NOTABLE BOOKS
1972

Compiled by the
Notable Books Council
Reference and Adult Services Division
American Library Association
This list has been compiled for use by the general reader and by librarians who work with adult readers. The titles were selected for their significant contribution to the widening of man's knowledge or for the pleasure they can provide to adult readers. Criteria include wide general appeal and literary merit.

Council members are chosen for their experience in the critical evaluation of adult books and in service to adult readers. The Notable Books Council of 1972 included: Kate Kolish, University of Pittsburgh, Chairman; Donald R. Briggs, Memphis State University; Mrs. Anona Jenkins Falls, Carnegie Public Library (Clarksdale, MS); Mrs. Inalea Mullen, Tulsa City–County Library System (Tulsa, OK); John Herbst, Penn Valley Community College Library (Kansas City, MO); Clayton E. Kilpatrick, Anne Arundel County Library (Annapolis, MD); Robert Oram, University of Illinois Library (Urbana, IL); Mary E. Poole, Kendall College Library (Evanston, IL); Larry Earl Bone, Memphis Public Library; Paul Gratke, Marquette University (Milwaukee, WI); Katherine L. Magraw, Naval Training Support Command (Washington, D.C.); and Richard Tirotta, The New York Public Library.

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August 1914 by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Farrar. The opening days of World War I provide the setting for this epic novel on the breakdown of the old order in Russia.

Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion by Garry Wills. Doubleday. Provocative, personal insights into the roots, confusion and strengths of contemporary American Catholicism.

The Best and the Brightest by David Halberstam. Random. A reassessment of the men who shaped the events leading to the involvement of the United States in Southeast Asia.


The Children of Pride: A True Story of Georgia and the Civil War edited by Robert Manson Myers. Yale Univ. Pr. Letters of a plantation family are creatively edited to provide a vivid picture of a time, a place, and a people.

The Clocks of Columbus: The Literary Career of James Thurber by Charles S. Holmes. Atheneum. The wild and wonderful world of the man with "a warm heart and an angry mind."


The Coming of Age by Simone de Beauvoir. Putnam. An indictment of society's indifference toward the aged.

The Confession of a Child of the Century by Samuel Heather; A Novel by Thomas Rogers. Simon and Schuster. Rogers' anti-hero struggles with the generation gap, war, and defection in a funny novel about the 1950s.

800,000,000: The Real China by Ross Terrill. Atlantic-Little. An informed reporter's impressions and interviews provide insight into a reopening country.

Eleanor: The Years Alone by Joseph P. Lash. Norton. The emergence of an exceptional woman as a world citizen.


The German Lesson by Siegfried Lenz. Hill and Wang. A novel of confrontation between the creative artist's need for freedom and Nazi Germany's insistence on blind obedience.

The Great Bridge by David McCullough. Simon and Schuster. The Brooklyn Bridge—an engineering feat which symbolized the aspirations of its age.

Henry James, The Master: 1901-1916 by Leon Edel. Lippincott. Concludes the masterful study of James, the artist, and James, the man.


In the Fullness of Time: The Memoirs of Paul H. Douglas. Harcourt. The full life and times of the former senator whose career was devoted to public service.


The Late Great Creature by Brock Brower. Atheneum. The world of horror movies is the background for this hilarious but chilling novel.

Licit and Illicit Drugs by Edward M. Brecher and the editors of Consumer Reports. Little. The Consumers Union report on narcotics, stimulants, depressants, inhalants, hallucinogens, and marijuana—including caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol.


My Land is Dying by Harry M. Caudill. Dutton. A powerful condemnation of strip mining and its effects on people and their environment.

Only One Earth: The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet by Barbara Ward and Rene Dubos. Norton. The social, economic, and political dimensions of the world ecology crisis.

The Optimist's Daughter by Eudora Welty. Random. A gentle novel that delves into the past to produce acceptance and understanding of the present.

The Painter and the Photograph by Van Deren Coke. Univ. of New Mexico Pr. An eye-opening demonstration of the reliance of many artists on the photograph as a source of inspiration.

The Party's Over: The Failure of Politics in America by David S. Broder. Harper. The political parties: what killed them as effective forces and how they can be reborn.

Passions and Politics: A Biography of Versailles by Joseph Barry. Doubleday. The royal palace serves as the framework for this study of pre-revolutionary France.


Queen Victoria: From Her Birth to the Death of the Prince Consort by Cecil Woodham-Smith. Knopf. New material illuminates the life of the girl and the young queen.


Sadness by Donald Barthelme. Farrar. Short stories examining life at middle age with great wit and tenderness.


Seven Arrows by Hyemeyohsts Storm. Harper. A Plains Indian evokes the spirit of his people in this beautifully illustrated work.


That Championship Season by Jason Miller. Atheneum. An explosive reunion of four former teammates and their coach dramatizes American values and personal failures.

The Unknown Orwell by Peter Stansky and William Abrahams. Knopf. A study of the elusive Eric Blair who at age 30 transformed himself into George Orwell.

Virginia Woolf: A Biography by Quentin Bell. Harcourt. The forces that shaped a complex woman form the core of her nephew's incisive interpretation.


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