



THE PULITZER PRIZE ARCHIVE

A History and Anthology of
Award-winning Materials in
Journalism, Letters, and Arts

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Federal Republic of Germany

PART G: SUPPLEMENTS

Volume 20

K · G · Saur München 2006

Chronicle of the Pulitzer Prizes for Biography

Discussions, Decisions and Documents

by
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and
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K · G · Saur München 2006

Gefördert durch Mittel
der Stiftung Presse-Haus NRZ
Essen

Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Bibliothek
Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at
<http://dnb.ddh.de>.

Gedruckt auf säurefreiem Papier
Printed on acid-free paper

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K.G. Saur Verlag GmbH, München 2006
Printed in Germany
Druck / Bindung: Strauss GmbH, Mörlenbach

Cover Design by Manfred Link, München

ISBN-13: 978-3-598-30190-2
ISBN 10: 3-598-30190-1
ISBN 3-598-30170-7 (Complete Set)

PREFACE

In the original plan of awards, designed by Joseph Pulitzer in his testament, one of the prizes was meant "for the best American biography teaching patriotic and unselfish service to the people, illustrated by an eminent example, excluding as too obvious the names of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln." But in the course of time the passage to exclude biographical works on Washington and Lincoln was dropped. And so studies on these two politicians increasingly came into consideration, sometimes even winning Pulitzer Prizes. In addition to biographies, soon autobiographies also became eligible for the awards, although they are of a very specific type. As Jill K. Conway in her book *When Memory Speaks – Reflections on Autobiography* states, all autobiographies are bound within the "prison of history and culture."

Together with the Pulitzer Prize for History the one for Biography and Autobiography respectively has the longest tradition among the awards for non-fiction literature, – both came into existence in 1917, the first year the awards were given away. "The vogue for biography in the United States, at the time the Pulitzer Prizes were inaugurated," John Hohenberg remarked, "was even greater than the urge to find different approaches to American history. The American public fairly reveled in highly personal books about the great and the near-great and rewarded the irreverent authors with both wealth and heady praise."

As Julian P. Boyd, a long-standing juror in this award category, once remarked, a good biography should contain "a record of one human being's progress from birth to death, an account of his sufferings, aspirations, achievements, failures, hopes and despairs... The roll of awards... shows that this form of letters has attracted the pens of some of the ablest writers in... America." Some winners of the Pulitzer Prize in the biography/autobiography category were themselves highly prominent personalities, well-known to the general public such as John F. Kennedy before he became President of the United States. In this connection also should be mentioned the diplomat George F. Kennan, the newspaper publisher William A. White, the aviator

Charles A. Lindbergh or the historian and political advisor Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.

To make clear how the annual deliberations of the nominating jurors went over the years, the book at hand not only describes the history of this award group but also presents the main sources, the jury reports. Like in the previous volume, for the first time since the start of the award system, the complete annual documents are reproduced in full length by facsimile. Professor Sig Gissler and Mr. Edward M. Kliment of the Pulitzer Prize Office at Columbia University, New York, made this possible. We are thankful to both of them and we also appreciate the help of Mr. Bernard R. Crystal, Curator of the Pulitzer Prize Collection at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Columbia University. Mrs. Ulrike Sonnemann, Head of the Library of the Jüdisches Museum in Berlin, and Mrs. Ingrid Dickhut of the Department of Media Science at the Ruhr University of Bochum were of kind assistance.

Bochum, FRG
July, 2006

E.J.F./H.-D.F.

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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED TO
PULITZER PRIZE-WINNERS FROM
VARIOUS AWARD CATEGORIES -
ALL OF THEM BORN IN 1906 -
ON THEIR HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAYS

CALDWELL, WILLIAM A.

CRIDER, JOHN H.

DILLON, GEORGE

HEINZERLING, LYNN L.

HILLS, LEE

HOHENBERG, JOHN

KINGSLEY, SIDNEY

MOWERY, EDWARD J.

PATRICK, JOHN

THOMPSON, LAWRENCE R.

WHITE, WILLIAM S.

History of the Award

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PULITZER BIOGRAPHY PRIZE

Beside of the award for history, Joseph Pulitzer's testament also contained another historical-oriented prize category designed for books with biographical or autobiographical content respectively. The exact original description of the prize was formulated as follows: "For the best American biography teaching patriotic and unselfish service to the people, illustrated by an eminent example, excluding as too obvious the names of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln."¹

On the rank of this award category John Hohenberg makes the following remark: "The vogue for biography in the United States, at the time the Pulitzer Prizes were inaugurated, was even greater than the urge to find different approaches to American History. The American public fairly reveled in highly personal books about the great and the near-great and rewarded the irreverent authors with both wealth and heady praise."² The jurors, like those in history, came to biography from a wide range of activities.³ "Although historians liked to think of biography as their particular province," Hohenberg states fundamentally, "none of the winners in the formative years of the Pulitzer Prizes was a professional historian."⁴

When in the year 1917 three jurors awarded the first Pulitzer Prize in the biography category to the book about lyricist *Julia Ward Howe*, the honored authors were her daughters Laura E. Richards, Maud Howe Elliott and Florence Howe Hall,⁵ who, in Hohenberg's words, gave to the volume "a symbolic martial touch."⁶

In 1918 when the same jurors had to pass judgment on the submissions in the biography category, they first of all faced a basic problem. The jury members had to answer the question, "whether the biographies of men not born in this country were eligible under the terms of the endowment. It is our opinion," the jury report continues, "that such biographies are eligible, if the distinctive work of the men was done in this country in such a manner that they are naturally thought of as Americans. In other words the phrase 'American biography' does not necessarily imply Americans in it's sense of being born in America."⁷ After presenting these fundamental reflections on how the definition of the prize in the biography category ought to be interpreted, the jurors offered an evaluation of the books at hand, according to which "the committee is unanimous in deciding that the Pulitzer Prize for Biography should be awarded to *Benjamin Franklin, Self-Revealed*, by W. C. Bruce."⁸ Not only the Advisory Board on the Pulitzer Prizes but also the Trustees of Columbia University, who as the second authority had to sanction the deci-

1 Quoted from De Forest O'Dell, *The History of Journalism Education in the United States*, New York 1935, p. 109.

2 John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes. A History of the Awards in Books, Drama, Music, and Journalism*, New York - London 1974, p. 65.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

5 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes, 1917 - 1991*, New York 1991, p. 60.

6 John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

7 Biography Jury Report, April 26, 1918, pp. 1 f.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

sions of the jury, followed suit on its suggestion and gave the biography prize to William Cabell Bruce, an ex-senator from Maryland.⁹

The jury of 1919 came "easily to the unanimous decision that the Pulitzer Prize this year for biography should go to *The Education of Henry Adams*."¹⁰ The book in question was an autobiographical work that ended up winning the award.¹¹ "Henry Adams," Hohenberg writes, "never considered himself a professional historian and he had no intention, when he began his *Education*, of writing a mere autobiography. He once called the book 'an incomplete experience which I shall never finish.' Had he known his book would be cited as an example of 'patriotic and unselfish services to the people,' he would have been embarrassed. But he never lived to receive his Pulitzer Prize. By birth, education, appearance and temperament, Henry Adams was an aristocrat and made no apologies for it. He was... the great grandson of President John Adams, the grandson of President John Quincy Adams, and the son of Charles Francis Adams, minister to the Court of St. James's... His nine-volume *History of the United States During the Administration of Jefferson and Madison, (1889-1891)*, became a classic."¹²

The jurors of 1920 "decided unanimously that the award... should be given to *The Life of John Marshall*, by Albert J. Beveridge,"¹³ and this decision was also accepted by the two other committees that figured in the awarding of the Pulitzer Prizes.¹⁴

More difficulties arose in 1921, when a jury could not at first work up unreserved enthusiasm for any of the biographical works at hand, so that the chairman of the jury wrote in his report that "none of the four volumes of biography offered is, considering the quality of the books which have hitherto gained the prize, worthy of so distinguished an honor as the Pulitzer reward."¹⁵ The heads of Columbia University disclosed thereupon, "that the Advisory Board will be disappointed to have no recommendation for the award of the biography prize... The jury is not restricted in its consideration to the books that are submitted. The juries are at liberty to initiate suggestions of their own regardless of the nominations by other people."¹⁶ After that the jury reconsidered and finally voted "for Mr. Bok's book."¹⁷ This proposal proved acceptable, and so the biography award of 1921 was given to the autobiographical work *The Americanization of Edward Bok*, by Edward Bok.¹⁸

There were new jurors on the jury appointed for 1922, who arrived at the following decision: They reported that the members of the "committee have unanimously voted the prize... to *The Daughter of the Middle Border*, by Hamlin Garland."¹⁹ Because neither Pulitzer Board nor Trustees had any objections to this suggestion, the prize for best biography went to the author and critic Hamlin Garland.²⁰

In 1923 when the same jurors held office, there were also no problems with the evaluation of the exhibits at hand. "I have the honor to report as Chairman of the Pulitzer Prize Committee for Biography under the auspices of Columbia University," a juror

9 John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

10 Biography Jury Report, February 8, 1919, p. 1.

11 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

12 John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *op. cit.*, pp. 67 f.

13 Biography Jury Report, March 7, 1920, p. 1.

14 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

15 Biography Jury Report, April 25, 1921, p. 1.

16 Letter to Maurice Francis Egan, April 27, 1921, p. 1.

17 Letter to Frank D. Fackenthal, May 5, 1921, p. 1.

18 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

19 Biography Jury Report, March 24, 1922, p. 1.

20 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

wrote, "that both of my colleagues... are in accordance with me in the opinion that the *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page* is the best biography printed during the year 1922, and, therefore, deserves to be crowned by Columbia and the Pulitzer Foundation."²¹ The other committees for the Pulitzer Prize shared the jury's opinion and bestowed the biography prize on the author of said book, Burton J. Hendrick.²²

The biography jury of 1924 struggled comparatively hard to determine a favorite for that year's Pulitzer Prize. One juror said about the biographies that were submitted to the jury, that "none seems to me very good," he found "the autobiographies... much more interesting," stating in more concrete terms: "Of these I think Pupin is much the best, and I cast my vote for him."²³ A second juror suggested among other things in his judgment on the books at hand: "I can't tell you how strongly I feel about Pupin. There is a first rate example of Americanism, of the Americanizing process, of a man getting thoroughly adjusted to the genius of the country and paying back a debt, so to say, by putting it all on record. It is well written and interesting. It seems to me to fit our bill completely as a bit of American achievement, both in living the life and in recording it."²⁴ The Chairman of the Biography Jury on the other hand declared: "I feel that Pupin is the second best... but I feel strongly enough about the excellence of the Pupin book to enter no protest."²⁵ The book in question was the autobiography *From Immigrant to Inventor*, by Michael Idvorsky Pupin, a physicist who had emigrated to the USA and was teaching at Columbia University.²⁶ Although the vote of the jury was not unanimous, the Advisory Board and the Trustees of Columbia University agreed that the biography prize should be given to M. I. Pupin.²⁷

In 1925 the jurors arrived yet again at a unanimous vote, and this time they also explained the criteria that had led to their decision. "We have interpreted the test as involving also the question of literary craftsmanship," the report reveals, "seeking the book not only sufficient in its subject but adequate as a work of art. We have looked for the writer proficient in composition, in proportion, in condensation, in omission, in narrative form, in anecdote and in handling the English language. Our unanimous choice for the prize is *Barrett Wendell and His Letters*, by M. A. DeWolfe Howe. Wendell was not a great man, he represented things that were greater than himself, but he represented them effectively, helpfully. In a materialistic generation he believed in the ideals of truth and beauty and goodness and steadily pursued them. He was a good teacher, an unusual inspirer of the feeling for good literature, and he knew how to write. As an educator he exercised a lasting influence... The task of writing his life was not an easy one. The art of selecting, cutting and combining letters into a steady sequence of biographical story is difficult. Mr. Howe has accomplished this admirably, with fine editorial taste and skill, the touch of a literary artist."²⁸ There was no objection to this unanimous vote, and so the Pulitzer Prize went to M. A. DeWolfe Howe.²⁹

The jurors of 1926 also all favored the same author. "For the Pulitzer Prize for biography this year I should unhesitatingly choose the *Life of William Osler*, by Dr. Harvey

21 Biography Jury Report, March 29, 1923, p. 1.

22 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

23 Letter to William Allan White, March 17, 1924, pp. 1 f.

24 Letter to William Allen White, February 25, 1924, p. 1.

25 Letter to Frank D. Fackenthal, Secretary of Columbia University, March 21, 1924, p. 1.

26 John Hohenberg, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

27 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

28 Biography Jury Report, March 21, 1925, pp. 1 f.

29 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

Cushing of Boston. It seems to me to stand far above any other recent work of the kind,"³⁰ as deemed one member of the jury. "Dr. Cushing's book," another juror wrote, "is of a distinctive high quality, worthy of comparison, in my opinion, with the great biographies of recent times. Osler himself was a man who represented the best kind of personal achievement, born in the ranks of moderate circumstances, with an ideal of the highest intellectual career, and essentially a man who sought to serve humanity in his efforts. By his side the striving upward of a mere politician or a popular writer of fiction seems small. I hope we may be able to give to him and his standards the approval of this prize."³¹ And the chairman of the jury for his part added to what already had been said, "that Cushing's book exactly fulfills my idea of what the prize is for, that is a work that stands out from the ruck, that treats the fine subject on high grounds, that promises to remain of widely recognized permanent value."³² Because of this unanimous vote the Pulitzer Prize was awarded to Harvey Cushing.³³

Although the jurors of the awarding year of 1927 finally agreed upon a unanimous vote, they found it difficult to arrive at a decision at first. "There is no outstanding or distinguished biography at all comparable with Dr. Cushing's *Life of Sir William Osler*," one juror complained with regard to the winner of the previous year and continued: "I have had some doubt whether there were any books in the list of this year that were really worthy of the Pulitzer Prize, and I have had moments when I thought of suggesting that the prize be withheld entirely... Two books only seem to impress me as possibilities. I think the book that gave me personally the greatest satisfaction was Commander Green's *Peary*... The other book which I also liked is Emory Holloway's *Whitman*. It is a sincere though not a great piece of work."³⁴ Another juror also seemed to be insecure but in the end was "prepared to go on record as favoring *Whitman*."³⁵ And the chairman of the jury admitted in his final report: "We have all been entertaining the same idea, that we might possibly have to declare no award. The books submitted, and those explored in addition, have proved on the whole of doubtful value. The mass has not hitherto... been quite so uninspiring. But after a good deal of consideration it would seem as if an award might, after all, be made, going to Emory Holloway's *Whitman*..."³⁶ This is how the Pulitzer Prize for biography went to Holloway's book on Whitman.³⁷

In 1928 the awarding of the prize caused not the slightest problem. The jurors stated in their report, "that our unanimous choice for the prize is *The American Orchestra and Theodore Thomas*, by C. E. Russell. This selection is based upon the value of the book as an adequate record of a life full of service to the United States... Mr. Russell has rendered justice to it in a well-documented, well-organized work and has altogether brought his book decisively closer to the terms of the award than has any of his competitors."³⁸ Because of these enthusiastic hymns of praise the prize was given without contradiction to Charles Edward Russell.³⁹

30 Letter to Royal Cortissoz, March 13, 1926, p. 1.

31 Letter to Royal Cortissoz, March 22, 1926, p. 1.

32 Biography Jury Report, March 29, 1926, p. 1.

33 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

34 Letter to Royal Cortissoz, March 7, 1927, pp. 1, 3 f.

35 Letter to Royal Cortissoz, March 8, 1927, p. 1.

36 Biography Jury Report, March 11, 1927, p. 1.

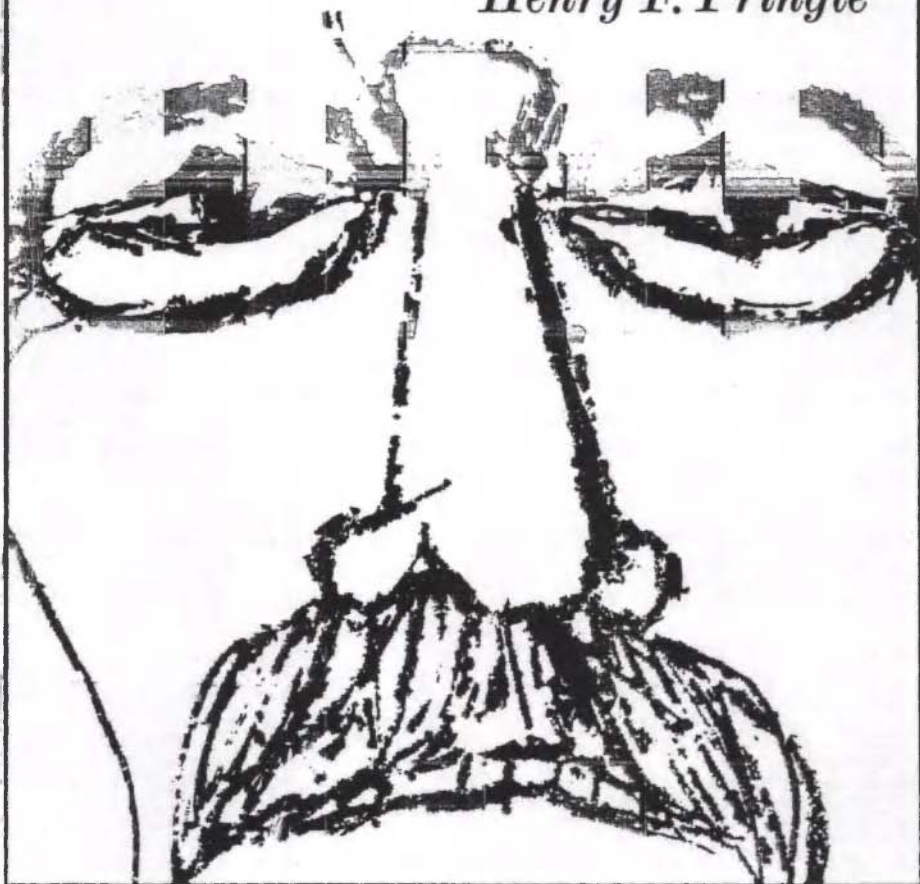
37 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

38 Biography Jury Report, March 20, 1928, p. 1.

39 John Hohenberg, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

*The Pulitzer Prize
Biography by
Henry F. Pringle*



In the year of 1929, when the same jurors had to decide in the biography category, there was also a strong agreement as to who should win. "We have unanimously chosen as the best work presented," the jury report indicates, "*The Training of an American – The Earlier Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, by Burton J. Hendrick... This book seems to be the best of them all. It is a genial, inspiring record, and has an epical character in that the hero is a representative man, representative of the New South and of a new spirit in international affairs... Page's record as a man, as an editor and as a figure in public affairs is from beginning to end inspiring as exemplifying a high type of Americanism and Mr. Hendrick has dealt with the subject in a workmanlike, interesting manner."⁴⁰ When the award was adjudicated to Burton J. Hendrick⁴¹ it was already his second Pulitzer Prize – six years after the first one.

The jury that was appointed in 1930 was marginally new and had to check the prize-worthiness of no less than 43 biographies and autobiographies respectively. In their report the jurors stressed, "that there is one book which we all find worthy of the prize, *The Raven*, a biography of Sam Houston."⁴² The author of the recommended volume, Marquis James was honored by the committees of the Columbia University with the Pulitzer Prize.⁴³

In 1931 when the same members of the jury officiated in the biography category, they had to cope with nearly sixty submissions. "In spite of the merits of more than one candidate," the jury report recorded, "we are unanimous in our selection of the winning book. This is *Charles W. Eliot* of Henry James. The subject is one of high significance in our field, the achievements of an outstanding American and their influence upon American life. Mr. James has splendidly risen to that subject. His book is thoroughly well written, constituting a living portrait... This is the book of the year... Without hesitation we recommend Mr. James's book for the prize."⁴⁴ There were no objections, and so the Pulitzer Prize was given to Henry James.⁴⁵

In 1932 the same jurors as in the preceding two years stayed in office to evaluate the submissions in the biography category. "Our unanimous choice for the prize," their report says, "is *Theodore Roosevelt*, by Henry F. Pringle. The net result of our consultation is that this is a vitalized portrait of an outstanding American, that it seeks to strike a fair balance where that – in a time so near to the subject – is difficult to achieve, that it is well documented and well written... We cordially commend it for the prize."⁴⁶ The Advisory Board as well as the Trustees endorsed this opinion and honored Henry F. Pringle with the Pulitzer Prize.⁴⁷

In 1933 once again the same individuals were selected as members of the jury, but this time they could not reach a unanimous vote concerning the first place. Whereas the chairman of the jury pleaded for the volume *Grover Cleveland* by Allan Nevins and praised this piece of work as "a book of value, in the first place, because it supplies what has been needed, a dispassionate and comprehensive survey of the subject,"⁴⁸ another member of the jury recommended the author as "an excellent historian, with plenty of

40 Biography Jury Report, March 15, 1929, p. 1.

41 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

42 Biography Jury Report, March 10, 1930, p. 1.

43 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

44 Biography Jury Report, February 28, 1931, p. 1.

45 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

46 Biography Jury Report, March 14, 1932, p. 1.

47 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

48 Biography Jury Report, March 11, 1933, p. 2.

literary flavor, complete command of the material, and, especially, with fair-minded, comprehensive survey of the questions involved."⁴⁹ In contrast to this a third juror judged the book about *Grover Cleveland* to be "not inspiring or thrilling and not likely to interest persons who do not remember the events and figures of the 1880's and 1890's... The book is like the subject, sound and admirable, though not fascinating."⁵⁰ In spite of these reservations of the third member of the jury Allan Nevins won the Pulitzer Prize for biography.⁵¹

In 1934 with the jurors of the previous year once more performing the duties of the jury, once again a consensus of opinion was reached: "*John Hay*, by Tyler Dennett,... is the unanimous choice of the jury for the award. Hay, through his character and his career," the jury-report continues, "is precisely such an 'eminent example' as the conditions require. A brilliant man, of high integrity, he lived a life full of public service. Mr. Dennett, though not a stylist like Hay himself, has produced a well-written biography, and, what is more, it is candid, justly poised... It promises to stand as the authoritative source for the subject and as a contribution to American biography (it) deserves cordial recognition."⁵² This laudation was so convincing that the Pulitzer Prize was awarded to Tyler Dennett.⁵³

In 1935 a slightly different jury was appointed nevertheless arriving at a unanimous vote for first-place as well: "*R. E. Lee*, by Douglas S. Freeman. This is unquestionably the outstanding biography of the year," the jury-report reads. "It is exhaustive in research (the book runs to four volumes) and it portrays a figure of national import sympathetically but without prejudice. It does justice to the man and the soldier and without being brilliant in style it is clear and workmanlike in execution. Altogether Lee's best literary monument."⁵⁴ The authorities at Columbia University who awarded the prize raised no objections and selected Douglas S. Freeman as Pulitzer Prize-winner in the biography category.⁵⁵

In the awarding year of 1936, the jurors stated at the beginning of their report: "We clearly understand that these notes are made simply as aids to the Advisory Board. Nevertheless we deem it our duty to express our opinion with peculiar emphasis as to the book placed at the head of the list: *The Thought and Character of William James*, by Ralph Barton Perry. It is the unanimous conclusion of the jury that this book has quite unusual merits, and quite unusual claims to the award. It deals with a distinguished American who was a positive force in our educational and philosophical development. It deals with him at full length and the author's grasp upon his subject is strengthened by his use of many previously unpublished letters. He treats James and his times, and his kinsfolk with sympathy and authority – and usefully. Studying the man he studies also his thought, painting a revealing portrait and writing altogether one of the most valuable studies of American intellectual life we have. Finally Perry has acquitted himself of his task with the touch of a scholar and a man of letters. He has produced what is by all odds

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

51 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

52 Biography Jury Report, March 5, 1934, p. 1.

53 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

54 Biography Jury Report, February 23, 1935, p. 1.

55 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

the best biography" of the year before.⁵⁶ The Advisory Board was of the same opinion and conferred the Pulitzer Prize on Ralph B. Perry.⁵⁷

In 1937 the same jurors as in the two preceding years were entrusted with selecting and judging the submitted entries. Although a basic agreement was reached, the chairman of the jury nonetheless deemed it appropriate to report the individual opinions on the favored book in detail: "*Hamilton Fish – The Inner History of the Grant Administration*, by Allan Nevins. This is a really remarkable work both as biography and as history. It is minutely exhaustive and it is very understanding. It renders a positive service to the literature of the period." One juror found "it 'mighty well done' and 'trustworthy,'" another called it "the most solid contribution to biography of the year... It is well written and interesting." The jury chairman added: "I am all for the *Fish* book because of its power and the author's efficiency throughout and I do not regard the previous award to the same author's *Grover Cleveland* in 1933 as a bar. In any case I am not sure that this point comes within the jurisdiction of the jury. It is one, perhaps, for the Advisory Board to settle."⁵⁸ The Board had no objections against this proposal and gave Allan Nevins his second Pulitzer Prize for biography.⁵⁹

In 1938 the jurors, working together on the biography jury for many years, arrived at the decision of naming two books of nearly equal merit: (1.) *Pedlar's Progress – The Life of Bronson Alcott*, by Odell Shepard. "This book," the report indicates, "has made a most favorable impression upon all... members of the jury. It commemorates a salient figure in an important period of New England's spiritual and intellectual development and it does this in an effective, workman-like manner... The author of this book... has made a really useful contribution to American biographical literature... It is decidedly worthy of the prize." (2.) *Andrew Jackson – The Border Captain/Andrew Jackson – Portrait of a President*, by Marquis James. "We are all agreed," it is said in the report about this book, "that this is an admirable study of a famous American, well conceived and well executed. On its merits it deserves a prize. The question arises, however, and it is one that may reasonably be called to the attention of the Board, whether it is judicious to give the award, for the second time, to the same author, when other good books are available... There is precedent for repetition of the award and there is no getting away from the fact that both as regards subject and treatment the book has a certain major significance. As such... we are unanimously of a friendly opinion – but *Pedlar's Progress* remains a weighty competitor."⁶⁰ The uncertainty of the jury as to who finally was deserving of the prize passed on to the Advisory Board, which "obligingly voted two coequal prizes for each book,"⁶¹ awarding the prize not only to Odell Shepard but to Marquis James as well, who therewith was honored with a Pulitzer Prize for the second time.

The time-tested three jurors of the previous year also formed the jury in the biography category in 1939. According to them the books on the following short list were especially qualified for the award: (1.) *Benjamin Franklin*, by Carl Van Doren: "To this book the jury as a body would make the award," the report reads. "It is not a masterpiece. It might have been more brilliantly written. But it is well written, well documented, and altogether promises to figure as the standard biography of Franklin. It rises on the whole

⁵⁶ Biography Jury Report, March 7, 1936, p. 1.

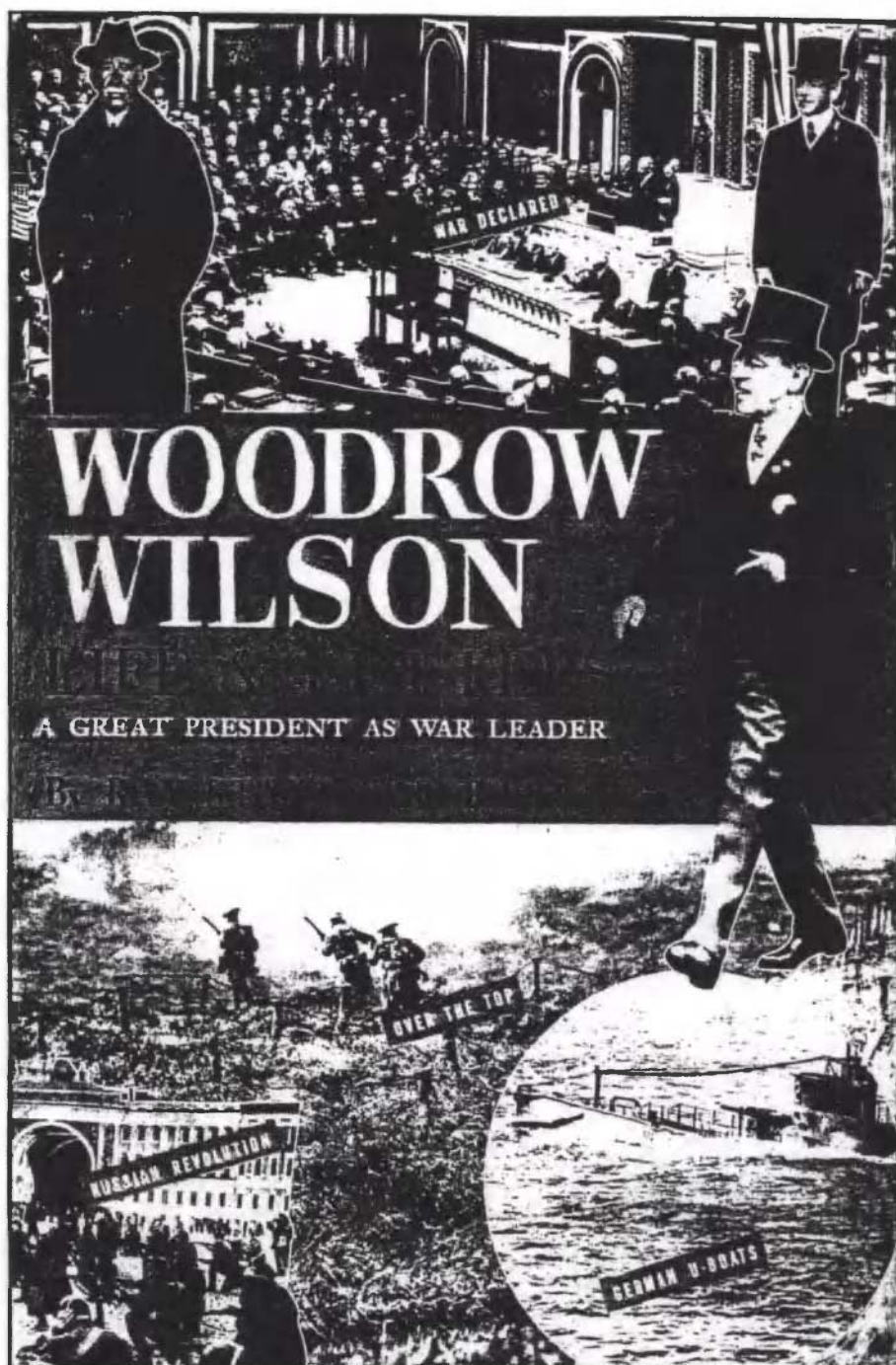
⁵⁷ Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 60.

⁵⁸ Biography Jury Report, March 13, 1937, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 60.

⁶⁰ Biography Jury Report, March 7, 1938, p. 1.

⁶¹ John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 163.



to the level of its subject and that subject by itself has significance..." (2.) *Elihu Root*, by Philip C. Jessup, which was described in the jury report "as a good runner up."⁶² The Advisory Board decided in favor of the Franklin-biography and bestowed the Pulitzer Prize on Carl Van Doren.⁶³

For the jury of 1940 the personnel was slightly changed. As in the previous year two books were found to stand out above all others: (1.) *Woodrow Wilson – Life and Letters*, by Ray Stannard Baker: "This is only partially represented by vols VII and VIII," the jury report stated. "But it is the unanimous opinion of the jury that these concluding volumes place the capstone upon the monumental work whose merits as a whole demand recognition... It is difficult to see how this work could be allowed to pass without receiving the allocade of the Pulitzer Prize." (2.) *Thoreau*, by Henry Seidel Canby. "In the absence of the *Woodrow Wilson* this would strongly recommend itself for the award,"⁶⁴ the report remarks on the book. The Advisory Board finally chose Ray Stannard Baker's biography of Wilson that comprised several volumes.⁶⁵

"The yield of biographies... has not been rich," the jurors of 1941 remarked in their report and added: "In fact it makes the poorest showing that we have had to deal with in years. However, at least one book stands head and shoulders above the rest. It is *Jonathan Edwards*, by Ola Elizabeth Winslow. We are united in regarding this biography as one of exceptional salience... we chiefly associate Edwards with the hellfire tradition of Presbyterianism but he was an important philosopher and a great mind, of deep significance in American History, and Miss Winslow has portrayed him not only with the care of a scholar but with uncommon vividness. The author has a keen sense of personality and she has a good style. Her book is well organized. It sums up Edwards with understanding and skill. In every way it seems the ideal candidate for the award this year."⁶⁶ Nearly forty biographical and autobiographical books respectively had been submitted for the Pulitzer Prize in this category and although these were also acknowledged in the jury report, the Advisory Board had no reason to question the unanimous vote of the jury, so that the award went to Ola Elizabeth Winslow for her biography of Jonathan Edwards.⁶⁷

In 1942 the list of proposals for the award looked like this: (1.) *Edgar Allan Poe – A Critical Biography*, by Arthur Hobson Quinn: "This is the unanimous first choice of the jury," the report said. "It has its' defects of arrangement and of style. But there can be no question of its containing the fruits of a lifetime of scholarly research; it marshals and analyses all the available facts, and, in short, promises to remain the definitive biography of the poet..." (2.) *Crusader in Crinoline – The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, by Forrest Wilson: A strong rival of the first place, one of the most satisfactory books in the lot. It is equally good in its background and in its portrayal of Mrs. Stowe, heightening her appeal to American readers. It is a workmanlike and humanly interesting performance. It has permanent value, like Quinn's *Poe*, but on the whole the jury adheres to the latter as its first choice."⁶⁸ This time the Advisory Board made use of its fundamental prerogative to inform and orientate itself with help of the jury-reports in order to arrive at its own decision

62 Biography Jury Report, February 25, 1939, p. 1.

63 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

64 Biography Jury Report, February 26, 1940, p. 1.

65 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

66 Biography Jury Report, March 8, 1941, p. 1.

67 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

68 Biography Jury Report, February 28, 1942, p. 1.

but to ignore these whenever it seems appropriate. That is why the Pulitzer Prize for best biography in 1942 went to Forrest Wilson, who ranked second on the jury's list.⁶⁹

In 1943 the jury had to pick a wartime laureate in biography. For the first place it decided in favor of the book *Admiral of the Ocean Sea – A Life of Christopher Columbus*, by Samuel Eliot Morison, adding in the jury-report: "Let it be admitted at the outset that Columbus was not a citizen of the United States. But the terms of the prize specify that it is to be given to 'a distinguished American biography teaching patriotic and unselfish services to the people,' and surely Columbus is thereby made eligible as a subject. After all he invented us, was, in a sense, our only begetter, and that was some service to the people. Furthermore this biography of him we unanimously agree is whole parasangs ahead of everything else submitted. It is the work of a finished scholar who is also a sea-faring man. He has absolutely mastered his subject and has brought to his treatment of it a warm humanizing touch. From under his hands Columbus emerges as not only an historical figure but as a man, is made sympathetic and moving. The book has all the apparatus of scholarship, including, by the way, many extremely pertinent illustrations, and is, besides, excitingly readable. It has had no comparable predecessors and it is unlikely to have any worthy successors. Mr. Morison has done this task superlatively well and the jury unhesitatingly commends his book for the award."⁷⁰ The Advisory Board accepted this proposition and announced the Columbus-biography by Samuel E. Morison as winner.⁷¹

In 1944 the same biography jury as in the preceding years went at work once again. At the beginning of their report the jurors emphasized "that the books submitted have not been numerically as impressive as on other occasions, nor do they include as many outstanding volumes as in some previous years. However, we have encountered a few excellent contributions... 1. *The American Leonardo – A Life of Samuel F. B. Morse*, by Carleton Mabree... This is the unanimous choice of the jury for the award. It triumphs over the absurdity of the first part of its title. To bracket Morse and Leonardo is to bring up an impossible association of ideas. But having got past his title Mr. Mabree writes an altogether good book about a man who certainly fits the purpose of the award and whose portrait he paints with remarkable fullness and success, assembling a great mass of facts, organizing them well and establishing a most persuasive characterization of his cantankerous but likable subject... 2. *Walt Whitman – An American; A Study in Biography*, by Henry Seidel Canby. Until the Morse (book) turned up this was the unanimous choice of the jury for the award... The Morse, however, takes precedence as being of admirable character as a biography... and a needed thing."⁷² The Advisory Board favored the biography of Morse by Carlton Mabree.⁷³

Although the makeup of the jury that was designated for the award in 1945 had not changed, not all of the three jurors could partake in the final stage of reaching the decision. The jury report remarked by way of explanation, that one juror "found it necessary, because of ill health, to resign from the committee... As it was deemed inadvisable to appoint a successor so late in the day, the opinions expressed below are those of the two remaining members. However, we had no difficulty in deciding on the books most worthy of consideration... 1. *George Bancroft – Brahmin Rebel*, by Russel B.

69 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

70 Biography Jury Report, March 13, 1943, p. 1.

71 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

72 Biography Jury Report, March 11, 1944, p. 1.

73 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

Nye. There is complete agreement that this is the best biography of the season. It is by... a young man – thirty-one years old. It is always a satisfaction to give an award to a new writer, but this point need not be over-emphasized in recommending Mr. Nye's book. He has – what so many industrious collectors of material so frequently lack – an easy, rapid biographical style, with a lively feeling for personality, for entertaining incident and picturesque background. It is one of the most readable volumes offered for some time, and it is also dignified and scholarly, a product of several years' research..."⁷⁴ The Advisory Board did not raise any objections to this proposal nor to the reduced jury and declared Russel B. Nye winner of the Pulitzer Prize in the biography category.⁷⁵

The jurors of 1946 placed first on their list of proposals the book *Soldier of Democracy*, a biography of Dwight D. Eisenhower, by Kenneth S. Davis, followed by the volume *Son of the Wilderness – The Life of John Muir*, by Linnie Marsh Wolfe. But "the Advisory Board, for its own reasons, preferred the John Muir story,"⁷⁶ and so the Pulitzer Prize went to Linnie Marsh Wolfe.⁷⁷

In the awarding year 1947 the jury of two "decided that the best work of biographical writing submitted is *The Autobiography of William Allen White*... In the opinion of the Committee, this Autobiography is destined to survival..."⁷⁸ White won the award. It was his second Pulitzer Prize after earning the honor in the "Editorial Writing" category nearly a quarter of a century earlier.⁷⁹

For the awards year of 1948 the appointed jury was partially new, and its evaluation was founded "on a point basis: ... "Counting five points for a first place, four for a second, three for a third, two for a fourth, and one for a fifth."⁸⁰ This course of proceeding proved to be suitable as the jurors' opinions concerning the ranking differed considerably. In all, said system of points resulted in the following appraisal: (1.) *Thomas Jefferson – American Humanist*, by Karl Lehmann, 13 points; (2.) *Wilson – The Road to the White House*, by Arthur S. Link, 6 points; (3.) *Forgotten First Citizen – John Bigelow*, by Margaret Clapp, 5 points.⁸¹ Although the book by Margaret Clapp ranked first with only one juror, thereby gathering the reported five points, even though the book was not even featured on the short list of the other two members of the jury,⁸² the Advisory Board bestowed the Pulitzer Prize for biography on the authoress for her study of Bigelow.⁸³ Obviously the following argumentation by the sole member of the jury that pleaded for the book turned out to be very convincing: "This is, I think, the best-rounded of the biographies, and one of the best written. It makes a more skillful use of background than any... It comes closer to what biography ought to be than any other of the entrants."⁸⁴

The jurors of 1949 were "happy to report a remarkable degree of unanimity among the members... Our first ballot, taken simultaneously and independently by mail, revealed the astonishing fact that each of us for our first four selections had agreed upon the same titles, though not in precisely identical order... Our recommendations for the Pulitzer

74 Biography Jury Report, March 1, 1945, pp. 1 f.

75 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

76 John Hohenberg, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

77 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

78 Biography Jury Report, March 12, 1947, p. 1.

79 Cf. Heinz-D. Fischer/Erika J. Fischer (Eds.), The Pulitzer Prize Archive, Vol. 4: Political Editorial 1916–1988, Munich – London – New York – Paris 1990, pp. 29 f.

80 Biography Jury Report, March 10, 1948, p. 1.

81 *Ibid.*

82 *Ibid.*

83 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

84 Biography Jury Report, March 10, 1948, p. 2.

award in Biography are, in the order given, as follows: 1. *Roosevelt and Hopkins – An Intimate History*, by Robert Emmet Sherwood; 2. *George Washington*, vols. I and II, by Douglas Southall Freeman; 3. *Jefferson the Virginian*, by Dumas Malone; 4. *James Madison – The Nationalist 1780-1787*, by Irving Brant; 5. *The Story of John Hope*, by Ridgely Torrence."⁸⁵ In this case the Advisory Board followed the suggestion of the jury and declared Sherwood winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his biographical work about the cooperation of and the relationship between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his adviser of many years, Harry L. Hopkins.⁸⁶ This book brought Robert E. Sherwood his only award in the biography category, while being honored with three additional Pulitzer Prizes in the drama category.⁸⁷

In 1950 the same jury sat as in the previous year. "Our first choice," their report reads, "is Samuel Flagg Bemis' *John Quincy Adams and the Foundation of American Foreign Policy*; our second choice – and it is a very close second – is Eleanor Roosevelt's *This I Remember...* The two following books were tied for third place: Dr. Charles M. Wiltse's *John C. Calhoun – Nullifier* and Perry Miller's *Jonathan Edwards*."⁸⁸ The Advisory Board accepted the author ranking first, which is why the Pulitzer Prize for biography was given to Samuel Flagg Bemis.⁸⁹

The biography jury of 1951 consisted of merely two people who – without any justification with regards to contents – in their report only named the following four titles, "in the order of preference given...: *James Madison – Father of the Constitution, 1787-1800*, by Irving Brant; *Jane Mecom – Franklin's Favorite Sister*, by Carl Van Doren; *John C. Calhoun – American Portrait*, by Margaret Louise Coit; *The Peabody Sisters of Salem*, by Louise Hall Tharp."⁹⁰ As had already happened once in a while in the preceding years, the Advisory Board used its prerogative to form its own evaluation independently on this occasion as well and awarded the Pulitzer Prize for best biography to Margaret Louise Coit,⁹¹ who ranked third on the jury's list of suggestions.

In 1952 yet again a jury of only two went to work and "decided to recommend... the following biographies in the order named: 1. Merlo J. Pusey, *Charles Evans Hughes*; 2. Charles M. Wiltse, *John C. Calhoun – Sectionalist, 1840-1850*; 3. Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and the Rights of Man*; 4. Holman Hamilton, *Zachary Taylor – Soldier in the White House*; 5. Francis Brown, *Raymond of the Times*."⁹² Although further reasons for this choice were not given and a ranking was omitted, the Advisory Board accepted the author who ranked first and honored the book by Merlo J. Pusey with the Pulitzer Prize.⁹³

The same jurors as in the year before also formed the jury in 1953, once again coming to the decision to provide a list of five books as a "recommendation for the Pulitzer award in Biography: 1. David J. Mays, *Edmund Pendleton, 1721-1803*; 2. Dixon Wecter, *Sam Clemens of Hannibal*; 3. Zoltan Haraszti, *John Adams and the Prophets of Progress*; 4. Joseph Barnes, *Willkie*; 5. Herbert Heaton, *A Scholar in Action – Edwin F. Gray*." The jurors said in a few explanatory comments to this list, that they "fully agreed in the opinion that Mr. Mays' work is a first rate performance. It represents many years of labor

⁸⁵ Biography Jury Report, March 7, 1949, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁸⁷ John Hohenberg, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, pp. 152, 351.

⁸⁸ Biography Jury Report, March 14, 1950, p. 1.

⁸⁹ Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁹⁰ Biography Jury Report, March 22, 1951, p. 1.

⁹¹ Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁹² Biography Jury Report, March 21, 1952, p. 1.

⁹³ Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

and an extremely careful appraisal of all available sources. It is written in an attractive manner and its subject is a figure of the front rank in a generation of Virginians who emphasized public duty and achieved high distinction in their discharge of it."⁹⁴ This ought to have convinced the Advisory Board, and so the Pulitzer Prize for biography went to David J. Mays for his study of Pendleton.⁹⁵

Because the jury report of 1954 reportedly has been lost, only a few comments on the result can be made. As Hohenberg formulated, the Pulitzer award was won by "Charles Lindbergh's story of his 1927 solo flight to Paris, which bore the same name as his little aircraft, *The Spirit of St. Louis*."⁹⁶

The two men also performed the duties of the jury in 1955, writing in their report to the Advisory Board that they "have consulted by correspondence and by telephone and have come to the following recommendations... for the Pulitzer Prize in Biography...: First place: Virginia Crocheron Gildersleeve, *Many a Good Crusade*; Second place: Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington*; Third place: Wallace Stegner, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*; Fourth place: Allan Nevins, *Ford – The Times, The Man, The Company*; Fifth place, the following three: Jacques Barzun, *God's Country and Mine*; Ellen Glasgow, *The Woman Within*; Thad Snow, *From Missouri*."⁹⁷ Further information about any possible reasons for this selection, however, are not to be found in the report. Obviously this also displeased the Advisory Board, which considered still other candidates and finally found a possible winner: The Board gave the biography-prize to *The Taft Story*, by William S. White,⁹⁸ which was not mentioned on the jury report.

The jurors of 1956 in their report named the following authors and titles it deemed to be deserving of the award: 1. Talbot Hamlin, *Benjamin Latrobe*; 2. Gay W. Allen, *The Solitary Singer – A Critical Biography of Walt Whitman*; 3. Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs – Vol. 1, The Year of Decisions*; 4. Charles A. Baker, *Henry George*; 5. Van Wyck Brooks, *John Sloan – A Painter's Life*; 6. Marguerite Courtney, *Laurette*.⁹⁹ "There are several other items in this year's list that we seriously considered as worthy to be ranked among the top contenders," it reads literally in the jury report, "though the offerings as a whole were not very distinguished... We are in close agreement in our admiration for the works of Professors Hamlin and Allen. Indeed, we think that these biographies are almost if not quite on a par in contending for first place. But we gave the honor to Professor Hamlin's notable study of Latrobe primarily because he pioneered in a way that Professor Allen did not..."¹⁰⁰ The Advisory Board was completely convinced by the arguments advanced and honored Talbot Hamlin's biography of Latrobe with the Pulitzer Prize.¹⁰¹

In the awarding year of 1957 the two jurors arrived at these "five recommendations... in the order of preference: 1. Alpheus T. Mason, *Harlan Fiske Stone – Pillar of the Law*; 2. James McGregor Burns, *Roosevelt – The Lion and the Fox*; 3. Irving Brant, *James Madison – The President, 1809-1812*; 4. Samuel F. Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*; 5. William N. Chambers, *Old Bullion Benton*. We are emphatically agreed," the jury report continues, "that in subject, in scholarly treatment, and in style, the biography of Chief Justice Stone by Mason is a very distinguished work by one of the leading au-

94 Biography Jury Report, March 26, 1953, p. 1.

95 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

96 John Hohenberg, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

97 Biography Jury Report, March 20, 1955, p. 1.

98 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

99 Biography Jury Report, March 5, 1956, p. 1.

100 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

101 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

THE TRUSTEES OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

TO ALL PERSONS TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS MAY COME GREETING
BE IT KNOWN THAT

JOHN F. KENNEDY
has been awarded
THE PULITZER PRIZE IN LETTERS
- BIOGRAPHY -
FOR "PROFILES IN COURAGE"

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE STATUTES OF THE
UNIVERSITY GOVERNING SUCH AWARD

IN WITNESS WHEREOF WE HAVE CAUSED THIS CERTIFICATE TO BE
SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY AND OUR CORPORATE
SEAL TO BE HERETO AFFIXED IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK ON THE
SIXTH DAY OF MAY IN THE YEAR OF
OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY SEVEN

Guyon 1/10/57

PRESIDENT

thorities on American jurisprudence... We are also agreed that Burns' *The Lion and the Fox* is a brilliant performance, and its literary quality is in our opinion superior to that of Mason's *Stone*..."¹⁰² With these recommendations and further detailed comments the jury report was sent in to the Board where one of its members "was greatly taken with a book that neither of the jurors had mentioned, *Profiles in Courage*, by John Fitzgerald Kennedy, then a senator from Massachusetts. Kennedy had written the book during a long and painful convalescence after an operation... At first, the discussion of the Biography Jury's report before the Board was aimless... The upshot of the discussion was a majority vote to upset the jury's recommendations and bestow the Prize to Kennedy's book."¹⁰³

In spite of the experiences they had made in the previous year the two jurors made up the biography jury in 1958 as well. "Although we were fairly well agreed on the top-ranking candidates," their report explained, "we had some difficulty in arriving at a recommendation for the first place," and so this list of suggestions was put forth: (1) Douglas Southhall Freeman, *George Washington*, I-VI, completed by John Alexander Carroll and Mary Welles Ashworth, Volume VII; (2) Allan Nevins and Frank Ernest Hill, *Ford – Expansion and Challenge, 1915-1933*; (3) Raymond Walters Jr., *Albert Gallatin – Jeffersonian Financier and Diplomat*; (4) Margaret L. Coit, *Mr. Baruch*; (5) Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Master Roger Williams – A Biography*.¹⁰⁴ After appreciating these books in detail, the chairman of the jury added the following remarks: "In light of the decision of the Advisory Board in regard to our recommendations in 1956 and 1957, I cannot conclude without making one further recommendation," which, however, amounted to a great fear, concerning the autobiography of a prominent politician that was not to be found on the jury's list. "Baruch's *My Own Story* consistently makes the best-seller list week after week... Because of past experience... we feel it necessary to record in advance..., that if Baruch's *My Own Story* should this year receive the Pulitzer award in Biography, the result will be an affront to scholarship generally, a demeaning of the dignity of the Advisory Board and of this committee, and a mockery of the high purpose that Joseph Pulitzer had in view."¹⁰⁵ The Advisory Board gave the prize to the book that ranked first on the jury's list, the biography of Washington by Douglas S. Freeman.¹⁰⁶

In 1959 a completely new jury took over the task of selecting a winner in the biography category. "Forty-nine candidates were submitted to the prize jury," as can be read in its report, "and a mixed bag they were. Practically every period of American History was covered, from Puritan Massachusetts in the time of John Winthrop to contemporary Alabama as reflected in the autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr. While some of the candidates had very little to recommend them for any award, others were strong contenders for a Pulitzer Prize. The best among them, in the jury's opinion, was and is Arthur Walworth's two-volume biography, *Woodrow Wilson*... The result is a sympathetic portrayal of the life of Woodrow Wilson and an appraisal of his career as teacher, university president, Governor of New Jersey, President of the United States, and participant in the shaping of international policy and international institutions. The biography, well-written and well-paced, is marked by industry and imagination in the gathering and weighting of relevant material. It presents a careful evaluation of Wilson's ideas, actions, methods and

102 Biography Jury Report, February 28, 1957, pp. 1 f.

103 John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes, op. cit.*, pp. 270 ff.

104 Biography Jury Report, March 24, 1958, pp. 1 f.

105 *Ibid.*, pp. 2 f.

106 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes, op. cit.*, p. 61.

relationships, a thoughtful interpretation of his significance in national affairs, and a sensitive and honest inquiry into the shaping of his personality."¹⁰⁷ In a supplementary report the jurors added: "We would put in second place... Ernest Samuels' *Henry Adams – the Middle Years*... It is a fascinating book, extremely well-written, presents a picture of Washington society in those years that is new to most of us and offers a reappraisal of a man and his time."¹⁰⁸ The Pulitzer Prize was awarded to Arthur Walworth for his biography of Woodrow Wilson.¹⁰⁹

The jurors for the awards of 1960 also decided to suggest just two works as being prizeworthy out of the nearly fifty books that were nominated. "As could have been anticipated," they wrote in their report, "some (books) were good, some were poor, and some should never have been nominated. In our opinion the best among them, and the one that we whole-heartedly urge for a Pulitzer Prize is Margaret Leech's *In the Days of McKinley*.... Here is a first-class and fascinating performance. McKinley, his wife, and the world in which they moved are brought alive in Miss Leech's sympathetic but not uncritical reconstruction of an era... If a second choice for the biography prize is in order, then in the jury's view such choice falls upon Samuel Eliot Morison's *John Paul Jones*... While *John Paul Jones* is not in a class with Morison's really great biography of Columbus, it is a good book, written with the excellent style that one expects from Morison and with his customary superior scholarship."¹¹⁰ Yet Margaret Leech's biography of McKinley was also discussed in the Pulitzer jury that selected the "American History" award and performed its duties at the same time. In that category the book was ranked third, so that the Advisory Board found itself a sort of dilemma. The problem was solved by giving Margaret Leech the Pulitzer Prize for American History,¹¹¹ while honoring Samuel Eliot Morison in the biography category,¹¹² who ranked second and therewith won his second Pulitzer Prize.

In 1961 when the two jurors from the previous year officiated once again, they had to pass judgement on fifty-eight books. "Best of them all, and the biography that in the jury's opinion would add greatest lustre to the roll of Pulitzer Prize-winners," the report says, "is David Donald's *Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War*. In this biography of Sumner, the first in a generation and more, David Donald has tackled a strange, complicated and controversial figure with sympathy, but without eulogy, with objectivity and yet with feeling. He understands his man and makes the reader, perhaps for the first time, understand him, too... Our second choice for the prize... is Edward Lurie's *Louis Agassiz – A Life in Science*, a scholarly, illuminating study of the brilliant Swiss geologist and zoologist... Lurie... keeps himself above the battle that arose from Agassiz's opposition to Darwinism... This is a thorough book, scholarly, probably over-detailed, yet a contribution and one for which its author doesn't need to apologize."¹¹³ The Advisory Board decided in favor of the study on Charles Sumner.¹¹⁴

The two jurors of 1962 although altogether in agreement on the finalists, were nevertheless unable to file a joint report. One juror ranked his favorites in the following way:

107 Biography Jury Report, February 20, 1959, p. 1.

108 Supplementary Biography Jury Report, April 3, 1959, p. 1.

109 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

110 Biography Jury Report, March 9, 1960, p. 1.

111 Cf. Heinz-D. Fischer/Erika J. Fischer (Eds.), The Pulitzer Prize Archive, Vol. 7: American History Awards 1917 – 1991, Munich – New Providence – London – Paris 1994, p. XLVII.

112 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

113 Biography Jury Report, January 24, 1961, pp. 1 f.

114 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

"1. *Citizen Hearst*, by W. A. Swanberg; 2. *Lafcadio Hearn*, by Elizabeth Stevenson; 3. *Charles Francis Adams*, by Martin E. Duberman; 4. *Sinclair Lewis*, by Mark Schorer. *Citizen Hearst*," he continued in his report, "is a long, solid, impressively detailed work which is based upon massive research... This is a book which is a pleasure to read."¹¹⁵ The other juror first of all confirmed in his report that he did not dissent from the first juror's evaluation of the books by Duberman and Stevenson, but he also made clear: "Our difference is over the relative merits of Mark Schorer's *Sinclair Lewis* and W. A. Swanberg's *Citizen Hearst*. In my opinion Schorer's *Lewis* is one of the most penetrating and revealing biographies of an American man of letters that we have ever had... Swanberg's *Hearst* is an entertaining and colorful account of a life that was also full of painful aspects and ambiguities. What troubles me is that the book represents a limited effort and inconclusive results."¹¹⁶ When the chairman of the jury sent the separate reports to the Advisory Board, he expressed his regrets in a cover-letter that the jury was not made up of three members, which may have allowed for a majority vote.¹¹⁷ The Advisory Board, Hohenberg reports, "voted overwhelmingly for W. A. Swanberg's *Citizen Hearst*,"¹¹⁸ but for the first time in the whole history of the Pulitzer Prize the Columbia Trustees refused its consent to the Board's vote and decided "to make no biography award"¹¹⁹ that year.

In 1963 the jurors had no problems coming to an agreement on the favorite for the prize in the biography category. "Our choices, in order of preference," they wrote in their report, "are: (1) Leon Edel's two volumes on *Henry James*; (2) Arthur and Barbara Gelb, *O'Neill*; and (3) Page Smith, *John Adams*."¹²⁰ As both jurors found similar words of praise for the biography of Henry James, the Advisory Board had no reason to block the bestowal of the Pulitzer Prize upon Leon Edel and honored him with the award.¹²¹

In 1964 two new jurors were appointed. "Our first choice," they explained in their report, "is Walter Jackson Bate's *John Keats*. We were mindful of the criterion that the subject should be preferably American. But we felt there were overriding reasons in support of this book. Our second choice, to offer an alternative on an American subject, is *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, edited by Andrew Turnbull... *John Keats* meets the need as a distinguished book in every sense... The remoteness of the poet's world is brilliantly overcome with all the scholar's arts. In contrast to this complex study, *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald* is simply a sensitive selection and arrangement of a writer's letters grouped accordingly to the correspondants to whom they were sent. The editing is not so thorough as one would wish, but the total effect is that of living, breathing autobiography."¹²² As the biography of Keats undoubtedly had greater merits, the Pulitzer prize easily went to Walter Jackson Bate.¹²³

The two jurors who worked on the biography category in 1965 declared at the beginning of their report, that "on the whole it was a disappointing year for biography, despite the number and variety of the offerings... Fortunately, scholarly biography was better served," the report to the Advisory Board continues, "and it is from this area that

115 Report on books submitted for the Pulitzer Prize in biography and autobiography, undated, p. 3.

116 Report to the Advisory Board on the Pulitzer Prizes, December 31, 1961, p. 1.

117 Letter to the Advisory Board on the Pulitzer Prizes, January 2, 1962, p. 1.

118 John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

119 *Ibid.*, p. 276.

120 Biography Jury Report, January 5, 1963, p. 1.

121 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

122 Biography Jury Report, January 31, 1964, pp. 1 f.

123 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR.

A Thousand Days

JOHN F. KENNEDY
in the White House



your jurors have selected their recommendation for the prize. During the year Ernest Samuels... published *Henry Adams – The Major Phase...*, the third and concluding volume of a literary enterprise launched some fifteen years ago... The biographer, in our opinion, has treated every significant phase of Adams's life and work in a manner befitting so perfectionist a subject. We therefore recommend that the Pulitzer prize for Biography be awarded to... Samuels for his work as a whole. As runner-up we have chosen Philip L. Barbour's *The Three Worlds of Captain John Smith...*, in which the biographer has made a determined and largely successful effort to separate fact from fiction and the man from the legend."¹²⁴ As the assets of the books about Henry Adams had been presented with utmost conviction, the prize was given to Ernest Samuels.¹²⁵

In 1966 when two jurors had to evaluate the sixty-three books nominated in the biography category, the members of the jury ranked their suggestions differently again – in spite of a basic concordance: "We found ourselves, in the end, in agreement on two books of distinction," the report says, "the *Autobiography* of Van Wyck Brooks and Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s *A Thousand Days*. Both of these, to be sure, raise questions of availability for the Pulitzer Prize in biography. The Van Wyck Brooks book was written over a period of a decade or so, and belongs in part to the fifties. This is its first appearance as a single book, but not its first appearance. The Schlesinger book is not quite a biography, though it probably comes as close to qualifying in that category as the Brooks *Autobiography*. So far your two judges are in agreement," but they differed in the rankings of each.¹²⁶ Since the Brooks work "had all been published before in separate volumes, the Board therefore, voted Schlesinger his second Pulitzer Prize for *A Thousand Days*."¹²⁷

After many years the jury that was installed in the biography category in 1967 again consisted of three members. The jurors judged were rather disappointed with the quality of the submitted books. "The picture is not all bleak," they stated in their report to the Advisory Board, "your jurors were happy to read a handful of biographies which would have stood out in any year... Justin Kaplan's *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain* was a distinguished accomplishment – a biography which shattered the stereotype of Mark Twain as the rugged iconoclast of the Gilded Age and presented him instead as an artist very much of his time... The narrative skillfully suggests the flow and development of the writer's life... The jury was also fortunate in being able to agree on a runner-up in Martin Duberman's *James Russell Lowell*, a biography which resurrects a once influential literary figure whose work has fallen into neglect, and perhaps deservedly so... Lawrance Thompson's *Robert Frost – The Early Years, 1874-1915* also commended itself to us as the beginning of what promises to be a major biography... Frederic A. Pottle's *James Boswell – The Early Years, 1740-1769* is likewise a work in progress... To sum up,... we unanimously recommend that the Pulitzer Prize for Biography... be awarded to Justin Kaplan."¹²⁸ As the Advisory Board shared this opinion, the honor went to Kaplan's portrait of Mark Twain.¹²⁹

The jurors of 1968 had "found five of the numerous books submitted... worthy of the Pulitzer Prize in biography," their report reads, presenting this order of rank: "1. George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950*; 2. Gay Wilson Allen, *William James*; 3. Henry

124 Biography Jury Report, undated (January 1965), pp. 1 f.

125 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 61.

126 Biography Jury Report, undated (January 1966), p. 1.

127 John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., pp. 331 f.

128 Biography Jury Report, December 24, 1966, pp. 1 ff.

129 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 61.

Wilkinson Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson – The Academic Years*; 4.-5. (on a par) Samuel Eliot Morison, *Old Bruin Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry*, and Glydon G. Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward... Kennan's Memoirs* is such a book as one can expect to see written only a few times in a generation. That it will speedily take its place among the great books in a great tradition seems unquestionable... In combination with his extraordinarily varied experience in the foreign service of the United States, these qualities and Kennan's disciplined virtuosity as a writer have resulted in a book that brilliantly illuminates the tragedy of the second World War and the ensuing tensions of the peace and the cold war from their roots in the Twenties and Thirties of this century."¹³⁰ In an additional note the jurors stressed that, if it should turn out that the Kennan book "is to receive the Prize in History (for we understand that it was originally submitted as a candidate in that field), we recommend that the Prize in Biography be awarded to Allen's *William James*."¹³¹ The Advisory Board, however, awarded the prize for best biography to George F. Kennan,¹³² who thereby got his second Pulitzer Prize after winning eleven years earlier in the History category.¹³³

A newly appointed jury working in this prize category in 1969, did not reach a consent with regard to a definite favorite for the award. It was reported to the Advisory Board, that "two of your jurors... recommend that the... Pulitzer Prize for Biography be awarded to B. L. Reid for *The Man from New York*," while the third was "of the opinion that the prize should go to Clifford K. Shipton for his *Harvard Graduates*."¹³⁴ Concerning the latter book, one member of the jury was of the opinion that it represented a remarkable feat of biography, "deserving of the highest accolade for creative scholarship, graceful writing, and enduring worth as the product of a single hand," whereas the two other jurors regarded this piece of work as "too limited in scope and appeal and its importance too peripheral for an award in the field of general literature."¹³⁵ These two members of the jury, however, considered the title *The Man from New York* to be a book that "surprised many readers in that its subject, John Quinn, a New York lawyer who died in 1924, was virtually unknown, yet the biography revealed him as an active supporter of the significant art movements of the first quarter-century..."¹³⁶ Thus all in all two jurors voted for Reid's book, whereas the third preferred the volume by Shipton,¹³⁷ the Advisory Board selected Benjamin Lawrence Reid as Pulitzer Prize-winner for best biography.¹³⁸

In 1970 three new jurors sat on the jury, first of all stating in their report that "it was a vintage year for biography. Of the 40-odd candidates, six were serious contenders." Yet the jury "has unanimously and on the first ballot selected *Huey Long*, by T. Harry Williams," it was said directed towards the Advisory Board. "Your committee was impressed by the adroit and effective interweaving of biography with History in Mr. Williams' book and by his ability to provide precise weighting to the numerous,

¹³⁰ Biography Jury Report, January 13, 1968, pp. 1 f.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹³² Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹³³ Cf. Heinz-D. Fischer/Erika J. Fischer (Eds.), The Pulitzer Prize Archive, Vol. 7: American History Awards, *op. cit.*, pp. 183 ff.

¹³⁴ Biography Jury Report, undated (December 1968), p. 3.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

complex, and sometimes sprawling aspects of his work."¹³⁹ Because of these hymns of praise the Pulitzer Prize for biography was bestowed upon T. Harry Williams.¹⁴⁰

The jury of 1971 also was able to point out one definite favorite, suggesting to the Advisory Board that "the Pulitzer Prize for Biography be awarded to Lawrance Thompson for his *Robert Frost – The Years of Triumph, 1915-1938*, with James MacGregor Burns' *Roosevelt – The Soldier of Freedom, 1940-1945* and Thomas Flexner's *George Washington and the New Nation, 1783-1793*, runners-up in that order."¹⁴¹ The biography of Frost, the report explains in another passage, "seemed to us a work which plowed fresh ground, and presented the rugged, supposedly lovable New England poet in a new and more realistic light... It is our feeling that Thompson's achievement" is in "bringing this largely unknown figure to life."¹⁴² So the award for best biography went unanimously to Lawrance Thompson for his study about Robert Frost.¹⁴³

In 1972 the jury wrote that it "has unanimously – and on the very first ballot – chosen Joseph Lash's *Eleanor and Franklin*... We agree that the reason for the choice is that the book, despite a kind of 'official' sponsorship by the Roosevelt family, is an historical work of the first importance and treats its' subjects with candor, sympathy and understanding and shows the subjects of the book with warts and all. We agree, too, that the work has been exhaustively researched and that new insights into the subjects have been afforded us by the author."¹⁴⁴ The Pulitzer Prize for biography without any objections on part of the Advisory Board was therefore given to Joseph P. Lash's work focussing on the marriage of Eleanor and Franklin D. Roosevelt.¹⁴⁵

The jurors of 1973 favored W. A. Swanberg's *Luce and His Empire*, "the first full-length portrait of a man whose magazines have exercised a profound influence on journalism in this country... The jury feels that Swanberg has grappled with a difficult but important subject and demonstrated the power that can be exercised by news media in the hands of a strong, dedicated, self-willed man."¹⁴⁶ Although, as Hohenberg explained, "strong objections to the Swanberg work had been expressed in reviews..., these did not sway the jurors. Nor did they influence the Advisory Board's majority, which accepted the jury report at face value."¹⁴⁷ With this award W. A. Swanberg, who had not won the Pulitzer Prize for his book on Hearst a decade earlier because the Columbia-Trustees had prevented it, thus finally was given delayed satisfaction.¹⁴⁸

The three members of the jury for the awards of 1974 regarded "as the best biography of the year, Louis Sheaffer's *O'Neill – Son and Artist*... It is a commanding portrait of the gifted, haunted dramatist whose best plays constitute the bedrock on which American theatre rests. This concluding volume, like its predecessor, is prodigiously researched and written with an incisive knowledge both of the theatre and of O'Neill's tormented life. Sheaffer's insights into the demons that possessed the playwright give the book, for all its length, that *élan vital* missing from so many of the other entries."¹⁴⁹ As Hohenberg imparts, "there was general satisfaction" at the selection of Louis Sheaffer's

139 Biography Jury Report, December 8, 1969, p. 1.

140 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

141 Biography Jury Report, December 15, 1970, p. 3.

142 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

143 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

144 Biography Jury Report, December 23, 1971, p. 1.

145 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

146 Biography Jury Report, January 5, 1973, p. 3.

147 John Hohenberg, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

148 *Cf. ibid.*

149 Biography Jury Report, December 18, 1973, p. 2.

O'Neill book, "which had taken sixteen years to produce."¹⁵⁰ The Advisory Board acknowledged the author's accomplishment as well and honored him with the Pulitzer Prize for biography.¹⁵¹

In 1975 the jurors also found a favorite to everyone's liking in Robert A. Caro's book *The Power Broker – Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. The jury, according to its report, regarded this piece of work as "gargantuan in theme and impact as well as size. It is shattering, enormously vital, and original in a sense that no other book is... The research is as impressive, prodigious, and thorough as it could be. Caro's achievement goes well beyond that of the comparatively conventional biographies... The jury believes that despite extravagances, he deserves the Pulitzer Prize for Biography. Unanimous verdict."¹⁵² Faced with these merits the Advisory Board also consented to give the award to Robert A. Caro.¹⁵³

Although the jury of 1976 reached a unanimous vote for the prize-winner as well, the process of arriving at this decision nevertheless turned out to be much more complicated than in previous years. "Your jury was favorably impressed by Nancy Hale's *Mary Cassatt*, a distinguished American painter... High in the jury's esteem was Paul Horgan's *Lamy of Santa Fe*, a biography of the French priest who established the first Catholic diocese in the southwest a century ago... *Steinbeck – A Life in Letters*, edited and annotated by his widow, Elaine Steinbeck and Robert Wallsten, comes as close to a self-portrait as one could expect of a writer's correspondence... Loren Eiseley's *All the Strange Hours* is as unorthodox in its structure as all this poet-anthropologist's books have been to date... Neither of these candidates," the jury report continues later on, "however, can match R. W. B. Lewis' biography *Edith Wharton*, in your jury's opinion one of the finest literary biographies of recent years... Lewis has thrown a new 'even lurid'... light on a lady we thought we knew very well... This is a masterfully organized and admirably written biography which combines original research with impressive psychological insights and critical judgment. It is our unanimous recommendation, that R. W. B. Lewis be awarded the 1976 Pulitzer Prize for his *Edith Wharton*."¹⁵⁴ The Advisory Board had no problems accepting this proposition and made Lewis the winner in the prize category of best biography.¹⁵⁵

The jurors of 1977 once again for the first time in decades gave an impression of the work they had to cope with. "During the past six months," their report indicates, "the members of the Biography Jury have read and considered ninety-four books, most of them nominated by the publishers but some submitted at our invitation. As we read, we regularly exchanged opinions about the books, so that, in a telephone conference call... we found it easy to reach a final decision. The jury unanimously recommends that the... Pulitzer Prize in Biography be awarded to John E. Mack's *A Prince of Disorder – The Life of T. E. Lawrence*. All three of us believe that this book has such distinctive merits as to stand in a class by itself, with no serious competitors... The name and achievements of 'Lawrence of Arabia' have become familiar to most Americans... This... is the subject of Professor Mack's distinguished biography. His study is based upon prodigious research. He has utilized more fully than any previous biography the readily available, voluminous

150 John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 332.

151 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 62.

152 Biography Jury Report, December 23, 1974, pp. 1 f.

153 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 62.

154 Biography Jury Report, December 23, 1975, pp. 1 f.

155 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 62.

collections of Lawrence's papers... In... recommending a biography by an American author but not about an American subject, we feel that we are making the only responsible choice; and we are reassured by the fact that we are following the distinguished precedent set in 1964 when the biography award deservedly went to Walter Jackson Bate's *John Keats*.¹⁵⁶ Faced with these arguments the Advisory Board once again made an exception and gave the prize to a book that did not completely meet the definition of the award, thus honoring John E. Mack.¹⁵⁷

It is interesting that in 1978 the favorite for the prize confronted the members of the jury officiating that year with the same problem their colleagues had to deal with in the previous year. In "a unanimous and enthusiastic recommendation" for the Pulitzer Prize in Biography the jurors suggested to the Advisory Board the book *Samuel Johnson*, by W. Jackson Bate. This portrait, the report says further on, "is undoubtedly the finest biography we have received. It is perhaps the only nominee one reads with a certain kind of personal involvement... We are deeply impressed by Bate's absolute mastery and control of his material... Much more important... is the fact that Bate is so insightful and lucid on Johnson's complex psychic nature. Although this is not avowedly a psychobiography in the current, trendy sense, it can be regarded as an exemplary study of a subject's mind joined to the narrative of his behavior, interaction with others, and so forth... We are impressed by Bate's sensitive application of common sense and compassion in exploring Johnson's troubled mind and spirit."¹⁵⁸ As this biography was also the sort of book that did not necessarily fall into the boundaries given by the definition of the prize "preferably on an American subject," the jury added by way of explanation: "If a biography on an American subject had been quite *close* to the quality of *Samuel Johnson*, we might have been in a predicament. Although there are runners-up, they are not comparable to *Johnson*."¹⁵⁹ Once again the Advisory Board had no objections to the proposal of the jury and declared W. Jackson Bate the Pulitzer Prize-winner for biography.¹⁶⁰

The jurors of 1979 named in their report "six biographies of highest scholarly, literary, and subject quality, in terms of conception, organization, and execution...: 1. Leonard Baker, *Days of Sorrow and Pain – Leo Baeck and the Berlin Jews*; 2. Milton Meltzer, *Dorothea Lange*; 3. Carolly Erickson, *Bloody Mary*; 4. William Byron, *Cervantes – A Biography*; 5. William L. O'Neill, *The Last Romantic – A Life of Max Eastman*; 6. Deirdre Bair, *Samuel Beckett*... Within that order," the report continues, "we had no difficulty assigning first place to Leonard Baker's *Days of Sorrow and Pain*... This book remained in our minds as the outstanding biography we received. What makes it superior to the others? The awful grandeur of the theme, the depth of the research, the clarity and balance of the organization and expression – all these. It has shortcomings. One Juror, after praising it, noted that Baker did not explain adequately how Baeck managed his liaison with the Nazis, even for the lofty purposes and results of that connection. But reservations notwithstanding, this is the book we put forward as our choice for the first place in this distinguished roster."¹⁶¹ With this vote for the third time in a row a book ranked first that was not necessarily in agreement with the definition of the prize, prompting the jury to write the following additional note: "The trend continues, in biog-

156 Biography Jury Report, December 24, 1976, pp. 1 f.

157 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

158 Biography Jury Report, December 1, 1977, pp. 1 f.

159 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

160 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

161 Biography Jury Report, December 15, 1978, pp. 1 f.

Days of Sorrow and Pain

LEO BAECK AND THE BERLIN JEWS

by LEONARD BAKER

Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.
NEW YORK

ographies at least, that non-American subjects are producing better biographies than those of Americans."¹⁶² The Advisory Board took note of this and the prize-suggestion as well, giving the award to Leonard Baker's biography of Leo Baeck.¹⁶³

The biography jury of 1980 it says in its report, "unanimously recommends as its first choice *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, by Edmund Morris... This volume takes Roosevelt only to his accession to the presidency in 1901, with another to follow. This book stands on its own, however. Sound in its research and highly readable in its presentation, it invokes the lively image of an uncommon American who was yet almost symbolically characteristic of his nation's qualities... The unanimous second choice is *The Duke of Deception*, by Geoffrey Wolff."¹⁶⁴ There was no contradiction on the part of the Advisory Board, and so the Pulitzer Prize for best biography went to Edmund Morris.¹⁶⁵

The jurors of 1981 again pleaded that a book on a non-American subject matter ought to take the first place. The piece of work in question was the study *Peter the Great*, by Robert K. Massie. "This is a biography – and History as well – on a heroic scale," the report indicates. "In intricate and massive detail, Massie portrays a man as complicated as his times, whose personal life was as dramatic as his military conquests, who imposed his character and will not only upon Russia but upon the balance of power in Europe, who still plays an ambiguous role in the memory of his countrymen, and who invites endless speculation upon the differences between pre-modern and modern dictators."¹⁶⁶ *Walt Whitman – A Life* by Justin Kaplan ranked second,¹⁶⁷ yet the prize was bestowed upon Robert K. Massie's biography of Peter the Great.¹⁶⁸

The jury for the awards in 1982 named in its report the following three finalists "in alphabetical *not* rank order...: Gay Wilson Allen, *Waldo Emerson*; David McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback*; William S. McFeely, *Grant*. Each of these books makes an outstanding contribution; each will remain of lasting significance... Gay Wilson Allen's *Waldo Emerson* is the most comprehensive and sensitive study yet made of this important figure in American intellectual life in the nineteenth century... What emerges from the book is a profound new understanding and appreciation of Emerson... The book is written with unusual felicity and grace... David McCullough's *Mornings on Horseback* is a remarkably sympathetic and informed study of the early life of Theodore Roosevelt... McCullough's Roosevelt is the man who will not be avoided in the future; he is the figure who will become a vital part of our History as it will be written from now on... William S. McFeely's *Grant* is preeminent in two essential ways. First, it authoritatively establishes a new place in our historic memory of an important American, deepens our understanding of his private character as well as of his public experience. Second, it is exemplary in its exploitation of the biographer's art... Above all McFeely presents throughout the stubbornly surviving quality of this extraordinary-ordinary man which surfaced in his autobiography. McFeely offers an historian-biographer's study that fully appreciates not only events but the human actor at the center."¹⁶⁹ The members of the

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁶³ Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹⁶⁴ Biography Jury Report, December 19, 1979, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹⁶⁶ Biography Jury Report, December 20, 1980, p. 1.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹⁶⁹ Biography Jury Report, December 18, 1981, pp. 1 f.

Advisory Board voted for the latter piece of work and announced that William S. McFeely had won the Pulitzer Prize in the biography category.¹⁷⁰

The jurors of 1983 made up a list of three proposals in alphabetical order, although this order was not based on the names of the finalists but on the titles of the suggested books: *Churchill – Young Man in a Hurry*, by Ted Morgan; *Growing Up*, by Russell Baker; *Thomas E. Dewey and His Times*, by Richard Norton Smith. The statements of the jury concerning the three biographies read as follows: "1. *Churchill* – Ted Morgan not only brings vividly to life young Winston Churchill and his world, but skillfully illuminates the formation of a character often written about, but rarely so artfully delineated. 2. *Growing Up* – A journey into the self and America's recent past that goes far beyond memoir to become a powerful work of literature and undoubtedly an American classic. 3. *Thomas Dewey* – Richard Smith creates a Dewey far more interesting and complex than had been imagined, and around him has built a revealing study of the modern Republican party."¹⁷¹ In spite of his winning a Pulitzer Prize in a journalism category only four years earlier, the Advisory Board gave Russell Baker the award for best biography.¹⁷²

In 1984 the group of the three finalists, listed by the jury in alphabetical order by title, consisted of: *Black Apollo of Science – The Life of Ernest Everett Just*, by Kenneth Manning; *Booker T. Washington – The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915*, by Louis R. Harlan; *Thomas Carlyle – A Biography* by Fred Kaplan. "Manning's book was impressive," it is stated in the jury report, "for its discovery of a strikingly significant life hitherto unknown in its reality and complexity... Harlan's *Washington* is a revelatory picture of one of the most conspicuous of Black American lives... Harlan has written a valuable chapter in our History... Kaplan has retold the story of a great and baffling English Victorian,... written with energy and grace."¹⁷³ The Advisory Board selected the study by Louis R. Harlan.¹⁷⁴

In 1985 when the jurors listed their favorites in alphabetical order by name, the three suggestions read as follows: Howard M. Feinstein, *Becoming William James*; Michael Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*; Kenneth Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather*.¹⁷⁵ In the separate justifications it was explained that Feinstein's book "is artful in both conception and execution. The language is direct and economical yet often eloquent."¹⁷⁶ "As exposition and analysis," the jurors characterized Mott's piece of work, "the book is masterly, and it is beautifully written – no flourishing, no self-reference, no mere prettiness."¹⁷⁷ Regarding Silverman's volume they noted that he succeeded, "in making understandable both Mather and the time in which he lived,... in a prose that is clear and lively."¹⁷⁸ To the Advisory Board the arguments in favor of Kenneth Silverman's book seemed to be the most convincing, so that the biography of Cotton Mather won the Pulitzer Prize.¹⁷⁹

The list of three with the finalists of 1986, presented in the report of the jurors contained the following books and evaluations: "Elizabeth Frank, *Louise Bogan – A Por-*

170 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 62.

171 Biography Jury Report, undated (January 1983), p. 1.

172 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 62.

173 Biography Jury Report, January 18, 1984, pp. 1 f.

174 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 62.

175 Biography Jury Report, January 1, 1985, p. 1.

176 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

177 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

178 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

179 Columbia University, *The Pulitzer Prizes*, op. cit., p. 62.

trait,... is an outstanding work ... It is a unique and very special book that is worthy of the Pulitzer Prize... John Hope Franklin, *George Washington Williams – A Biography*... is a splendid scholarly work that merits the Pulitzer Prize. Frida Weinstein, *A Hidden Childhood*... is a memorable work, and the book is the closest to a work of art."¹⁸⁰ Finally the portrait of Bogan by Elizabeth Frank was chosen and won the authorship the Pulitzer Prize for best biography.¹⁸¹

In 1987 the jury had three new members who made up the following list of finalists: *Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation, 1860-1865*, by Joseph Frank; *The Life and Times of Congressman John Quincy Adams*, by Leonard L. Richards; *Murrow – His Life and Times*, by A. M. Sperber.¹⁸² Yet – for the first time in years – the Advisory Board made use of its fundamental prerogative to add to the jury's list a suggestion of its own, if it seemed appropriate. In this case it completely ignored the jury's three propositions and declared a fourth book out of the submitted entries as the winner. The study in question was by David J. Garrow on the subject matter of *Bearing the Cross – Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership conference*, winning the Pulitzer Prize for biography.¹⁸³

In 1988 a new jury took up the effort and announced these three books as the finalists: "David Herbert Donald, *Look Homeward – A Life of Thomas Wolfe*... is a classic biography: judicious, graphic, balanced and perceptive. Donald paints Wolfe with infinite nuance; he emerges as complex, many-sided, hateful, tremendously gifted, sadly flawed. Donald is relentless in his pursuit of the truth about Wolfe – the result is a remarkably round life of the writer as artist and tormented personality... Kenneth S. Lynn, *Hemingway*... creates an unfamiliar picture of Hemingway's career that is also an appalling study of human disintegration... John McCormick, *George Santayana – A Biography*... is a superbly literate biography, impressive in its range and scope, a fitting tribute to its magisterial subject."¹⁸⁴ The Advisory Board selected the biography of Wolfe by David Herbert Donald and made him the winner.¹⁸⁵

The Nominating Jury in Biography for 1989 wrote in its report among other things: "Richard Ellmann's *Oscar Wilde* is a masterly achievement in biography, composed with high literary skill and the intellectual profundity needed to express his subject's complexity and cultural meaning...; Peter Gay, *Freud – A Life for Our Times*... is a major scholarly achievement... Professor Gay has mastered the literature and offers his own judicious, well-paced, and nuanced interpretation...; Neil Sheehan, *A Bright and Shining Lie – John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*... is the book on America's role in Vietnam."¹⁸⁶ Richard Ellmann posthumously was honored with the Pulitzer Prize for best biography for his study of Oscar Wilde.¹⁸⁷

In the awarding year of 1990 the jury named four finalists and gave these comments: "Sebastian de Grazia's *Machiavelli in Hell* is an artistic and intellectual achievement of the finest order. Audaciously, the author has discarded the conventional task of linking a political theorist to his times in favor of a biography unconventionally but successfully conceived... *Machiavelli in Hell* is a demanding book – it presupposes considerable

180 Biography Jury Report, December 23, 1985, pp. 2 f.

181 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

182 Columbia University, The 71st annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 16, 1987, p. 6.

183 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

184 Biography Jury Report, December 26, 1987, pp. 1 f.

185 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

186 Biography Jury Report, December 15, 1988, pp. 1 ff.

187 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

BEARING THE CROSS

AND THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

A PERSONAL PORTRAIT BY
DAVID J. GARROW

knowledge of early modern political history and of Machiavelli's literary work, but the reader is attractively challenged to explore that world... In some of the finest descriptive prose we have encountered in recent years," the jury report said about the second book, "Jill Ker Conway in *The Road from Coorain* tells of her upbringing on a remote sheep ranch in Australia. This powerful and yet modest autobiographical work is a valuable addition to the literature of the globe's remaining frontiers..."¹⁸⁸ The third book on the short list was *Clear Pictures – First Loves, First Guides*, by Reynolds Price. The jury described it with the following words: "Snapshots of an ordinary middle-class Southern family accompany a family narrative in which the goodness of things seems always to triumph over adversity... With his appropriate and strong title, *A First-Class Temperament*," the jurors said about the fourth finalist, "Geoffrey Ward has written handsomely of the years in which Franklin Roosevelt matured as a politician and, combatting polio, as a man."¹⁸⁹ The Pulitzer biography award went to de Grazia's book on *Machiavelli*.¹⁹⁰

The jurors of 1991 agreed upon the following three praiseworthy candidates in alphabetical order: "(1) Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, *Jackson Pollock*. This massive, fully researched biography, appropriately subtitled *An American Saga*, recreates the life and world of America's most famous twentieth-century painter... Naifeh and Smith are especially skillful in recreating the rival cliques and shifting loyalties of the New York art world, both in the 1930's when *Pollock* was an apprentice and in the 1950's when he was an acknowledged master. We feel that no better life of an American artist has ever been written. (2) Patricia O'Toole, *The Five of Hearts*. Surely the most enchanting of the biographies we read this year, Ms. O'Toole's book weaves together the lives of Henry and Clover Adams, John and Clara Hay, and Clarence King (along with a supporting cast that includes Theodore Roosevelt, Mrs. Don Cameron, and scores of others) with singular understanding and great literary skill... The book provides a splendid picture of the American intellectual and political elite at the turn of the century. (3) Joseph Frazier Wall, *Alfred I. Dupont: The Man & the Family*... This book... may well be the best biography ever written of an American businessman... We found the whole book fascinating."¹⁹¹ The Advisory Board decided in favor of the study on Jackson Pollock by Naifeh and Smith.¹⁹²

In 1992 the jury's shortlist contained the following three works: *Fortunate Son*, by Lewis B. Puller; *Frederick Douglass*, by William S. McFeely; and *Orwell – The Authorized Biography*, by Michael Shelden. Puller's autobiography concentrated on his Vietnam time where he stepped on a land mine while fleeing the enemy and lost both legs. One juror commented after reading this book that she "found herself more moved by it than any other book" under consideration for the Pulitzer Prize. The jury said about McFeely's book: "Although others have told Douglass' amazing story, McFeely has created a wonderfully readable blend of classic biographical narrative, judicious psychological speculation and a heaping of fascinating social history." The Orwell biography by Michael Shelden was praised as "a book that is objective, fair and sympathetic. And it manages to be concise without leaving out anything important. And it is very lively

188 Biography Jury Report, January 4, 1990, pp. 1 f.

189 *Ibid.*, pp. 3 f.

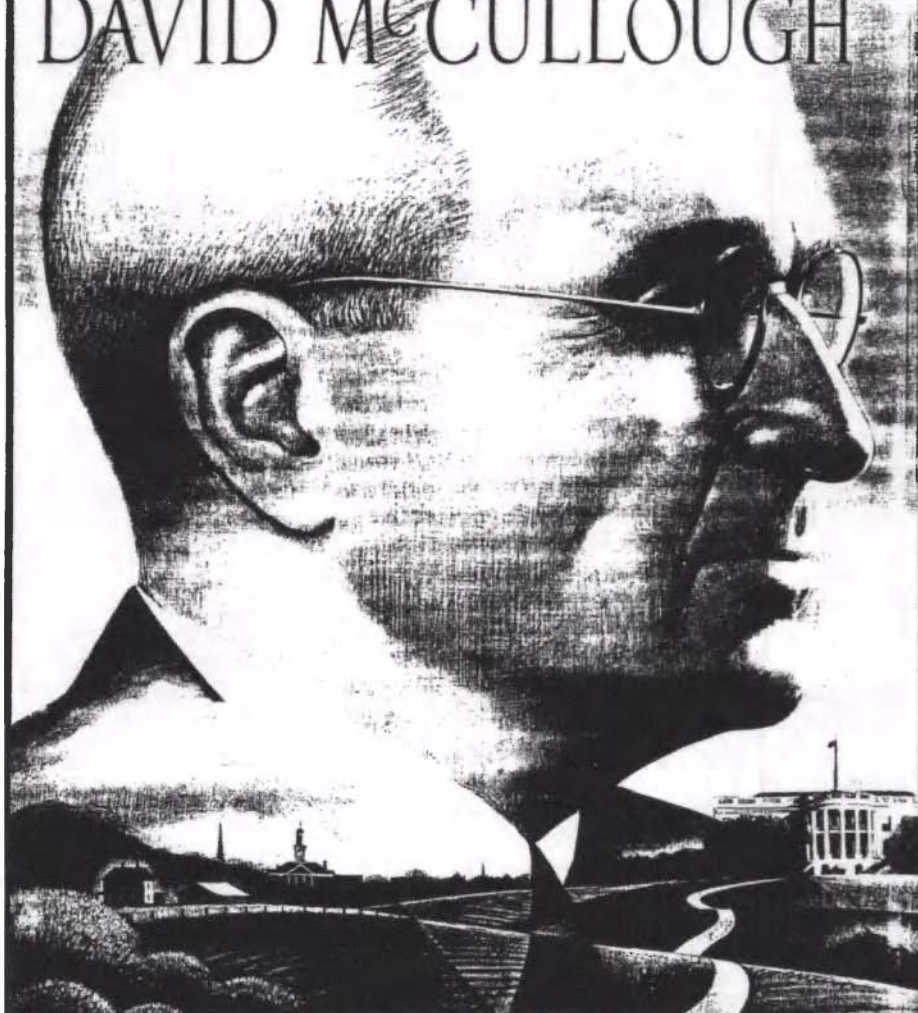
190 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

191 Biography Jury Report, December 27, 1990, pp. 2 f.

192 Columbia University, The Pulitzer Prizes, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

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reading."¹⁹³ The Board voted in favor of *Fortunate Son – The Healing of a Vietnam Vet* and Lewis B. Puller Jr. earned the award.¹⁹⁴

The jurors of 1993 nominated these three finalists: *Genius – The Life and Science of Richard Feynman*, by James Gleick; *Kissinger – A Biography*, by Walter Isaacson; and *Truman*, by David McCullough. Gleick's book, according to the jury, was "written with unfailing clarity, lyric passion, and narrative drive..., a paean to the life of science, and a funny, moving, awe-inspiring story." Isaacson's work about Henry Kissinger was called "smart and exciting to read, one of the most compelling political biographies of recent years." And there was also praise for David McCullough's Truman biography: "McCullough apparently took a lesson from his subject: with hard work, plain speaking, and intellectual gusto this study of Truman emerges as a stellar Presidential biography."¹⁹⁵ So thought the members of the Pulitzer Prize Board, too, and they declared the Truman book by David McCullough as the winner in this award category.¹⁹⁶

In 1994 the jurors expressed at the beginning of their report: "From a shelf of perhaps a dozen works of true distinction, we offer, with full confidence in their merit, three fine biographies." Deborah Baker's book *In Extremis – The Life of Laura Riding* was called "thoroughly researched, but artfully distilled" and a "literary biography of a very high order." David Levering Lewis's book on *W.E.B. Du Bois* was praised as to be "simultaneously a biography, an intellectual portrait of a major American thinker, and a deeply probing study of an emerging class of African-American leaders." *Genet – A Biography*, by Edmund White, was the third finalist. The author, in the eyes of the jury, "has drawn on a deep understanding of contemporary culture and quietly applied the fruit of prodigious research to give us a Jean Genet of full magnitude. Genet is a classic study of seldom-matched excellence."¹⁹⁷ The Board filtered out the book by David Levering Lewis who earned the Pulitzer Prize for *W.E.B. Du Bois – Biography of a Race 1868-1919*.¹⁹⁸

The jurors of 1995 mentioned first in their report the biography *Harriet Beecher Stowe*, by Joan D. Hedrick. Her book, the jury said, "transcends the public Harriet Beecher Stowe to probe an intensely personal story as well... Hedrick builds solidly on feminist scholarship of the last twenty-five years; her scrupulously researched biography enriches both her field and her readers." Roger K. Newman's biography of *Hugo Black* deals with one of the most influential Supreme Court justices in American history. The author "has given us a full, richly detailed life of the man," the jurors said, "without blinking his faults. The legal battles are recounted lucidly and dramatically; the research is massive yet aptly shaped." Stacy Schiff was represented on the jury's shortlist with her biography of *Saint-Exupéry*. The author was called by the jurors "a wonderful writer and a sensitive understander; she has written a biography that will be difficult to match for sheer reading pleasure."¹⁹⁹ The Board decided in favor of Joan D. Hedrick's book *Harriet Beecher Stowe – A Life*.²⁰⁰

In 1996 the list of the jury's finalists started with the book *John Sloan – Painter and Rebel*, by John Loughery. The author, in the opinion of the jurors, "writes perceptively about the integration of art and politics in Sloan's life... John Loughery's John Sloan is an

193 Biography Jury Report, December 29, 1991, pp. 1 ff.

194 Columbia University, The 76th annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 7, 1992, p. 6.

195 Biography Jury Report, undated (January 1993), pp. 1 f.

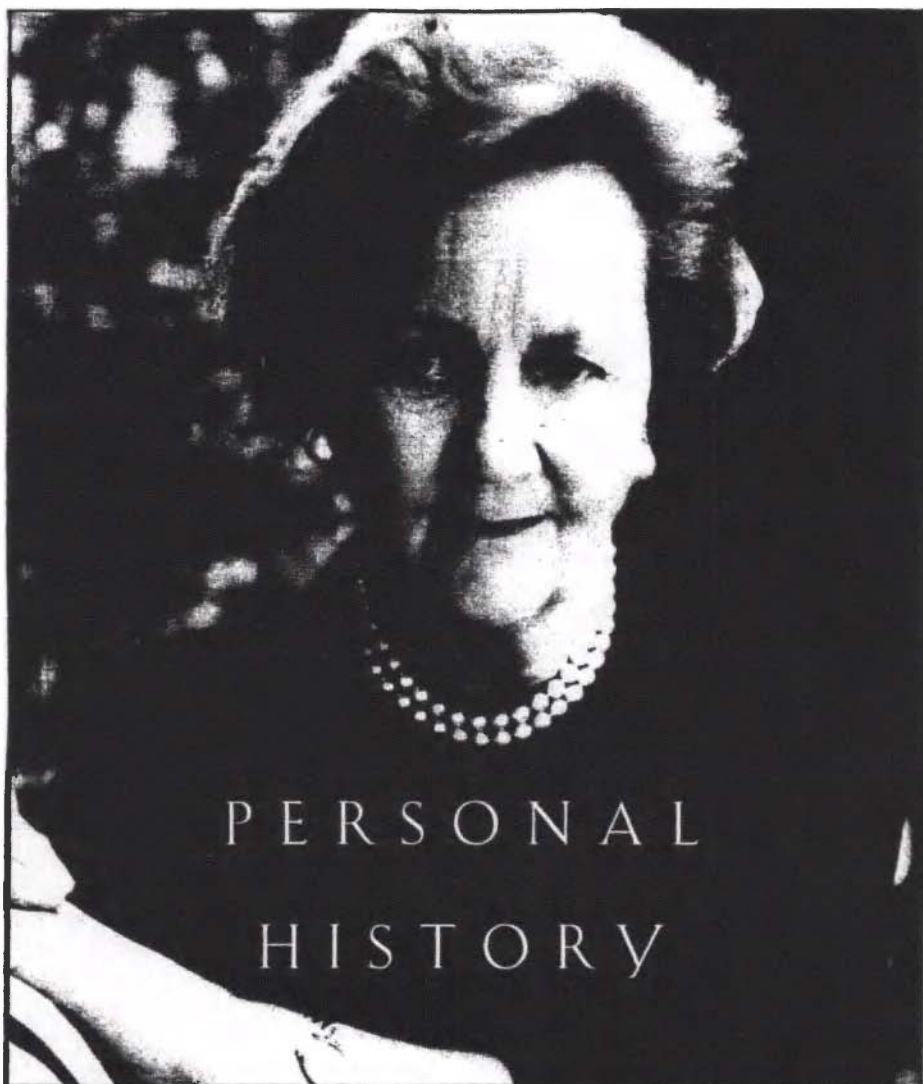
196 Columbia University, The 77th annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 13, 1993, p. 6.

197 Biography Jury Report, January 4, 1994, pp. 1 f.

198 Columbia University, The 78th annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 12, 1994, p. 6.

199 Biography Jury Report, December 28, 1994, pp. 1 ff.

200 Columbia University, The 79th annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 18, 1995, p. 8.



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altogether admirable example of the biographer's art." Jack Miles was among the finalists with his work *God – A Biography*, and the jury stated at the beginning of its report: "Can one write a biography of God? Can there be any 'life of God' that is not simply another theological statement or exercise in literary criticism? This panel's answer is an enthusiastic yes... Jack Miles has achieved the unthinkable: he has written a convincing and persuasive biography of a personality who has changed the course of history. In recognizing this book, the Pulitzer Committee would recognize original thinking, brilliant style and profound learning." Maynard Solomons's *Mozart – A Life* was mentioned as the third finalist. This book, in the eyes of the jury, "is a triumph of learning and restrained psychological understanding, alive with insights into a complex man."²⁰¹ The winner was Jack Miles for his biography *God*.²⁰²

After the jurors of 1997 had considered one hundred and sixteen books in the biography or autobiography category, they nominated these three finalists: *In The Wilderness*, by Kim Barnes; *Angela's Ashes*, by Frank McCourt; and *Herman Melville, Vol. 1, 1819-1851*, by Hershel Parker. Kim Barnes's memoir of her childhood was called "a worthy candidate for the Pulitzer Prize for Biography." Frank McCourt's book was an autobiography, too, and it was, in the view of the jury, a "heartwrenching, funny and lyrical memoir." The biography of Herman Melville by Hershel Parker, as the jury report states, contains "great passages of exciting writing and his biography will be the one that scholars and Melville fans will be reading and referring to for the next fifty years... This biography is a stunning achievement."²⁰³ The Pulitzer Prize Board bestowed the award on Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes – A Memoir*.²⁰⁴

In 1998 the jury nominated to the Board the following three biographical works: *Alfred C. Kinsey – A Public/Private Life*, by James H. Jones. According to the jurors, "Jones has written an intriguing, if somewhat disturbing book... Jones has written a biography that captures the spirit of both the man and his times." *Personal History*, by Katharine Graham, came next on the jury's list. The memoirs of the publisher of the *Washington Post*, in the eyes of the jury, "goes to the heart of life in Washington as the city emerged as a true world capital... Her (book) is a unique take on twentieth century America from a person who quietly influenced its course." *Whittaker Chambers – A Biography*, by Sam Tanenhaus, was the third finalist in this category. This book was called an "important, engrossing, and scrupulously documented biography."²⁰⁵ The Pulitzer Prize Board was in favor of Katharine Graham's *Personal History* and declared her the winner.²⁰⁶

The jury's shortlist of 1999 mentioned these three books as worthy of the award: *Lindbergh*, by A. Scott Berg; *At Home with the Marquis de Sade – A Life*, by Francine du Plessix Gray; and *A Beautiful Mind*, by Sylvia Nasar. "Berg brings fresh details and vivid narrative style to every period of Lindbergh's life," the jurors stated and added: "We felt that two mysteries of Lindbergh's character remained less fully explored than they might have been – the sources of his anti-Semitism and the reasons for his stubborn refusal ever to admit that his pre-war enthusiasm for Hitler's Germany had been a mistake." The book on de Sade was characterized in this way: "With aplomb, sophisti-

201 Biography Jury Report, January 1, 1996, pp. 1 ff.

202 Columbia University, The 80th annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 9, 1996, p. 8.

203 Biography Jury Report, January 2, 1997, pp. 1 ff.

204 Columbia University, The 81st annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 7, 1997, p. 7.

205 Biography Jury Report, December 29, 1997, pp. 1 f.

206 Columbia University, The 82nd annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 14, 1998, p. 6.

cation, a sure grasp of the history of France, and a brilliant narrative style, Francine du Plessix Gray turns an icon of perversity into an understandable, if reprehensible and deluded, human being." And *A Beautiful Mind*, a biography of John Nash, was praised as "one of the most striking biographies to appear in years. In a genre that so often follows a standard pattern of accounting for the lives of the famous, Sylvia Nasar has achieved originality... *A Beautiful Mind* is a true work of art."²⁰⁷ Despite the jury's criticism of A. Scott Berg's book, the Pulitzer Prize Board gave the award to his biography of Charles Lindbergh.²⁰⁸

In 2000 the jury's three favorites were as follows: *Clear Springs – A Memoir*, by Bobbie Ann Mason; *Véra (Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov)*, by Stacy Schiff; and *Galileo's Daughter – A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love*, by Dava Sobel. "Of the forty autobiographies and memoirs submitted this year," the jurors found that Mason's *Clear Springs* "most impressed the jury. The quality of writing is very fine... She draws character with great effectiveness." Stacy Schiff's book impressed the jurors, too: "This original, elegant, and witty biography evokes the cosmopolitan emigré world the couple inhabited, first in Europe and then in America, and traces the evolution of a unique partnership, literary and marital, that spanned half a century." Dava Sobel's book was called "a beautifully crafted dual biography of the great scientist Galileo Galilei and his oldest daughter... Sobel's book is a fascinating contribution both to the history of women and to the history of science."²⁰⁹ The Pulitzer Prize for Biography went to Stacy Schiff's book *Véra (Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov)*.²¹⁰

The nominating jurors of 2001 came to the conclusion to place the following three candidates on their shortlist: *The First American – The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*, by H. W. Brands; *W. E. B. Du Bois – The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963*, by David Levering Lewis; and *Johann Sebastian Bach – The Learned Musician*, by Christoph Wolff. "As the first major biography of Franklin in sixty years," the jurors told about H. W. Brands's book, "*The First American* offers both the general reader and the specialist historian a work that allows one to appreciate and revalue a Founding Father who has suffered a certain neglect in recent times... Brands offers us a Franklin who is true to the 18th century yet vitally interesting to the 21st as well. Equally important, this book is great fun to read." David Levering Lewis's book about *W. E. B. Du Bois* was the second volume of his "monumental biography"; the first volume won the Pulitzer biography award 1994. "This volume," the jury report states, "brings to a superb conclusion the first full-length biography of Du Bois ever published. Lewis, a relentless researcher, ... engages Du Bois intimately at every important level involving intellect, character, and personality, and writes with clarity, wit, and authority. By almost any standards, this is a magisterial achievement in biography." The book by Christoph Wolff was called a "splendid intellectual biography of Johann Sebastian Bach" which "draws on discoveries and reinterpretations in recent decades that have shed sometimes astonishing new light on his background, his activities, and the fluctuations of his influence."²¹¹ The Board was most impressed by the biography *W. E. B. Du Bois* so that David Levering Lewis earned his second Pulitzer Prize in the biography category.²¹²

207 Biography Jury Report, January 14, 1999, pp. 1 ff.

208 Columbia University, The 83rd annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 12, 1999, p. 6.

209 Biography Jury Report, December 15, 1999, pp. 1 f.

210 Columbia University, The 84th annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 10, 2000, p. 6.

211 Biography Jury Report, undated (ca. January 2001), pp. 1 ff.

212 Columbia University, The 85th annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 16, 2001, p. 7.

When the jurors of 2002 completed their shortlist of three finalists in the Biography category, they started their report with the memoirs of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, entitled *An Hour Before Daylight – Memories of a Rural Boyhood*. The second finalist was David McCullough with a biography of *John Adams*, followed by Jean Edward Smith's portrait of *Grant*. "In prose as lean as the times in which he grew into adulthood," the jurors said about the first contestant, "Jimmy Carter's *An Hour Before Daylight* splendidly evokes the rural South of the Great Depression... The fine title of the book foretells the social and economic changes soon to transform the Georgia of white supremacy, monocrop agriculture, rural hegemony, and rigid segregation in ways painful and liberating that the young planter's son came to understand and accept. Race, its large tensions and small triumphs in black and white, is at the center of this story, and Jimmy Carter has told his part of his long-running American story of co-dependency with grace, humor, and unaffected poignancy... Jimmy Carter has produced a perceptive, significant memoir, made all the more rewarding for being very well written." David McCullough's *John Adams*, the jury report stated, "records Adams from close up, bringing him before the reader with intimate presence as he looks and speaks and moves. Richly multilayered, it keeps simultaneously in view the developing lives of his main associates and the political and social history of his time. Adams appears not only as a leading figure of the American Revolution and early republic, but also as a farmer's son, friend and lover, dotard troubled with failing sight... For all its liveliness, *John Adams* maintains an exacting standard of scholarly research and documentation... Technically the book is a lesson in the open-ended possibilities of the form, embodying many fresh ideas about how biographies can be constructed. The right word for this biography is *masterful*." The third book on the jury's list, Jean Edward Smith's life of *Ulysses S. Grant*, was called by the jurors as "a splendid example of biography and revisionist history... The most important feature of Smith's *Grant* is its fresh look at Grant's two-term presidency. Historians have traditionally ranked Grant near the bottom of the presidential scale... Smith's biography describes Grant as a highly effective president, who had the compassion and wisdom to defend black civil rights... Smith's book will be the starting point for all future work on Grant."²¹³ The Pulitzer Prize Board decided in favor of the biography *John Adams*, and so its author David McCullough, won his second Pulitzer Prize in this award category.²¹⁴

In 2003 the jurors started their list of finalists with a book by Robert A. Caro. "In volume three of his remarkable biography of Lyndon Johnson," the report states, the author "takes the reader through the 1950s, when LBJ, the youngest Senate Majority Leader ever, helped transform the nation's legislative agenda through the sheer force of his personality and political skill. On one level, *Master of the Senate* is a sweeping history of post-World War II America, with brilliant digressions about the lives of very different people, from the powerful elites of Washington to the forgotten African Americans of the segregated South. On another level, it is the story of a consummate politician... As this towering biography concludes, and Lyndon Johnson leaves the Senate, we can well understand his capacity for greatness – and self-destruction." Nicholas Dawidoff's volume *The Fly Swatter* was mentioned next on the jury's list and was evaluated in this way: "In his portrait of his grandfather, the Harvard economist and historian Alexander Gerschenkron," the author "manages a seamless hybrid of memoir

²¹³ Biography Jury Report, December 26, 2001, pp. 1 ff.

²¹⁴ Columbia University, The 86th annual Pulitzer Prizes..., New York, April 8, 2002, p. 7.