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## **Benjamin Franklin in London: the British life of America's Founding Father, George Goodwin (book review)**

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# social sciences

## BIOGRAPHY

**Bell-Scott, Patricia.** *The Firebrand and the First Lady: Portrait of a Friendship: Pauli Murray, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the Struggle for Social Justice.* Knopf. Feb. 2016. 480p. photos. notes. index. ISBN 9780679446521. \$30; ebk. ISBN 9781101946923. **BIOG**

In 1983, civil rights activist Pauli Murray (1910–85) instructed Bell-Scott (emerita, women's studies, Univ. of Georgia; *Life Notes*) to “know some of the veterans of the battle whose shoulders you now stand on.” When Murray died two years later, Bell-Scott began researching the activist's life. After reviewing the correspondence between Murray and first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Bell-Scott decided to focus on their decades-long friendship. Murray first wrote

**Burns, Eric.** *The Golden Lad: The Haunting Story of Quentin and Theodore Roosevelt.* Pegasus. Feb. 2016. 300p. notes. bibliog. ISBN 9781605989518. \$26.95; ebk. ISBN 9781681771007. **BIOG**

Quentin Roosevelt (1897–1918), Theodore Roosevelt's youngest and reputedly favorite child, was fatally shot during World War I, just short of his 21st birthday, an event that precipitated his father's death at age 60 less than a year later. That is usually the extent most accounts tell us about this young man whose story historian Burns (*1920: The Year That Made the Decade Roar*) expands with earlier anecdotes and interpretations. One of four brothers whom sister Ethel called “the Golden Lads,” Quentin possessed most of Theodore's good quali-

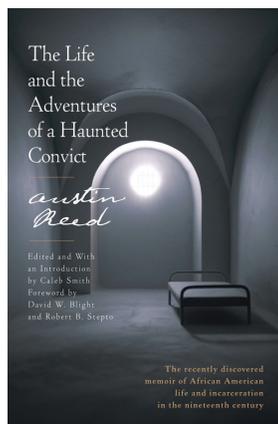
however, general readers seeking a naturally sympathetic, full-length portrait will appreciate this work.—**Frederick J. Augustyn Jr., Lib. of Congress, Washington, DC**

**Egan, Tim.** *The Immortal Irishman: The Irish Revolutionary Who Became an American Hero.* Houghton Harcourt. Mar. 2016. 384p. photos. notes. index. ISBN 9780544272880. \$28; ebk. ISBN 9780544272477. **BIOG**

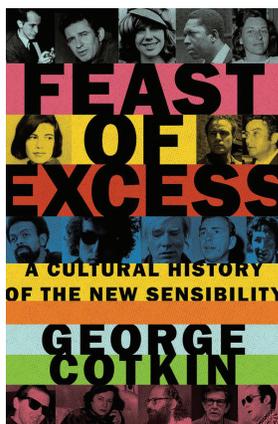
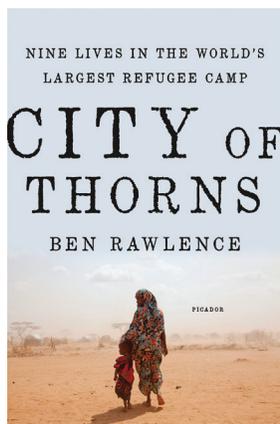
Egan's biography of Irish revolutionary Thomas Francis Meagher (1823–67) illustrates a singularly Irish-American story. In outlining Meagher's life, Egan, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of the National Book Award winner *The Worst Hard Time*, seeks to demonstrate how Meagher's experience was emblematic of Irish immigrants' spirit and resolve. Meagher was born in a well-to-do family in Ireland but was deeply empathetic toward the plight of the Irish poor, having lived through the Great Famine in the 1840s. After a failed uprising against the English, Meagher was banished to a penal colony in Tasmania, Australia. He escaped to the United States and took up the cause of freedom, identifying with the new country's anti-British attitudes. Leading the Irish Brigade in the Civil War, Meagher fought in some of the bloodiest battles, including Bull Run in 1861. He survived the war and was appointed governor of Montana territory where he hoped to create a “New Ireland.” His death by drowning in 1867 remains a mystery. **VERDICT** This important account is an excellent choice for all readers, especially those interested in the contributions of the Irish to U.S. history. [See Prepub Alert, 10/5/15].—**Barrie Olmstead, Sacramento P.L.**

**Goodwin, George.** *Benjamin Franklin in London: The British Life of America's Founding Father.* Yale Univ. Feb. 2016. 352p. illus. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780300220247. \$32.50. **BIOG**

Between 1757 and 1775, Benjamin Franklin (1706–90) made a temporary home for himself in London as a representative and agent for the 13 colonies. Goodwin (*Fatal Colours; Fatal Rivalry*) lays the groundwork of his subject's life quickly, zipping through Franklin's early days as an up-and-coming printer, his first trip to London as a young man, and his experiments with electricity before settling in on the nearly two decades that his subject spent in England. Franklin's activities on behalf of his American home



19th-century crime & punishment; the refugee experience in Kenya; a theatrical uprising



to both Eleanor and Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938 to express outrage that she was barred from the University of North Carolina's graduate school because of her race. Over the next few years, Eleanor became mentor to Murray, urging her to be patient with the progress of civil rights, while Murray encouraged Eleanor to consider the plight of African Americans who were suffering from discrimination during the Great Depression and World War II. The quotes from their lengthy correspondence, up to Eleanor's death in 1962, reveal their mutual respect and honesty. **VERDICT** Bell-Scott makes a convincing case that Murray influenced Eleanor's views on civil and human rights and though not popularly known, she should be remembered as an important leader in both the civil rights and feminist movements. [See Prepub Alert, 8/31/15].—**Kate Stewart, American Folklife Ctr., Washington, DC**

ties: popularity, daring, enthusiasm, humor, and academic ability. In this crisply written profile, Burns underlines Theodore's contradictions: his love of family life, his favorable view of the masculine proving ground of war, and his tendency to ignore references to the unpleasant, such as public recognition of relatives' deaths. Ironically, Theodore avoided military conflicts as president, instead choosing the negotiating table to the battlefield. As a former president he championed America's entrance into the Great War and all of his sons enlisted. The Roosevelts' enthusiastic letter writing helps Burns highlight Theodore's fatalism and Quentin's obsessive thoughts of death (and incongruous love of heights). A father-son focus reveals much about the multifaceted Theodore's personality. **VERDICT** Books such as J. Lee Thompson's *Never Call Retreat* detail Quentin's activities and temperament;

(along with his various political friends and enemies) might be the book's ostensible focus, but Goodwin finds ample space to explore other aspects of Franklin's English life: his wanderings throughout the country and other parts of Europe; his associations with intellectuals, scientists, and philosophers; and his own scientific and theoretical experiments. It's an approach that provides a thorough (if somewhat circulatory) portrait of this founding father. **VERDICT** Frequent digressions muddle the thread of this biographical narrative, but Goodwin presents Franklin's life in England with such verve that getting lost in it is a pleasure.—**Kathleen McCallister, Tulane Univ., New Orleans**

★ **Reed, Austin. *The Life and the Adventures of a Haunted Convict*. Random. Jan. 2016. 352p. ed. by Caleb Smith. illus. notes. ISBN 9780812997095. \$30; ebk. ISBN 9780812997101. AUTOBIOG**

Although written more than 100 years ago, this work is appearing in print for the first time. Reed was a free African American in New York State who spent most of his youth and early adulthood, from the 1830s through the 1860s, in reformatories and prisons. His story was lost and unknown until the manuscript turned up at auction in 2009. This candid and stirring autobiography provides an intimate look at the cruel and violent world of crime and punishment in the 19th century. Reed is honest in his description of the helplessness he felt as an indentured servant and the anger and frustration that led to multiple convictions for larceny and arson. Editor Smith (*The Prison and the American Imagination*) preserves the character of Reed's direct but unpolished prose. Smith's introduction places Reed's story in context, providing a helpful overview of the penal system in which Reed spent most of his life and describing the process undertaken to authenticate the manuscript when it finally came to light. **VERDICT** Reed's unique story is highly recommended to anyone interested in African American history or the history of crime and punishment in the United States.—**Nicholas Graham, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill**

**Rehm, Diane. *On My Own*. Knopf. Feb. 2016. 160p. ISBN 9781101875285. \$23.95; ebk. ISBN 9781101875292. MEMOIR**

Veteran public radio personality and interviewer Rehm (*Finding My Voice*) presents the next installment in her story in this candid account of the last years of marriage to her husband of over 50 years, John. Rehm writes of John's life, his struggle with declining abilities owing to Parkinson's disease, and her reactions to those life-altering circumstances. Her distinctive radio per-

sona may be detected in each episode she recounts, including those dealing with her own ambivalence about John's move to a care facility and her desire to keep working throughout the years of his decline. More pointedly, however, Rehm takes aim at the unsettled state of U.S. right-to-die legislation and policies, a situation that forced a heartbreaking and brutal decision by John. Anecdotes about other popular news figures who have been widowed, and Rehm's ruminations on her retirement plans as well as her own mortality are presented in the same conversational tone familiar to listeners of her long-running show. **VERDICT** Rehm doesn't gloss over the emotional complexities and difficulties of a long-term marriage, nor does she shy away from making her opinions about the inconsistencies in right-to-die legislation known (despite the apparent objections of her employers). Her views on the controversial topic, delivered with her hard-earned observations about its ramifications, distinguish this account from other memoirs of widowhood.—**Thérèse Purcell Nielsen, Huntington P.L., NY**

★ **Roberts, Randy & Johnny Smith. *Blood Brothers: The Fatal Friendship Between Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X*. Basic. Feb. 2016. 392p. photos. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780465079704. \$28.99; ebk. ISBN 9780465098637. BIOG**

Shortly before becoming heavyweight champion of the world in 1964, Cassius Clay Jr. (b. 1942) became involved with the black supremacist sect, the Nation of Islam. Malcolm X (1925–65), a fiery though thoughtful minister within the sect, formed a symbiotic relationship with Clay. Malcolm helped Clay develop as a worldwide figure, and having Clay as a protégé served the ambitious Malcolm. Over time, Clay, who changed his name to Muhammad Ali, had to choose between Malcolm and Elijah Muhammad, the aging and less charismatic leader of the Nation of Islam. Coauthors Roberts (history, Purdue Univ.) and Smith (history, Georgia Tech Univ.) argue that in losing Ali, Malcolm lost the centerpiece of his ascendance and then his protective cover; within months Malcolm was assassinated by his former cohorts. **VERDICT** This book offers a significant contribution to serious studies of Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, and the Nation of Islam.—**Jim Burns, formerly with Jacksonville P.L.**

## ECONOMICS

**Grant, Adam M. *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World*. Viking. Feb. 2016. 336p. illus. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780525429562. \$27; ebk. ISBN 9780698405776. BUS**  
Originals are people with creative ideas that

defy the traditional, but when their visions are made reality the world is improved. Grant (Class of 1965 Wharton Professor of Management, Wharton Sch., Univ. of Pennsylvania; *Give and Take*) thoroughly outlines his goals for the book, including at the beginning of each chapter a statement of purpose so readers have clear expectations. The author cites research and studies in a wide variety of fields to emphasize points and presents information in an entertaining and readable manner. According to Grant, the factors that lead to success include volume of work, birth order, coalition formation, fighting Groupthink, and the difference in strategy between a young genius and an old master. Even procrastination plays a role, as being a “first mover” can have definite disadvantages. While originals may have a battle to make the world a better place, Grant includes many examples, ideas, and encouragements for those who wish to try. He concludes the book with 30 practical actions to unleash originality. **VERDICT** No matter whether the reader is an original or a wannabe, this book is enjoyable and full of useful information. [See Prepub Alert, 8/24/15.]—**Bonnie A. Tollefson, Rogue Valley Manor Lib., Medford, OR**

**Martin, Bobby. *The Hockey Stick Principles: The 4 Key Stages to Entrepreneurial Success*. Flatiron: Macmillan. Apr. 2016. 304p. illus. notes. index. ISBN 9781250066374. \$27.99; ebk. ISBN 9781250066381. BUS**

Based on a study of over 100 start-ups, this book charts the path of successful companies and provides a list of best practices to help new companies manage their first few years. Martin, cofounder of sales-research firm Vertical IQ, compares the growth patterns of dozens of start-ups to the desired “hockey stick growth” chart, in which a company's linear maturation turns exponential in a moment. Through his research, the author has found that most profitable start-ups follow a similar pattern, starting in a tinkering phase that can last for years before the founders become focused on launching a product or service. After launch, they work through the “blade” years, when the founders manage expenses and search for investments, before hitting the “growth inflection point” when the product or service begins to grow rapidly, after which comes a period of surging growth. In Martin's explanations of each of the four stages, he provides relatable anecdotes and 92 core principles that illustrate how to manage successfully. A glossary of business terms is also included. **VERDICT** Martin summarizes several core business practices in an accessible outline that entrepreneurs will find helpful.—**John Rodzvilla, Emerson Coll., Boston**

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