



ALL ABOUT BOOKS

January/February 2006

Largo Public Library Readers' Advisory Group

"I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train."
Oscar Wilde

For Adventurers or Armchair Travelers

Travel Memoirs

Something in human nature compels us, from time to time, to want to travel. Intellectual curiosity, a desire for adventure, or pure escapism may drive us to experience life in a different place. For as long as people have traveled, travelers have written about their experiences, and others have enjoyed reading those accounts.

Although travel writing has existed for hundreds of years, the popularity of travel and travel literature first soared in Victorian England. Technological progress in transportation and the introduction of professionally organized tours in the mid-19th century contributed to the growth of tourism. As travel became popular, so too did travel literature. Victorians who were unwilling or unable to leave home could travel vicariously by reading the numerous travel books published during that era.

In the 20th century, the nature of travel changed. War correspondents, military troops, support personnel, and refugees were the travelers during the war years.

After World War II, more and more people began to travel, enticed by visual images of destinations and affordable prices for lodging and transportation. The popularity and variety of travel literature also grew.

Since World War II, travel writers have often sought the remote and the primitive. Political travel writing—seeing other political systems in action—has also been popular. Other travel writers have immersed themselves in foreign cultures with extended stays in small towns and villages. Travel writing in America has blossomed in recent years.

Whether you're an adventurer or an armchair traveler, make Largo Public Library the first stop on your next journey. Our extensive collection of travel books includes guidebooks, travelogues, and memoirs that describe living in foreign locales. Pick up our booklist **Intrepid Travelers: Selected Travel Memoirs** at the first floor Information Desk or second floor Reference Desk for a list of suggested titles for inspiration.

Sources:

Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol. 166: British Travel Writers, 1837-1875. Detroit: Gale Research (1996).

Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol. 204: British Travel Writers, 1940-1997. Detroit: The Gale Group (1999).

Mayes, Frances, ed., *The Best American Travel Writing 2002*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. (2002).

Tips for Travel Readers

Travel guidebooks and memoirs are located in Dewey Decimal numbers 914-919, on the second floor of Largo Public Library. Personal narratives of living in foreign countries are located in the history area for the particular country, within Dewey Decimal numbers 940-990. Staff at the second floor Reference Desk can assist you in finding specific titles and call numbers.

Romancing Our Readers

Do you read romance novels? If so, you are not alone! According to the Romance Writers of America, 64.6 million Americans read at least one romance novel in the past year.

In 1944, author Kathleen Winsor published Forever Amber, a book often credited with being the first “bodice-ripper” romance novel. An epic historical romance set in Restoration England, Forever Amber sold over 100,000 copies in its first week. Censored in 14 states for being too risqué, and banned in Boston, Forever Amber outsold almost every other book of the decade and became a bestseller in 16 countries.

Since that time, the “romance novel” has taken many different forms. Historical, contemporary, inspirational, and myriad other types of romances have their fans. Although historical romances were once the dominant form, romantic suspense stories are now at the top of the list of reader favorites.

Largo Public Library has a great collection of all kinds of romance, including the classic Forever Amber, as well as current popular titles. Stop by the Information Desk in the fiction area and pick up our booklist **Romantic Suspense!** for a list of popular authors and their recent titles.

Sources:

Dyer, Lucinda, “Romance, in Its Own Time,” Publishers Weekly (June 13, 2005).

“Kathleen Winsor,” Contemporary Authors Online. Literature Resource Center, Thomson Gale. Largo Public Library (Nov. 2005).

“Reader Statistics,” Romance Writers of America, www.rwanational.org (Nov. 2005).

“Romance Readers,” The Writer (Oct. 2003).

Recommended Reading: Staff Picks

Rebecca's Tale by Sally Beauman (F Beauman)

Also on Audio Cassette!

In this sequel to Daphne du Maurier's classic Rebecca, several characters reinvestigate the mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of Rebecca de Winter many years ago, aided by her recently discovered journal.

Recommended by Carla, Information Services.

Portrait of Mrs. Charbuque by Jeffrey Ford (F Ford)

A portrait artist receives the strangest commission of his career—to paint the likeness of a woman he cannot see. Hidden behind a screen, she will answer his questions, but not about her appearance! Other mysteries are exposed as the artist tries to discover his subject's true identity.

Recommended by Carla, Information Services.

Peyton Place by Grace Metalious (F Metalious)

Bestselling author Barbara Delinsky's recent Looking for Peyton Place (2005) caused a revival of interest in the original blockbuster novel of sex and secrets in a small New England town. The original is just as racy and scandalous today as it was when it was first published in 1956.

Recommended by Kristin, Circulation.

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