

## Great Reads from The Scribes' Book Lists

### Noteworthy Historical Fiction with a Canadian Twist

For Children:

***The Sky is Falling***, by Kit Pearson (Puffin Books). Young siblings face exile in Canada during World War II, with such compelling characters the book became a trilogy.

***Tess***, by Jocelyn Reekie (Raincoast Books). A feisty young heroine overcomes adversity in the many adventures that beset her when she immigrates to Canada from Britain.

For Adults:

***Underground to Canada***, by Barbara Smucker (Puffin). The escape of two fugitive slaves based on first-hand experiences from personal narratives.

***Book of Negroes***, by Lawrence Hill (Harper Collins). The experience of a young woman's capture into slavery and her escape through the "underground railway" to Canada is a page turner.

***Obasan***, Joy Kogawa (Penguin Books). Based on Kogawa's family experience of being interned in poverty in rural camps during World War II.

***Broken Ground***, Jack Hodgins (McClelland & Stewart). Hodgins draws on his childhood stories to write from several points of view about WW I vets' postwar lives.

***I Heard the Owl Call My Name***, Margaret Craven (Dell). The young priest experiences a full range of human emotion and personal growth—and his own mortality—in a small and very remote aboriginal village.

***Fugitive Pieces***, Ann Michaels (McClelland & Stewart). A young boy, the victim of war torn Europe, is adopted by a brilliant man who hides and ultimately adopts him, helping him to cope with his painful experiences of war.

***Englishman's Boy***, Guy Vanderhaeghe (McClelland & Stewart). A western with a Canadian twist and some memorable characters.

***LeSurvenant***, Germaine Guevremont. The setting is early 20<sup>th</sup> century rural Quebec where the fixed lives of the villagers is tossed into turbulent change by the arrival of a charismatic stranger.

## **Memoirs, Autobiographies & Fiction Based Upon Memoir**

***The Penguin Book of Memoir***; selected and introduced by Camilla Gibb.

Excerpts from published memoirs of significant Canadian writers. A high-end banquet of memoir writing that covers a range of subject matter including family history.

***The Book of Small***, Emily Carr. Vignette's from Carr's Victoria, BC childhood in the late 1800s, told in the visceral style of one of Canada's foremost painters.

***Little House on the Prairie***, Laura Ingalls Wilder. This book, part of a series, was written for children and has captured the hearts of all ages, incorporating elements of fiction storytelling to achieve its longtime success.

***The Curve of Time***, M. Wylie Blanchet. A BC coastal classic, the tale of a widow's adventures traveling the coast in a small boat with her four children in the pre-World War II era.

***Totem Poles & Tea***, Hughina Harold's memoirs of her experiences teaching in a remote aboriginal village during the Depression years.

***Spilsbury's Coast, Pioneer Years in the Wet West***, Howard White and Jim Spilsbury. A colourful yarn about the many characters of Vancouver Island's inner coast, told through Spilsbury's experience as a travelling salesman in the pre-World II era.

***The Dragon's Village, An Autobiographical Novel of Revolutionary China***, by Yuan-Tsung Chen (Penguin Books). Seventeen year old Ling-Ling renounces her middle-class privileges to take her revolutionary zeal to villages across China, working for land reform.

***Half Broke Horses – A True Life Novel*** by Jeannette Walls (Scribner). This story is based on the oral history of Walls' remarkable grandmother. Admirable attention to voice, narrative, setting, and evocative detail.

***A Farewell to Arms***, Ernest Hemmingway, a fictional biography with names and some circumstances changed, though it closely follows this brilliant writer's life.

***Glass Castle***, Jeannette Walls, takes us into the heart of a highly dysfunctional family living in poverty as her parents chase their egocentric dreams.

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***Lark Rise to Candleford***, Flora Thompson. A charming ramble through a Victorian childhood for a working class poor family, beautifully told.

***Stories We Tell***, a film by Sarah Polley, exploring the various points of view family members hold of her mother, as Sarah tried to come to grips with her paternity.

## **Nonfiction History with a Regional Theme**

*Exploring Quadra Island, Heritage Sites & Hiking Trails*, Jeanette Taylor & Ian Douglas. A guide that has sold 2,300 copies in this small community.

*The Quadra Story, A History of Quadra Island*, by Jeanette Taylor (Harbour Publishing). The author dips her readers into the lives and exploits of some fascinating individuals who left their mark on social fabric of the largest of the Discovery Islands.

*Tidal Passages, A History of the Discovery Islands*, by Jeanette Taylor (Harbour Publishing). This companion to the Quadra Story, presented in the lively storytelling style, gives us a glimpse into the past on each of the Discovery Islands. *Tidal Passages* was on the BC Bestseller List.

*River City, A History of Campbell River & the Discovery Islands*, Jeanette Taylor (Harbour Publishing). Jammed with terrific archival photos and crazy characters, *River City*, runs through the centuries from the First People to present times to show what makes this little coastal community tick, past and present.

*High Slack*, by Judith Williams. A gripping story about a very dramatic place, Bute Inlet, with its mountains, rivers and some fool hardy attempts to harness its energy.

*Measure of the Year*, by Roderick Haig-Brown. One man's lyrical musings on the ebb and flow of the seasons as experienced from his home on the banks of the Campbell River.

## **Nonfiction History with a Universal Theme**

*Maps and Dreams, A Journey Into the Lives and Lands of the Beaver Indians of Northwest Canada*, Hugh Brody. An insightful and well written account by one of the world's foremost ethnographers.

*Fatal Passage, The Untold Story of John Rae, the Arctic Adventurer Who Discovered the Fate of Franklin*, by Ken McGoogan. What a combo: a passionate writer with a compelling hero fighting dramatic odds, in this an award-winning read.

*Notes from the Century Before, A Journal from British Columbia*, by Edward Hoagland. An urbanite's discovery of a rugged rural backwater lost in time and captured by Hoagland's pen before the last of the gold rush adventurers were gone.

*A Short History of Progress*, by Ronald Wright. To fully understand the present we need to know about the past, a notion fully realized by this and other books by Wright.

***Into the Silence***, Wade Davis. This expose of the impact WWI experiences had upon some of the early climbers of Everest is just one in a list of books by this anthropologist and explorer for your 'must read' list.

***The Last Great Sea, Voyage Through the Human & Natural History of the North Pacific Ocean***, Terry Glavin. What was the Pacific Ocean like pre-and-post glaciation and how did it facilitate settlement in North America? These are the big questions Glavin addresses, plus more.

***A Distant Mirror***, Barbara Tuchman. The turbulent 100 Years War between 14<sup>th</sup> century France and England is Tuchman's subject. Read this and any of her work for exemplary writing and scholarship.