

NONFICTION

4Q 3P M J S

Cooper, Michael L. **Hero of the Seas: John Paul Jones and the American Revolution**. National Geographic, 2006. 128p. \$21.95. 978-0-7922-5547-5. PLB \$32.90. 978-0-7922-5548-2. Glossary. Index. Illus. Photos. Maps. Source Notes. Further Reading. Chronology.

Of the two books on John Paul Jones evaluated by this reviewer in the past year, Cooper's work is the better choice. Although a small book, its cover made from maps of the Revolutionary War era quickly catches the eye. Many black-and-white art prints, photos, and maps within, including several two-page spreads, enhance but do not break up the text, as with books for younger readers. Even the text layout is attractive, with plenty of white space that will not scare away reluctant readers, but using normal type size and spacing so as not to offend older students. The text is more detailed than Bruce L. Brager's **John Paul Jones: America's Sailor** (Morgan Reynolds, 2006/**VOYA** October 2006) as well. Plentiful quotes from original sources include the resolution creating the U.S. flag, correspondence with Benjamin Franklin, and innumerable quotes from Jones himself.

Although Jones might not actually have said "I have not yet begun to fight," he was a prolific letter writer with the ability for a clever turn of phrase. Upon hearing one of his foes had been knighted, Jones wrote, "Let me fight him again and I'll make him a lord." Such quotes, seamlessly woven into Cooper's biography, make it an intriguing and highly educational read accessible to a wide range of abilities. There is only one small quibble in that the font, although elegant, makes the numeral one look like seven, a poor choice given the frequency of numbers and dates in the text.—Beth Karpas.

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Giovanni, Nikki. **On My Journey Now: Looking at African-American History Through the Spirituals**. Candlewick, 2007. 116p. \$18.99. 978-0-7636-2885-7. Glossary. Index. Biblio. Source Notes. Appendix.

Giovanni draws on religious and life experiences as well as history to express to a supposedly intergenerational audience her opinions on how spirituals reflect the African American journey. She discusses the Middle Passage, identity within slavery, the role of religion, the natural drive for freedom, the special contribution of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, and even the hip-hop generation. Parts of the spirituals are interspersed throughout her essays. Complete lyrics of all forty-seven, in the order presented, appear at the back of the book. With the exception of "We Am Climbing Jacob's Ladder," Giovanni uses Standard English. Although forms such as "lining out," "call-and-

response," and "ring shout" are explained in the text, the terms do not appear in the glossary. The bibliography and source notes include general references to four books, two scholars, and the Mudcat listserv. Giovanni points out that "Ain't Got Time to Die" and "Going Up to Glory" are modern spirituals, and infers that "Water Boy," traditionally considered a prison song, could easily have been sung simply by a people seeking relief, but she does not include individual source notes or documentation for specific historical information. Recommended recordings offer several listening suggestions.

Having greater impact for young adults, Sharon Draper's **Copper Sun** (Atheneum/S & S, 2006/**VOYA** February 2006) portrays many issues that Giovanni addresses in essays. **Bound for the North Star: True Stories of Fugitive Slaves** by Dennis Brindell Fradin (Clarion, 2000/**VOYA** October 2001), provides a well-documented picture of the anti-slavery movement and reminds readers that slavery still exists. Teens interested specifically in spirituals can find further information in **Slave Spirituals and the Jubilee Singers** by Michael L. Cooper (Clarion, 2001/**VOYA** February 2002).—Lucy Schall.

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Gore, Al. **An Inconvenient Truth: The Crisis of Global Warming**. Viking/Rodale, 2007. 192p. \$16 Trade pb. 978-0-670-06272-0. Index. Photos. Maps. Charts. Source Notes.

If skepticism about global warming has faded significantly, much of the credit must go to the Oscar-winning documentary and best-selling book on which this title is based. Former Vice President Gore has thrown his energy and prestige into raising the issue to the forefront of popular consciousness. This young adult version will have immediate name recognition. Slightly shortened and simplified, it includes most of the same, highly effective graphics and illustrations as the adult book. Gore makes no apologies for not presenting opposing opinions. Indeed he contends that in the scientific as opposed to the popular press, there is no debate. The adult title includes more corroborating evidence for some contentions. Here the text is graceful but blunt: There is no doubt about global warming, and this generation will bear the brunt if changes are not made immediately.

Browsers will be drawn to the striking format, perfectly designed for a visually sophisticated age group. The text omits personal material found in the original and shortens and rearranges some of the chapters. Also unfortunately missing are the "Misconception" sidebars that address frequently heard objections. The one false note comes in the "Take Action" section, where Gore trivializes the ability of his audience to make an impact. His few suggestions are almost insultingly minor. He badly underestimates the will and influence of this very savvy generation, who can pressure

parents and politicians to take the steps he recommends to his adult readers. This book is a must-have for collections serving younger teen readers.—Kathleen Beck.

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Halls, Kelly Milner. **Mysteries of the Mummy Kids**. Darby Creek, 2007. 72p. \$18.95. 978-1-58196-059-4. Glossary. Index. Photos. Maps. Biblio.

Halls presents an eerily fascinating exploration of mummified children and teens found in South and North America, Europe, and Asia, clearing up the misconception that mummies are Egyptian only. Photographs show clothing, items buried with the mummies, and even final facial expressions while CT scans help tell the stories of how the children lived and died. Some were apparently proud sacrifices to the gods, some the victims of disease or violence, and others mummified naturally, such as those "evicted" from their graves in Mexico after their families failed to pay a death tax. Mexico has an entire museum housing these mummies—a perfect fit with the annual celebration of *El Día de los Muertos* (The Day of the Dead). Naturally most remains are skeletal, but others appear almost lifelike. An Italian toddler mummy looks as if she will awaken at any minute. Interviews with anthropologists and one paleopathologist reveal the need for patience and expertise in searching for, excavating, and transporting the fragile bodies. The final section provides information on modern mummification methods available to those able to spend a lot of money to preserve themselves or their pets.

A list of contact information for museums with mummies on display is supplied. The writing style is plain yet absorbing, presenting scientific and historical information in simple terms. Bonus features such as how a chemist recreated the scent used on an Egyptian death mask make this a fine addition to collections. It is best used as a supplemental report source or browser.—Pam Carlson.

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Pearson, Carol Lynn. **No More Goodbyes: Circling the Wagons Around Our Gay Loved Ones**. Pivot Point Books, 2007. 306p. \$14.95 Trade pb. 978-0-9638852-4-1. Source Notes. Further Reading.

Pearson's previous work, **Goodbye, I Love You** (Random House, 1986), a memoir about the relationship between Pearson and her gay husband, Gerald, who died of AIDS in 1984, provides the foundation for this second book calling for acceptance and sensitivity to the homosexual community. This timely work, an evaluation of Mormon attitudes about homosexuality, offers an alternative message to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and other faiths whose doctrines condemn

homosexuality as grave sin. Primarily a collection of letters and anecdotes from current and former gay and lesbian Mormons and their families, the book helps to "put a face on" those persons who have been ostracized from their faith communities. Attention is drawn to the high rates of suicide among young Mormon males, the church's practice of treating homosexuals through "reparative therapy," and the referrals of individuals to Evergreen, a support group focused on assisting homosexuals to "reorient" to a heterosexual lifestyle.

In light of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act and legislation permitting same-sex marriage and civil unions in some states, Pearson's message is surprisingly not legalistic. Instead her heartwarming stories of reconciliation as well as her heart-wrenching accounts of tragedy encourage the faithful to follow the example of Jesus and love unconditionally, or in Pearson's words, "circle the wagons" and rally behind gay and lesbian loved ones. Teens inundated with conflicting messages about homosexuality will find that regardless of one's views about sexual orientation, Pearson's message and her "New Frontier" is one of love—a message that is urgent, valuable, and thankfully difficult to resist.—Erin Kilby.

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Sullivan, Edward T. **The Ultimate Weapon: The Race to Develop the Atomic Bomb.** Holiday House, 2007. 192p. \$24.95. 978-0-8234-1855-8. Glossary. Index. Photos. Biblio. Source Notes. Further Reading. Chronology. Appendix.

The United States had tried to keep itself neutral while Germany, under Hitler's ruthless leadership, invaded European countries and as Britain and France fought to contain the Nazi regime. But following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. declared war on Japan (and as a result, also on Italy and Germany). The U.S. military began the highly secretive Manhattan Project, the main purpose of which was to beat Germany to the punch and be the first to develop an atomic bomb. Scientists worked side by side with military personnel at three different, top-secret locations (Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Hanford, Washington; and Los Alamos, New Mexico), developing hardware and mining uranium and plutonium. Only a few short years later, two bombs ("Little Boy" and "Fat Man") were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, bringing Japan to its knees in surrender.

Sullivan presents a highly readable history of the development and eventual use of the atomic bomb by the United States against Japan. Quotes from military personnel, laundresses, and scientists are interwoven in the text, creating a human picture of patriotism, sacrifice, and stress. Sullivan covers a variety of topics, from the scientific development of the bomb to the political and ethical implications of its use; from the living conditions at Oak Ridge, Hanford, and Los Alamos to the horrific results of the bombs' devastation. Sullivan's writing is balanced and unbiased yet informed and

interdisciplinary, making this volume, which is laden with photographs, an excellent source of information on a timely topic.—Melissa Moore.

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