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Walls: a history of civilization in blood and brick, David Frye (book review)

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men were justified in their pursuits and that their friendship, devolving into a feud over time, is emblematic of a clash in fundamental American values present since George Washington left office. Equal parts fascinating and alarming, this work illustrates how corrupt our government has always been. **VERDICT** A fair assessment of two Founders' legacies and highly relevant to our current political climate.—*Jessica Holland, Lexington, KY*

Frye, David. *Walls: A History of Civilization in Blood and Brick*. Scribner. Aug. 2018. 320p. maps. notes. ISBN 9781501172700. \$30; ebk. ISBN 9781501172724. HIST

No human invention has had a greater effect on civilization than defensive walls, states Frye (history, Eastern Connecticut State Univ.). The safety they afforded those who lived within them allowed the flourishing of what we think of as civilized culture—but with the result that such cultures began to lose their martial skills and readiness for conflict, relying on specially trained armies and mercenaries for protection and pouring a staggering amount of money, effort, and lives their construction and repair. Following a rough chronology, Frye illustrates how advancing conflicts and technologies shifted walls from occasional to necessary to essentially symbolic, with the structures of Europe, the Near and Middle East, and Asia receiving the most attention: walled Athens vs. unwallied Sparta; Hadrian's Wall in England; the various Long Walls and Great Wall in China; Constantinople's walls and their destruction by cannon. A single-chapter hop touching on barriers in the Americas and concluding chapters on the Maginot Line, the Berlin Wall, and the various borders of today complete the volume. **VERDICT** Though occasionally guilty of stretching facts to enhance his points, Frye on the whole delivers a lively popular history of an oft-overlooked element in the development of human society.—*Kathleen McCallister, Tulane Univ., New Orleans*

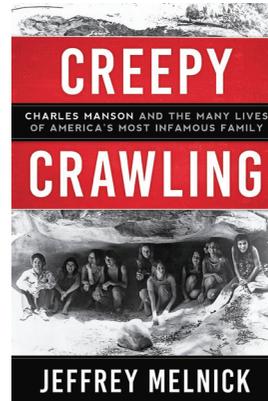
Golway, Terry. *Frank and Al: FDR, Al Smith, and the Unlikely Alliance That Created the Modern Democratic Party*. St. Martin's. Sept. 2018. 336p. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781250089649. \$29.99; ebk. ISBN 9781250089656. HIST

Historian Golway (history, Kean Univ.; *Machine Made*) presents a fuller story of the sometimes supportive, at other times antagonistic, relationship at the state and national levels between politicians Al Smith and Franklin Roosevelt. Relying largely on correspondence found at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, supplemented by other archival and secondary

The Manson Family

Melnick, Jeffrey. *Creepy Crawling: Charles Manson and the Many Lives of America's Most Infamous Family*. Arcade: Skyhorse. Jul. 2018. 352p. notes. bibliog. ISBN 9781628728934. \$24.99; ebk. ISBN 9781628728941. CRIME

Melnick (U.S. culture, Univ. of Massachusetts Boston) delves into the cultural impact Charles Manson and his Family had on the United States, specifically in the 1970s, but also their lasting influence. Melnick divides the book into four parts—looking at how they twisted the definition of family, how California was seen after the murders, how true crime writing changed, and how members of Manson's circle endured through art. While the author does a good job recreating 1970s California and how the murders were a part of the cultural change from peace and love to fear and violence, each part works better as a separate essay than combined in a single work. This is most noticeable at the end, in which there's no conclusion that puts the pieces together for readers. Despite this, each part has a lot to say, leaving details



of the murders to previous books and instead focusing on the relationships between Manson and his followers with some of the Hollywood members (aka Golden Penetrators). **VERDICT** This work succeeds in showing how this group embedded itself into the cultural conscious in a way that persists today. For readers interested in 1970s American culture and true crime.—*Ryan Claringbole, Wisconsin Dept. of Pub. Instruction, Madison*

Wiehl, Lis with Caitlin Rother. *Hunting Charles Manson: The Quest for Justice in the Days of Helter Skelter*. Nelson. Jun. 2018. 336p. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780718092085. \$26.99; ebk. ISBN 9780718092115. CRIME

Mystery writer, lawyer,

and legal analyst Wiehl presents an accessible reboot of prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi's classic *Helter Skelter* that for the most part doesn't add new information to the highly publicized case. Wiehl's writing style is no nonsense, serving to emphasize the Manson Family's absurdist beliefs: "it all made sense when you were on acid." Her inclusion of current-day followers (amazingly, there are some) and Family members' probation hearings brings the case into the modern era, with various convicted killers either realizing the serious error of their ways or sticking with Manson until the bitter end. Wiehl concludes, not surprisingly, with Manson's death from cardiac arrest, the subsequent fight over his remains, and the fate of one of his sons and his grandson. Especially enjoyable is Wiehl's chapter on bizarre "Alternative Scenarios" of the killings, including theories that the LaBianca murders were either a mafia hit or a supposed connection between LaBianca daughter Suzan and killer Tex Watson. **VERDICT** A must-read for true crime fans.—*Amelia Osterud, Milwaukee P.L.*

sources, Golway traces how these two New York governors and presidential candidates shaped the Democratic party, both when they collaborated throughout the 1920s and when they split after 1932. This focused work offers cross-cutting accounts of the progress of these men—one a grade school drop out but practiced amateur actor, the other a privileged Harvard grad. With Roosevelt the subject of numerous books, the influence of the lesser-studied Smith is arguably more compelling and enlightening. Most of Smith's advisors eventually rallied for Roosevelt, while a few, notably Belle

Moskowitz and Robert Moses, emphatically did not. Curiously, the author maintains that Eleanor Roosevelt campaigned for presidential candidate Smith in 1928, not her husband, that year's gubernatorial candidate. **VERDICT** Golway's clear, at times humorous, prose will entice all readers interested in this political rivalry. The author's diligent research will impress historical practitioners.—*Frederick J. Augustyn Jr., Lib. of Congress, Washington, DC*

Hatzfeld, Jean. *Blood Papa: Rwanda's New Generation*. Farrar. Aug. 2018.

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