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## Caesars' wives: the first ladies of the Roman empire. Annelise Freisenbruch (book review)

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camaraderie of the law to build friendships and knowledge essential to his political interests. They agree that law prepared Lincoln for presidential leadership, especially as it attuned him to the importance of argument, audience, and constitutional strictures. **VERDICT** The book offers no surprises in an already rich literature on Lincoln, but it does bring together useful demonstrations of what the law meant to Lincoln and what Lincoln meant to the law. A valuable addition for serious students of Lincoln or of American antebellum legal practice.—**Randall M. Miller, Saint Joseph's Univ., Philadelphia**

**Allen, Thomas B. *Tories: Fighting for the King in America's First Civil War*. Harper: HarperCollins. Nov. 2010. c.480p. bibliog. index. ISBN 97800061241802. \$26.99. HIST**

The dissenters in popular wars (e.g., those who supported "America First" before World War II) can be neglected by war historians—often because victors write the history books. And so to a large extent forgotten are those Americans who remained loyal to the Crown in the Revolutionary War. Allen (*George Washington, Spymaster*) tells their stories here, showing that Americans were far from united against the British, even after the shot heard round the world. And the American revolutionaries were just as cruel, brutal, and intolerant as revolutionaries everywhere always are. Allen doesn't sugarcoat the record: the colonists—of both loyalties—committed outrages in the pursuit of their causes. As the 70 pages of end matter show, Allen has extensively researched his subject. It is a scholarly book, heavy on detail. Too often it comes across as a military history of the war from a Tory perspective, rather than by a disinterested author. **VERDICT** This book is most suitable for students seeking the alternate perspective on the Revolutionary War, and interested readers of military history.—**Michael O. Eshleman, Allen Law Firm, Mason, OH**

★ **Bendavid-Val, Avrom. *The Heavens Are Empty: Discovering the Lost Town of Trochenbrod*. Pegasus. 2010. c.256p. ISBN 9781605981130. \$25.95. HIST**

Bendavid-Val, a retired economic development expert whose father grew up in this "lost town," provides a vividly told and culturally relevant history of the place popularly introduced in Jonathan Safran Foer's novel *Everything Is Illuminated*. (Foer provides the preface here.) The town of Trochenbrod, in western Ukraine (then a republic of the U.S.S.R.), was during its existence from the early 1800s to its destruction in the Holocaust in 1944 a medium-sized farming and craftsman town that has had the distinction of being the only Jewish town

in a region fearful of Jews. Little physically remains today beyond a monument to those who were massacred there. Intertwining his own research with the meticulously documented, gripping personal histories of Trochenbrod's survivors, Bendavid-Val crafts a well-researched, detailed, and eminently readable work. **VERDICT** This is an essential read for anyone interested in religious history, the culture and history of World War II, or Jewish history, as Bendavid-Val shares not only the culture and customs of Slavic Jews before the 1930s but also the long-lasting and deeply felt impact of the Holocaust on the survivors.—**Elizabeth Zeitz, Otterbein Univ. Lib., Westerville, OH**

**De Bruhl, Marshall. *The River Sea: The Amazon in History, Myth, and Legend; A Story of Discovery, Exploration, and Exploitation*. Counterpoint. Nov. 2010. c.248p. ISBN 9781582434902. \$26. HIST**

The Amazon River and its many tributaries have been a focus of mystery, adventure, and exploration ever since the initial Spanish sighting of the river's mouth by the Vicente Pinzón expedition in 1500. De Bruhl (*Sword of San Jacinto: A Life of Sam Houston*) provides a coherent account of the history of the Amazon basin, a largely chronological overview of its exploration and development. He looks closely at a number of specific expeditions into the vast Amazon wilderness, including the unplanned voyage of Francisco de Orellana from the Andes Mountains of Ecuador to the river's mouth in 1541–42 and the disastrous Pedro de Ursúa–Lope de Aguirre expedition, which began in 1559. Nearly 200 years later, less exploitative and more scientifically focused expeditions started, the earliest led by Charles-Marie de la Condamine in 1743. In 1800, there was Alexander von Humboldt; later, Alfred Russel Wallace, Henry Walter Bates, and Richard Spruce, mid-century Englishmen who spent several years discovering and cataloging new plant, insect, and animal species. De Bruhl provides balanced coverage of the development and growth of Spanish and Portuguese settlements in the Amazon region, the late 19th-century rubber boom, and the 20th-century exploitation of the Amazon area and its indigenous people by ranchers and loggers. **VERDICT** An effective, engaging, and well-researched presentation that should appeal to both history and natural history enthusiasts.—**Elizabeth Salt, Otterbein Univ. Lib., Westerville, OH**

**Freisenbruch, Annelise. *Caesars' Wives: The First Ladies of the Roman Empire*. S & S. Nov. 2010. c.368p. bibliog. ISBN 9781416583035. \$28. HIST**

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## BLACK HISTORY

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Little, Brown. Feb. 2011. 320p.

ISBN 9780316017237. \$24.99. SOC SCI

The author reflects on her own Harlem, as well as the Harlem of its iconic storytellers.

Spencer, Rainier. *Reproducing Race: The Paradox of Generation Mix.*

Lynne Rienner. Dec. 2010. 355p.

ISBN 9781588267511. \$68.50; pap.

ISBN 9781588267764. \$27.50. SOC SCI

Afro-American studies professor Spencer argues that mixed-race identity does not bring about a post-racial society or the deconstruction of race. On the contrary, it promotes assumptions about white supremacy and antiblackness.

### SPORTS

Callahan, Tom. *His Father's Son: Earl and Tiger Woods.* Gotham: Penguin Group (USA). 284p. ISBN 9781592405978.

\$27; ebook. SPORTS

Former *Time* magazine senior writer Callahan explores Tiger Woods by studying the life of Tiger's father, Earl Woods. Hav-

ing interviewed both men, as well as their friends and associates, the author promises new insights.

Duru, N. Jeremi. *Advancing the Ball: Race, Reformation, and the Quest for Equal Coaching Opportunity in the NFL.* Oxford Univ. Jan. 2011. 192p. (Law & Current Events Masters). ISBN 9780199736003. \$24.95; ebook. SPORTS

Decades after the NFL desegregated, head coaching positions remained almost entirely held by whites—until two attorneys and a former offensive lineman worked to bring change. Temple University law professor Duru chronicles how it happened.

Hogan, Lawrence. *The Forgotten History of America's Negro Leagues.* Praeger. Feb. 2011. 204p. ISBN 9780313379840. \$44.95; ebook.

SPORTS

Hogan goes back well before the formation of the professional Negro leagues, and well after, to place the story in full context.

Merlino, Doug. *The Hustle: One Team and Ten Lives in Black and White.*

Bloomsbury. Jan. 2011.

320p. ISBN 9781608192151.

\$26. SPORTS

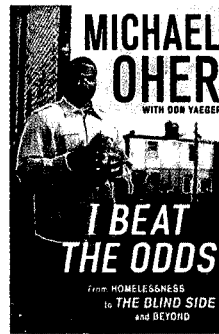
In 1986 Seattle, the lives of ten kids, inner-city black and elite-schooled white, came together by means of one basketball team. Journalist Merlino was on the team, and now he seeks out his fellow players.

Oher, Michael with Don Yaeger.

*I Beat the Odds: From Homelessness to The Blind Side and Beyond.* Gotham: Penguin Group (USA). Feb. 2011. 256p. ISBN 9781592406128. \$26; audiobook, library/retail eds. (Recorded Bks./Penguin Audio); ebook. SPORTS

The football player we know from *The Blind Side* now tells his own story, relating his family's struggles, and how the right role models and continued determination can counter hopelessness and move you toward your dreams.

*Margaret Heilbrun is Senior Editor, LJ Book Review*



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The calculating Livia; the licentious Messalina; the devout Christian Helena—Roman history is populated with famous and infamous women, giving classical scholar Freisenbruch ample material for her survey of the wives, sisters, mothers, and daughters of the Roman Empire's ruling dynasties. While she doesn't skimp on the scandalous details, Freisenbruch's central aim is to examine the complex lives of a group of women who might have lacked official power but still held enormous sway in the political arena. In particular, she delves into how the public images of an emperor's wife and his female relatives became a powerful force to influence popular opinion and bolster the legitimacy of his reign. Although there was resulting pressure on imperial women to be models of virtue, it also opened the door for them to become patrons of the arts and public works, appear as symbolic figures in statuary and on currency, and even become deified after death. **VERDICT** Those already well versed in Roman history will find little new here, but for general readers this is an entertaining and educational book that captures the vividness of its subjects' lives while drawing an interesting parallel between the political treatment of Rome's "first ladies" and their

counterparts in the modern world.—Kathleen McCallister, Univ. of South Carolina Lib., Columbia

Gray, Charlotte. *Gold Diggers: Striking It Rich in the Klondike.* Counterpoint. 2010.

c.416p. illus. ISBN 9781582436111. \$26. HIST

Generations of readers have been enchanted by accounts of gold rushes, e.g., Jack London's stories taking place in the frozen Canadian north. Award-winning Canadian author Gray (*Reluctant Genius: The Passionate Life and Inventive Mind of Alexander Graham Bell*) now turns her skill to an enchanting recitation of lives—and deaths—in the Klondike during the gold rush over 100 years ago. Combining a keen eye for detail and firsthand histories of contemporary witnesses, Gray sets forth the lives of six "stampedeers," including Jack London (who almost died in the wild before writing so wonderfully of those who did), Mountie Sam Steele, business wiz Belinda Mulrooney, high-born journalist Flora Shaw, devoted Jesuit priest William Judge, and, most of all, Bill Haskell, a simple soul who left America with a dream of exploration and riches. Readers will discover whether or not he succeeded. **VERDICT** This is a captivating example of *lecture d'évasion* (i.e., escapist reading) and of historical scholarship examining the lives of such pioneers from the—frozen or flooded—

ground up. A delight for readers of all ages and interests.—Gilles Renaud, Cornwall, Ont.

*Inside the Nixon Administration: The Secret Diary of Arthur Burns, 1969-1974.* Univ. of Kansas. 2010.

c.144p. ed. by Robert H. Ferrell. photogs.

index. ISBN 9780700617302. \$24.95. HIST

Burns (1904–87) served—and survived—as chairman of the Federal Reserve board for the entire Nixon administration. Now Ferrell (history, emeritus, Indiana Univ.; *Harry S. Truman: A Life*) skillfully edits Burns's diary, first made available from the Gerald Ford Library in 2008, and includes a helpful introduction and brief notes that identify people and events. The diary is distinguished by its brevity. The author rails against Nixon's hacks (as Burns describes them), including H.R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman, Charles Colson (who admits Nixon charged him with "getting Burns" to ensure his cooperation), and treasury secretary John Connally, whom the author viewed as an uninformed flatterer. Another interesting entry shows Henry Kissinger confiding in Burns that Nixon's anti-Semitism could hurt his (Kissinger's) chances of becoming secretary of state. **VERDICT** This diary will be of interest mostly to specialists because complicated economic policies are

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