

American Library Association

Notable Books of 1950

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Notable Books of 1950¹

IN CONTINUANCE of a popular annual custom, this list was prepared for publication under the sponsorship of the American Library Association's Division of Public Libraries. It was compiled by Gertrude E. Gscheidle, director, Chicago Public Library, and a committee of librarians from that library. Nominations of titles, however, were made by dozens of public library staffs in many parts of the U.S. These suggestions were tabulated, organized and winnowed by Miss Gscheidle and her committee until the final list was achieved.

The compilers of this list were bound to select books published in the United States in 1950, written in English for adult readers. Books selected were to be "genuinely meritorious in terms of literary excellence, factual correctness, sincerity and honesty of presentation, and value and interest to readers." Books that were solely for diversional reading and those of only transitory popular interest were to be excluded. The primary basis of selection was to be the important role each book could play in promoting enlightened citizenship and enriching personal life.

Notable Books of 1950

Appleton, LeRoy H., *Indian Art of the Americas*.

A notable compilation of the Indian arts which have an important place in art history.

Bainton, Roland H., *Here I Stand*.

A readable life of Martin Luther which emphasizes the concept of freedom of the spirit.

Barzun, Jacques M., *Berlioz and the Romantic Century*.

A detailed, scholarly, and skillfully written biography which interprets not only the life and works of the composer but offers interesting and documented sidelights on the political, social, and literary history of his times.

Boswell, James, *London Journal*.

This major literary discovery is outstanding for its portrayal of the personal life of a man who has influenced English letters since his own times, and for its description of the life and customs of his day.

Bowen, Catherine D., *John Adams and the American Revolution*.

A study of a great man against a background of a crucial time in our history. Gives the reader an awareness of "our precious heritage of freedom."

Brinton, Clarence C., *Ideas and Men*.

A stimulating synthesis of western thought clearly written and organized to interest the average reader. Shows the relationship of ideas to the lives of men.

Christensen, Erwin O., *Index of American Design*.

The most complete record of folk arts and

early crafts of America, an important part of American cultural heritage.

Churchill, Winston S., *Grand Alliance*, and *Hinge of Fate*.

Personal memoirs of England's great war prime minister, which contribute to an understanding of World War II.

Chute, Marchette G., *Shakespeare of London*.

A simple and eloquent exposition of life in Shakespeare's London which fosters an appreciation of the literature of the period and an understanding of part of our social heritage.

Coit, Margaret L., *John C. Calhoun*.

Well-integrated story of a man who was a champion of lost causes concerned with the principles of free government. Should interest the thoughtful modern reader.

Commager, Henry S., *American Mind*.

An interpretation of American thought and character through 70 years of development, which aids the modern reader to understand the present problems in which he is involved as a citizen of the United States and of the world.

Douglas, William O., *Of Men and Mountains*.

Through his love of the mountains the author shows the effect of nature in the development of man's philosophy and character.

Durant, William J., *Age of Faith*.

Presents the five dominant cultural forces of the Middle Ages, and suggests their influence on present-day Europe.

Faulkner, William, *Collected Stories*.

A collection of short stories by the Nobel Prize winner which shows the wide range of

¹ Reprints of this list are available for a nominal charge from the Sturgis Printing Company, Sturgis, Mich.

the author's interests. An excellent introduction to Faulkner as a writer.

Fischer, Louis, *Life of Mahatma Gandhi*.

Contributes to an understanding of India and its great leader.

Fry, Christopher, *Lady's Not for Burning*.

A brilliant poetic drama distinguished for beauty of language which has stimulated an interest in the revival of drama in verse.

Gebler, Ernest, *Plymouth Adventure*.

A readable novel which presents a realistic and factual picture of the Pilgrim Fathers. Restores the mood of the times and the spirit of the American heritage.

Goodspeed, Edgar J., *Life of Jesus*.

Simply but beautifully written biography by one of the leading authorities on the New Testament.

Hart, James D., *Popular Book*.

Witty and valuable study of America's reading tastes from the books of the Puritans to today's best sellers. Has value not only as an inquiry into American literature and subliterate but as social history.

Hersey, John R., *The Wall*.

A novel having those qualities of timelessness and universality which distinguish the genuine work of art. Presents the human spirit triumphant in the face of physical destruction—a theme much needed in our troubled world.

Heyerdahl, Thor, *Kon-Tiki*.

A fascinating adventure story of great sacrifice on the high seas to prove a scientific theory.

Hight, Gilbert, *Art of Teaching*.

Since we are all constantly teaching or being taught, this is a stimulating book for thinking laymen as well as for teachers.

Jefferson, Thomas, *Papers*.

An indispensable source book and contribution to American history. One of the leading scholarly undertakings of our time.

Johnson, Gerald W., *Incredible Tale*.

Presents with penetrating insight the men and events of the last half century. Aids the average American in interpreting the effect of past history on the present and future.

Kelly, Amy R., *Eleanor of Aquitaine*.

Combines scholarship and polished writing in a story of a romantic queen who played an important role in the world affairs of the twelfth century.

Lewis, Lloyd, *Captain Sam Grant*.

A sympathetic study of the formative years of an American soldier and president.

McCune, George M., *Korea Today*.

Brings out clearly the closely linked internal and international aspects of the Korean problem, and adds to the reader's understanding of the Korean situation.

Menaboni, Athos and Sara, *Menaboni's Birds*.

A book which is of interest both in the field of ornithology and of graphic art.

Millikan, Robert A., *Autobiography*.

An important presentation of the impact of physical science and engineering upon American development during the twentieth century.

Nevins, Allan, *Emergence of Lincoln*.

A definitive appraisal of four critical years in American history.

Payne, Robert, *Mao Tse-tung*.

Sets forth the career and motives of Mao Tse-tung, a knowledge of which is important to the understanding of modern Red China.

Perkins, Maxwell E., *Editor to Author*.

Shows the influence of an able editor in developing authors and creating books that have helped shape the character of our time.

Sandburg, Carl, *Complete Poems*.

Brings together all of the poems of Carl Sandburg, the underlying theme of which is a deep faith in the hope and promise of America.

Schulberg, Budd W., *The Disenchanted*.

A vivid picture of the 1920's presenting realistically a gifted novelist who, both as a person and as a writer, was a symbol of his era.

Seldes, Gilbert V., *Great Audience*.

Describes and evaluates three media of mass communication—movies, radio, television—and their effect upon our civilization.

Tharp, Louise H., *Peabody Sisters of Salem*.

Biography of three sisters prominent in the fields of education and literature in nineteenth-century New England. Recreates the life of the times and the social movements which have had a profound influence on American culture.

Trilling, Lionel, *Liberal Imagination*.

An illuminating series of essays which demonstrate the close connection between literature and politics and the importance of the liberal tradition in American culture.

Van Doren, Carl C., *Jane Mecom*.

Through the life of an American woman this book gives fresh insight into the character of a great American and an important period in American history.

Wiener, Norbert, *Human Use of Human Beings*.

Crystallizes the implications of the machine age for mankind, and the place of human beings in a world in which non-human production is increasing.