side of New York City.

Gene Smith, *WHEN THE CHEERING STOPPED*. The fascinating story of Woodrow Wilson's years of illness. His wife, Edith Bolling Wilson, carried out a cover-up that makes Watergate pale by comparison.

Dava Sobel, *GALILEO'S DAUGHTER: A HISTORICAL MEMOIR OF SCIENCE, FAITH, AND LOVE*. Based on letters from Galileo's daughter, a nun, to her father. (His letters to her are lost.)

This is a sensitive story of how science advances. Galileo's invention of the telescope and his discovery of sunspots led him to decide that Copernicus was right — and in 1633 to be excommunicated for doing so.

Ronald Steele, *WALTER LIPPMANN AND THE AMERICAN CENTURY*. You'll learn a lot from this intelligent book.

John Steinbeck, *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*. The great American novel.

Irving Stone, *THE ORIGIN*. About Charles Darwin. He only left home once, but that was some big adventure.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*. This book had an immense effect on public opinion in the North.

Jonathan Swift, *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*. I love it! Every word.

Alan Taylor, *WILLIAM COOPER'S TOWN: POWER AND PERSUASION ON THE FRONTIER OF THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC*. This book, which won a Pulitzer, is history at its best. In the years after the American Revolution, the frontier was western New York, and William Cooper was one of the most aggressive speculator-developers in the region. His son, James Fenimore Cooper, wrote a fictional and not very charitable account of his father's life, *The Pioneers*. Historian Alan Taylor weaves the real story and the novel into a fascinating account of two generations.

John M. Taylor, *WILLIAM HENRY SEWARD: LINCOLN'S RIGHT HAND*. The old story, and it is true, is that Governor Seward of New York, as Lincoln's Secretary of State, decided that Lincoln should be a titular ruler and that he (Seward) should do the heavy lifting. One month after Lincoln was inaugurated, Seward wrote a famous memorandum to him, "*Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration*," in which he effectively said, things are going badly, let me take charge. (This is sometimes referred to as the "*The April Fool's Day Paper*.") Lincoln responded, "Whatever must be done, I must do it." Though secret until 1890, this exchange of memos put Seward in his place. Thereafter, he came to be Lincoln's closest associate and confidant. Basically a moderate, Seward fell out with the Radi-

cal Republicans in the Congress (he had previously been one as a Member of the Senate), and ended his political career trying to save Andrew Johnson's presidency. When Lincoln was assassinated, there was an attempt on Seward's life, which failed, and led to a rumination by him years later to New York political boss Thurlow Weed, suggesting that he, Seward, would have been better remembered had the attempt on his life succeeded. Oh well, such is life — or maybe that's the wrong metaphor.

Leo Tolstoy, *WAR AND PEACE*. A must read!

Barbara W. Tuchman, *THE GUNS OF AUGUST*. About World War I. History at its best. A classic.

Barbara W. Tuchman, *THE PROUD TOWER: A PORTRAIT OF THE WORLD BEFORE THE WAR, 1890-1914*. This book, the precursor in time to *The Guns of August*, was written after *The Guns of August*. The title is from Edgar Allan Poe, "While from a proud tower in the town, Death looks gigantically down."

Barbara W. Tuchman, *THE MARCH OF FOLLY: FROM TROY TO VIETNAM*. In this book, published in 1984, the author details four "follies" in history, how they came about, and why they shouldn't have. Her strongest treatments — 400 years apart — are of the Renaissance popes and U.S. military involvement in Vietnam.

Ivan Turgenev, *FATHERS AND SONS*. Crisp. One of the best of the Russians.

Voltaire, *CANDIDE*. Read it again and think about Frazier's *COLD MOUNTAIN*.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE* is a classic, and in my opinion is Vonnegut's best. Also recommended from Vonnegut are *PLAYER PIANO* and *THE SIRENS OF TITAN*.

Edith Wharton, *ETHAN FROME* and *THE AGE OF INNOCENCE*. Mix in a little Wharton.

Michael White and John Gribbin, *EINSTEIN: A LIFE IN SCIENCE*. A rich, readable book. Quantum physics is grounded in "the uncertainty principle" about the behavior of subatomic parti-

cles — which should make all of us social scientists feel just a little bit better about ourselves. Einstein spent his waning years forlornly seeking “a general theory,” and being shunned by colleagues for his fixation on doing so.

William Allen White, *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE*. American journalist of the first part of this century. “What’s the matter with Kansas?” The answer — nothing. He also wrote *PURITAN IN BABYLON*, a biography of Calvin Coolidge.

Oscar Wilde, *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*. Don’t miss it!

James Q. Wilson, *BUREAUCRACY: WHAT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES DO AND WHY THEY DO IT*. The best book on this subject — candid, insightful, highly readable.

Thomas Wolfe, *YOU CAN’T GO HOME AGAIN*. A classic, his best.

Tom Wolfe, *A MAN IN FULL*. I resisted this book when it came out, but when I got into it I found it compelling. His satire is Swiftian. Among the targets — college football, bankers, politicians, prisons, the underclass, and big city developers.

Tom Wolfe, *RADICAL CHIC AND MAU-MAUING THE FLAK CATCHERS. THE BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES*. Rich satire.

Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong, *THE BRETHERN: INSIDE THE SUPREME COURT*. An inside view of the Warren Burger Court. My bet is that these kinds of personal dynamics reflect what still goes on.

Richard Wright, *NATIVE SON*. A book that shaped attitudes in the fifties about race in America.

Malcolm X, *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X*. An important life and a crackling book.

Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, *THE COMMANDING HEIGHTS: THE BATTLE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE MARKETPLACE THAT IS REMAKING THE MODERN WORLD*. An essay about how globalization and privatization have reduced the role of governments.

William Zinsser, *ON WRITING WELL*, Fourth Edition. This book appropriately comes at the end of the list each year. It is the best book to read about how to do your own good writing. I have given copies to lots of students and refer to it often. Here are two gems from Zinsser:

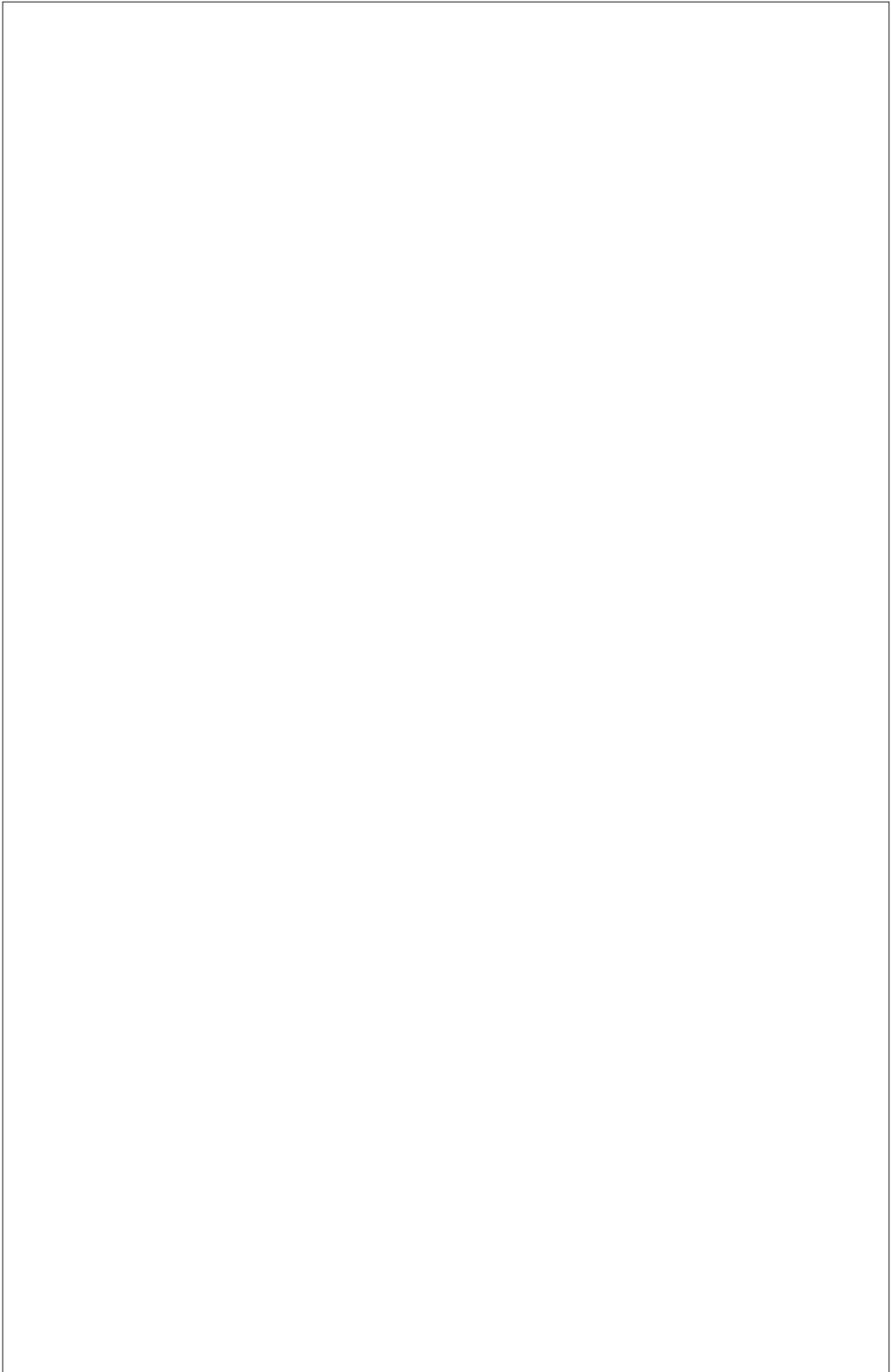
“Very few sentences come out right the first time, or even the third time. Remember this as a consolation in moments of despair. If you find that writing is hard, it’s because it is hard. It’s one of the hardest things that people do.

Look for the clutter in your writing and prune it ruthlessly. Be grateful for everything you can throw away. Reexamine each sentence that you put on paper. Is every word doing new work? Can any thought be expressed with more economy? Is anything pompous or pretentious or faddish? Are you hanging on to something useless just because you think it’s beautiful?”

## RULES FOR REGULAR READERS

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1. Decide what type of books you like best. For me, it's history and biographies. One of my pet peeves is we don't teach students enough history.
  2. Rule No. 2 is especially important:  
**If you don't like a book, don't finish it. Never force yourself to read a book you aren't enjoying.**
  3. Read each day, even if only for half an hour.
  4. Buy a lot of books. Used books are best. Mark them up. A good system is to underline the parts you like, and note the page numbers up front. Take possession of your books!
  5. Another good rule is that if a book is more than thirty years old and you've heard about it, you should try it.
  6. Don't watch too much TV. Groucho Marx once said, "TV is good for me, because every time someone turns it on I go and read a book."
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*"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them."*

Mark Twain

*"Some books are to be tasted; others swallowed; and some to be chewed and digested."*

Francis Bacon



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