FEATURED TITLES

December 1941: Twelve Days that Began a World War
By: Mawdsley, Evan
D743 .M365 2011

Review from: Library Journal December 9, 2011
After his broad perspective in World War II: A New History, Mawdsley (honorary fellow, Univ. of Glasgow) focuses on the events that merged separate European and Asian wars into the world’s largest war, a decisive turning point in history and one involving complex interconnections. Mawdsley emphasizes that the events cannot be considered in isolation... This is traditional history, looking at the story at the highest levels, from extensive primary resources. It’s an accessible account that scholars as well as military history buffs will enjoy as we note Pearl Harbor’s 70th anniversary. General readers may also like Stanley Weintraub’s Pearl Harbor Christmas: A World at War, December 1941, which covers the broad strategy discussions between Churchill and FDR at the time.

Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies
By: Macintyre, Ben
D810.5.S7 M2457 2012

Review from: Publisher’s Weekly May 14, 2012
"Any method of seeking the truth can also be used to plant a lie." Therein lies the root of the brilliantly dangerous Allied plan (which MIS called Double Cross)... to throw off the Germans and launch an assault at Normandy on June 6, 1944. The key to the plan-convincing Germany that the impending attack would come either at Pas de Calais or in Norway-was the careful manipulation of five double agents, each feeding misinformation back to their German handlers... Macintyre effortlessly weaves the agents’ deliciously eccentric personalities with larger wartime events to shape a tale that reads like a top-notch spy thriller.

Before They’re Gone: a Family’s Year-Long Quest to Explore America’s Most Endangered National Parks
By: Lanza, Michael
E160 .L37 2012

Review from: Library Journal April 1, 2012
Freelance writer and photographer Lanza (Northwest editor, Backpacker) chronicles his one-year journey with his nine-year-old son and seven-year-old daughter to ten climate-threatened American national parks. As a lifelong backpacker, he has observed firsthand the changes in parks caused by global warming, and he wanted his children to see Glacier, Yellowstone, the Everglades, Yosemite, and Mount Rainier National Parks before they are permanently altered... Part travelog (including kayaking, canoeing, and rock climbing), part memoir, and part scientific inquiry, the work points to what lies ahead-melting glaciers, disappearing species, and inundated coastlines, unless Americans decide as a society to change their behavior.

Bunker Hill: A City, a Siege, a Revolution
By: Philbrick, Nathaniel
E241 .B9 P48 2013

Review from: Choice October 1, 2013
Nathaniel Philbrick has long demonstrated a rare talent for bringing new perspectives and sparkling prose to iconic episodes in US history... As the subtitle suggests, this narrative centers on Revolutionary Boston and culminates in the Battle of Bunker Hill. The analysis seamlessly combines political and social history to evoke a city and a people under stress. The author’s maritime sensibility further enhances its descriptive power. It is, however, the depiction of individuals, particularly Joseph Warren and Thomas Gage, that gives the work its engaging poignancy... This book deserves to be ranked with David Hackett Fischer’s classic Paul Revere’s Ride (CH, Sep’94, 32-0497) as a superb evocation of early Revolutionary Massachusetts. No one interested in the American Revolution should miss this one.

Double Entry: How the Merchants of Venice Created Modern Finance
By: Gleeson-White, Jane
HF5605 .G54 2012

Review from: Booklist September 1, 2012
Double-entry bookkeeping was the first system that allowed merchants to actually measure the worth of their business. Gleeson-White, with a background in economics and accounting, traces the story of double-entry bookkeeping from its first known origins, in the late-thirteenth century, to its role in the twenty-first-century global economy... In response to the growing complexity of business dealings, a new kind of record keeping began, was perfected by the merchants of Venice, was published as a printed treatise in 1494, and today is what we know as double-entry accounting. Yet the story of double-entry accounting has had notable failures in the recent past, with the Enron Corporation scandals in 2001, the collapse of Arthur Andersen in 2002, and the demise of Lehman Brothers in 2007. This book will appeal to history and business students.
Will Rogers: A Political Life
By: White, Richard D.
PQ287 W74 2011

Review from: Library Journal March 1, 2011
This is the first biography of Rogers (1879-1935), entertainer, columnist, and pundit, to focus largely on his political influence. White... argues that Rogers played a strong role shaping American opinion on topics from Prohibition and intervention in global affairs—both of which he ardently opposed—to New Deal policies and commercial air flight—which he backed. White reviews Rogers's trips as unofficial envoy to China and the Soviet Union, as well as his fallibility in embracing some of history's villains, in particular Mussolini, because he had "never met a man he didn't like." Through his newspaper columns, radio show, and movie roles, Rogers was very famous in his own time—the world mourned his death in a plane crash—but he is largely unknown to today's younger generations. White's presentation may change that. Comparing favorably with previous biographies of Rogers, this is recommended primarily for readers of 20th-century American studies.

A Curious Man: The Strange & Brilliant Life of Robert "Believe it or not!" Ripley
By: Thompson, Neal
PN4874 .R53 T57 2013

Review from: Booklist April 15, 2013
You can be very familiar with someone's work but know next to nothing about the person himself. Ripley's Believe It or Not!, which began life as a newspaper feature before becoming a popular television series, is a staple of popular culture. But who among us knows much about its creator?... Thompson paints a picture of Ripley as a brilliant but aggressively eccentric man, a globe-trotting curiosity seeker who always believed there was something even more unusual just around the corner. A fine introduction to a man who, for most of us, has been merely the name above a famous title.

The Year Without Summer: 1816 and the Volcano that Darkened the World and Changed History
By: Klingaman, William K., Nicholas P. Klingaman
QC981.8 .V65 K55 2013

Review from: Booklist January 1, 2013
In April 1815, two giant eruptions from Tamboro, a supposedly latent volcano east of Java, pumped millions of tons of ash and sulfuric acid into the atmosphere. The immediate results were catastrophic, as the blast, lava, poisonous gases, and a tsunami destroyed entire villages. But the long-term effects, felt the following year, were more far-reaching and devastating... The Klingamans lay out the scientific details of the disaster in a lucid, easily digestible manner. They also effectively integrate the natural calamities into a narrative that includes the political and social milieu of Europe and North America. This is an engrossing work that illustrates the fragility of societies when confronted with sudden and severe disruption of weather patterns.

Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal
By: Roach, Mary
QP145 .R53 2013

Review from: Library Journal March 1, 2013
... Roach asks the questions that some readers may have always wondered: Does saliva have curative properties? Do pets taste food differently than their owners do? Could Jonah have survived three days in a whale's stomach? Could Americans lower the national debt by chewing their food more thoroughly? As she investigates these questions, Roach encounters many an eccentric scientist who has worked tirelessly to unlock the mysteries of saliva, gastrointestinal gases, and mastication. As she recounts her adventures in tasting centers and laboratories, she aims not to disgust readers, but to inspire curiosity—even awe—for the most intimate functions of the human body. VERDICT Filled with witty asides, humorous anecdotes, and bizarre facts, this book will entertain readers, challenge their cultural taboos, and simultaneously teach them new lessons in digestive biology.

DDT and the American Century: Global Health, Environmental Politics, and the Pesticide that Changed the World
By: Kinkela, David
SB952 .D2 K56 2011

Review from: Library Journal November 1, 2011
Kinkela (history, SUNY at Fredonia) traces the global use of DDT since 1941, particularly in relation to malaria, and examines the pesticide's political and economic implications in this nuanced and accessible study of complicated issues of health and the environment... Readers interested in the environment, public health, and international relations will find this book particularly timely as the World Health Organization and the Gates Foundation renew efforts for malaria eradication more than 40 years after abandoning eradication as a goal in 1969. Kinkela's recognition that current tools and systems are insufficient for the task and his advocacy of a more integrated effort than past attempts make this book a relevant and useful addition.