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## The way of Herodotus: travels with the man who invented history, by Justin Marozzi (book review)

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methods for African American genealogical research, with bibliographic sources. This book is an able companion to the PBS series *Gates* hosted, but it stands on its own as well. Essential for genealogy collections; recommended for all public and high school libraries.—Emily-Jane Dawson, *Multnomah Cty. Lib., Portland, OR*

**Herring, George C. From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776.** Oxford Univ. (Oxford History of the United States). 2008. 1040p. maps. index. ISBN 978-0-19-507822-0. \$35. HIST

Herring (history, emeritus, Univ. of Kentucky; *America's Longest War*) has created a verbal monument to the place of the United States in the world. The only themed volume so far in the "Oxford History of the United States" series, this work portrays the history of the world's foremost republic through the prism of its international interactions. Striking is the emergence, through Herring's clear and compelling storytelling, of certain themes in the way the United States has conducted and still conducts itself among nations. Through Herring's methodical presentation of the facts we see a nation alternately petty and grasping, magnanimous and generous, a nation propelled to greatness by equal amounts of arrogance, racism, and greed but most of all by a genuine desire to make of the world something better. The author's quick character sketches of the actors who move this narrative forward bring life to a subject that could, in less skilled hands, easily induce tedium. Highly recommended for both public and academic libraries.—Michael F. Russo, *Louisiana State Univ. Libs., Baton Rouge*

**Kline, Michael J. The Baltimore Plot: The First Conspiracy To Assassinate Abraham Lincoln.** Westholme. Jan. 2009. c.528p. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 978-1-59416-071-4. \$29.95. HIST

Corporate lawyer Kline details an alleged plot to which most Lincoln books only allude. President-elect Lincoln journeyed by private railway from Springfield, IL, through Maryland to his 1861 inauguration and, in Baltimore, escaped from what was probably the first conspiracy to assassinate him. The alleged plotters were never brought to trial. Kline contextualizes Baltimore as the largest city of a pro-secessionist border state, where previous tumult had earned it the sobriquet "Mobtown." Foiling the plot burnished the reputation of private detective Allan Pinkerton, among others. Lincoln's protectors saved his life but not his reputation. The press ridiculed Lincoln for resorting

to disguise when moving between stations in Baltimore in the midst of his otherwise highly publicized "Lincoln Special" to Washington. Lincoln thereafter vowed never to hide. Kline translates legal concepts into comprehensible language, making readable an at times exhaustive examination of a scheme tied together through the "circumstantial evidence of motive, means, and opportunity." Kline invites his readers to serve as judge and jury and to conjecture how history would have been different had such a conspiracy succeeded. Comparing favorably with Harold Holzer's *Lincoln President-Elect*, this book demonstrates the use of archival sources beyond the usual standard and is recommended for libraries serving specialists and general readers.—Frederick J. Augustyn Jr., *Library of Congress*

**Kushner, David. Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon, and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb.** Walker. Feb. 2009. c.256p. photos. bibliog. ISBN 978-0-8027-1619-4. \$25. HIST

In 1957, Bev and Lew Wechsler, activists and residents of Levittown, PA, welcomed Daisy and Bill Myers and their children to move next door. The Myers thus became the first black family to reside in Levittown, built and maintained as an explicitly "whites only" suburb. *Rolling Stone* contributing editor Kushner (*Masters of Doom*) frames the Myers's story within the rise of self-assured entrepreneur developer Bill Levitt, who built wildly successful postwar suburbs and was an unrepentant defender of racially exclusive policies. Kushner also limns the contemporary civil rights struggle but focuses on the immediate fallout of the Myers's move into Levittown: nonstop protests, near-riots, and threats from appalled residents backed by out-of-town white supremacists, which were countered by the Wechslers and other forward-thinking residents with support from local Quaker and human rights groups. Though the Myers family prevailed in the courts, and Levitt's communities would be officially integrated by 1960, the tension of that summer is still palpable in this gripping account. Timing gives this publication an additional layer of historic intrigue: in November 2008, voters in Bucks County, PA, home to Levittown, selected Barack Obama for President by an 8.5 percent margin. Recommended for all public libraries and essential for regional collections.—Janet Ingraham Dwyer, *Worthington Libs., OH*

**Malcolm, Joyce Lee. Peter's War: A New England Slave Boy and the American Revolution.** Yale Univ. Feb. 2009. c.272p.

index. ISBN 978-0-300-11930-5. \$28. HIST  
Malcolm (law, George Mason Univ.) vividly recounts the Revolutionary War experiences of slaves such as Peter Nelson, who at age 12 enlisted in the Massachusetts militia and participated in some of the war's most famous battles. Malcolm's deep research, including into primary sources, sheds light on slaves' wartime involvement, chronicling the stories of men who bravely and willingly fought alongside free whites not knowing whether their efforts toward victory would result in their own eventual freedom. Malcolm describes in grim and poignant detail the vastly different wartime experiences of three slaves—Peter; his father, Jupiter, and unrelated Southern slave Titus, who joined the British army and engaged in guerrilla warfare against American slaves and their owners. Using the three slaves' stories as a narrative fulcrum, Malcolm provides a succinct but satisfying overview of the entire war. Major historical figures such as George Washington, Benedict Arnold, and John Adams play key roles in this narrative, but the author's focus is on the unknown and forgotten participants. She has assembled an engagingly written and incisive book, valuable to both scholars and informed general readers. Recommended for history collections in academic and large public libraries.—Douglas King, *Univ. of South Carolina, Thomas Cooper Lib., Columbia*

**Marozzi, Justin. The Way of Herodotus: Travels with the Man Who Invented History.** Da Capo. Jan. 2009. c.352p. maps. bibliog. ISBN 978-0-306-81621-5. \$27.50. HIST

Herodotus is a somewhat controversial figure, dubbed both the "Father of History" and the "Father of Lies" for his famous *Histories*, which explored the causes of the Greek and Persian wars while often digressing into cultural notes, examinations of politics, and local legends. Marozzi (*Tamerlane*) makes no secret of his admiration for the man, and in this vivid travelogue he lets Herodotus's spirit be companion and guide. Marozzi traces Herodotus's footsteps as he sought out knowledgeable people for their observations through what is now Greece, Egypt, Turkey, and Iraq. Though times have changed, there's plenty of evidence in Marozzi's explorations and encounters to suggest that the overall messages in Herodotus's work—the hubris of man, the strangeness and power of culture, and the importance of historical records—are just as applicable to the world today. While his imagined version of Herodotus's personality sometimes seems a bit of a stretch, Marozzi succeeds admirably at emulating the tone of the work he so admires, producing a lively and accessible narrative that's often as

eclectic as its spiritual predecessor. Recommended for public libraries, especially those with travel history collections or as a companion to Ryszard Kapuscinski's *Travels with Herodotus*.—Kathleen McCallister, Univ. of South Carolina Lib., Columbia

**Moore, Wendy. *Wedlock: The True Story of the Disastrous Marriage and Remarkable Divorce of Mary Eleanor Bowes, Countess of Strathmore*. Crown. Mar. 2009. c.352p. bibliog. index. ISBN 978-0-307-45223-8. \$25.95. HIST**

Once the richest heiress in Britain, Mary Eleanor Bowes (1749–1800), ancestor of the current queen, was a highly intelligent and accomplished woman renowned as a gifted botanist and playwright. She nevertheless frequently exhibited poor judgment, particularly with regard to men. After Mary was widowed at age 27, there was no shortage of suitors vying for her hand in marriage. Debt ridden and a recent widower, Capt. Andrew Robinson Stoney staged a duel pretending to defend Mary's honor and feigned injury to procure Mary's sympathy. Convinced of his imminent death, Mary agreed to marry him even though she was betrothed to someone else. She was thereafter subjected to unimaginable cruelty, violence, and degradation at the hands of her husband and was kept as a virtual prisoner. In an era when domestic abuse was an accepted part of marital life, Stoney's inhumane treatment of Mary still shocked many. Eventually, Mary was able to escape her captor and successfully petitioned for divorce, which was difficult if not impossible for a woman to obtain at that time. Moore (*The Knife Man*) skillfully depicts Mary's life with poignant detail in an exhaustively researched book that joins only a few works about Bowes. Recommended for academic and large public libraries.—Carrie Benbow, Toronto P.L., Ont.

**Morin, Karen M. *Frontiers of Femininity: A New Historical Geography of the Nineteenth-Century American West*. Syracuse Univ. (Space, Place, & Society). 2008. c.248p. illus. index. ISBN 978-0-8156-3167-5. \$29.95. HIST**

Morin (geography, Bucknell Univ.) examines the travel writings of American and British Victorian women in the American West and Mexico. Her work here seems to follow closely the kind of research presented in Maria H. Frawley's *A Wider Range: Writing by Women in Victorian England*, explaining that travel writing provides a way both to solidify and to defy cultural standards. But Morin moves the discussion forward by looking at how those travel narratives served as a way for women to redefine their

gender identity "in place" by comparing their gender roles to those of the women they encountered. In this way, says Morin, their writing demonstrates how women maneuvered between needing to appear as proper Victorian ladies while at the same time reevaluating their understanding of societal and institutional norms based on what they experienced during their travels. This well-researched volume is recommended for academic libraries with collections in Western Americana, social history, geographic history, travel writing, women's history, and gender studies.—Crystal Goldman, Univ. of Utah, Salt Lake City

**Prochaska, Frank. *The Eagle and the Crown: Americans and the British Monarchy*. Yale Univ. 2008. 256p. illus. index. ISBN 978-0-300-14195-5. \$40. HIST**

The Declaration of Independence blasts George III and kingship. So why is it that George III's great-great-great-great granddaughter Elizabeth II and her family so fascinate "the Colonies"? Yale lecturer in history Prochaska doesn't quite figure that out either, but his chronicle of the Crown as seen from this side of the pond is worth reading. While the intensity of interest has never been so strong as in recent years, Prochaska documents how the royals have long been of interest to America. Some of this fascination is owing to snobbery in a land lacking a defined aristocracy, some is a longing for something above politics, and some is respect for this country's British heritage (though the royals aren't very British themselves—the Queen Mum was the first royal consort from Britain since James II's first wife). And part of our fascination is out of sheer respect for the queen, who does her somewhat indefinable work quite well. Prochaska, who ends his study with the death of Princess Diana, considers the U.S. presidency to have shades of the British monarchy in its contours. Suitable for all libraries with deep American history collections and for public libraries with patrons interested in the royals, i.e., most of them.—Michael Eshleman, Kings Mills, OH

**Rapport, Mike. *1848: Year of Revolution*. Basic Bks: Perseus. Feb. 2009. c.496p. illus. index. ISBN 978-0-465-01436-1. \$29.95. HIST**

Rapport (history, Univ. of Stirling; *Shape of the World*) skillfully unravels a complex series of cataclysmic events that swept over Europe in 1848, forever changing the lives of millions. Surging population growth, economic collapse, and oppressive regimes were just a few of the factors that led to the spontaneous ignition of revolutionary fires that January. Street barricades went up in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and other autocratic

capitals of Europe. From Sicily to Slovakia, the disempowered demanded civil rights, enfranchisement, and constitutional governance. In many cases initial demands met with success, but by the end of the year the autocrats of Europe regained their footing and, after horrendous bloodshed, their dominance. By 1851 the hopes of a new order were shattered, but, as Rapport stresses, profound changes had been made. For example, in the eastern reaches of Europe, the medieval institution of serfdom was finally abolished. The author also maintains that the ideals of 1848—liberty, democracy, civil society, nationhood—were at last fulfilled in the 1989 uprisings against the Soviet hegemony. Rapport mixes his lucid narrative with astute analysis based on memoirs, eyewitness accounts, and secondary sources. While his work does not surpass Jonathan Sperber's excellent *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851*, Rapport's study is a worthy and affordable addition to any modern European history collection.—Jim Doyle, Rome, GA

**Reed, Thomas C. & Danny B. Stillman. *The Nuclear Express: A Political History of the Bomb and Its Proliferation*. Zenith. Jan. 2009. c.393p. photogs. maps. index. ISBN 978-0-7603-3502-4. \$30.**

**Tucker, Todd. *Atomic America: How a Deadly Explosion and a Feared Admiral Changed the Course of Nuclear History*. Free Pr: S. & S. Mar. 2009. c.288p. index. ISBN 978-1-4165-4433-3. \$26.**

**Younger, Stephen M. *The Bomb: A New History*. Ecco: HarperCollins. Jan. 2009. c.256p. index. ISBN 978-0-06-153719-6. \$26.95. HIST**

Reed (former secretary of the air force) has joined with veteran Los Alamos physicist Stillman to write a complement to his earlier *At the Abyss: An Insider's History of the Cold War*. This book illustrates how nuclear technology and scientific knowledge was developed and distributed according to decisions made within fluctuating global geopolitical contexts. Even "peaceful" research and energy programs can be easily co-opted for military uses. While radical Islamic fundamentalism is clearly a dangerous threat to a weakened America, the authors emphasize how an ambitious and rising China has been quick to aid proliferation in its bid to become the world's leading power. Most important is the human element—who decides to use the weapons and why—and this is not always predictable or preventable. It is all very alarming, no doubt what the authors intended. Suitable for academic and public libraries. (Index not seen.)

Younger's book follows logically from his earlier *Endangered Species: How We Can*

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