

The Good, the Bad, and the Mad: Some Weird People in American History

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The quiet spinster who erupted one day in a blinding flash of violence, the brilliant scientist that was terrified of women wearing pearl earrings, the inexperienced pilot who took off from New York bound for Los Angeles and landed 27 hours later—in Dublin! These are just a few of the many saints, sinners, hucksters, and oddballs you'll meet in *The Good, The Bad & The Mad*.

In this compellingly off-beat peek into America's past, E. Randall Floyd examines a fascinating array of men and women who achieved fame, fortune, or notoriety because (or in spite of) their glaring peculiarities. Did you know that: Stonewall Jackson was as renowned for his odd personal habits as for his daring flank attacks? Conan the Barbarian author Robert Howard lived all his life with his mother and committed suicide immediately after she died? All of General Custer's Indian scouts survived the Battle of Little Bighorn because he'd fired them just hours before?

Discover why financier Jay Gould was known as "the most hated man in America," who called social activist Jane Addams "the most dangerous woman in America," and how shy photographer's assistant Edgar Cayce achieved the title of "America's most mysterious man." They're all right here in *The Good, The Bad & The Mad*.

E. Randall Floyd is a nationally syndicated newspaper columnist, motion picture screenwriter, and author of several books, including *Deep in the Heart* and *Great Southern Mysteries*. His history lectures at Georgia's Augusta State University helped inspire *The Good, The Bad & The Mad*.

The Good, the Bad, and the Mad: Some Weird People in American History Details

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From Reader Review The Good, the Bad, and the Mad: Some Weird People in American History for online ebook

Sarah Yasin says

the facts on Robert E. Howard are incorrect. He did not die after his mother, she lived a few hours in a coma. Also, he earned 6 grand in the year before his death, while this book says he never made more than 2 grand in a year. The thing about REH is he massaged the truth in his letters, so those cannot be taken at face value.

Otherwise it's a good chapter which captures the spirit of how weird REH's life was.

Clark says

Well, since the book is a collection of little essays about eccentric personalities from American history, it's easy to read in small, short sessions.... like on the toilet.... which is where I read it. It was a pleasant and edifying use of that time. Perfect bathroom read. And, that's high praise from me.

Becky Loader says

Holy moly rocky. This little book is crammed full of mini-bios of famous people--some I had heard of and some I had not. Just enough information is given to pique your interest in reading a full-scale biography of: Madame Blavatsky (noted Spiritualist), Isadora Duncan (modern dancer before her time), Robert E. Howard ("Conan the Barbarian"), Marie Laveau (New Orleans voodoo queen), Nikola Tesla (electric genius), and more. Not academic at all, but tantalizing!

Skjam! says

American history is full of offbeat people, some downright weird. The author was (like many a lad) fascinated by their stories when he was young. Then he got to interview Erich von Daeniken (Chariots of the Gods) and decided to make writing about unusual people a full-time hobby. This book is one of the results.

It contains 37 mini-biographies of interesting people in American history, arranged alphabetically from Jane Addams (social worker and pacifist) to Wovoka (Native American mystic and the leader of the "Ghost Dance" movement.) There are the really obvious candidates, like "Emperor" Joshua Norton of San Francisco and Nikola Tesla (eccentric inventor.) But there are also more obscure figures, like Giacomo Beltrami, who didn't quite discover the source of the Mississippi, and Bernarr MacFadden (health nut.)

The writing is okay, but these are very short biographies, and some of the subjects have had entire (and much better) books written about them. There are no illustrations, no citations or bibliography, and no index. Your college professor isn't going to accept this as a source!

While written for adults, I think this book would best serve as a gift to a bright teenager who can then look further for more information about any person that catches their fancy. It's a good book for a quick read, and

some interesting historical moments.

D. Soares says

I didn't find one new piece of information in this book --not one. That made it a pretty dull read. I suppose if you didn't know anything about some of these people it might be interesting ...but it felt like a rehash of stale facts to me.

Trevor says

This is a collection of short biographies about some interesting people in American history. Some of the people are relatively well know, such as Houdini, Tesla, and P.T. Barnum. Others were introduced to me for the first time. Each biography is short and does not give much detail. There were definitely people that I wish there were more details about, however, this is a good book to give you an overview and perhaps pique your interest in reading a more comprehensive biography. I highly recommend to anyone who enjoys reading biographies. It is also a good bedtime book because each biography only takes a few minutes to read.

Rick says

This is light reading, a perfect beach book. Each chapter is a short biography of a person from American history, some obscure, some not.

This is good for someone who is history-minded but not in the mood to read a full book about a particular historical figure. This is light stuff, sometimes a little overly dramatic and sometimes a little too accepting of "alternative" theories, but it is a fun read and a good starting point.

David Allen says

This survey of American eccentrics was in the remainder bin at B&N and there were enough intriguing names that it seemed a worthwhile purchase. And it was, but just barely. I took it less seriously after noticing the Lovecraft piece steals a phrase ("lurkers in the earth and beyond the barriers of time") from the back cover of the '70s HPL paperback I was reading. Needed a bibliography and an editor.

Judd says

This would make an awesome toilet book. Each chapter is approximately three to four pages long and not particularly dense. One chapter per, uh, visit should do the trick. Two if you suffer from constipation. This book wasn't inherently good or bad. The folks presented within are an interesting lot but I wouldn't consider them all "weird" as the author proclaims. The information given for each character is brief but thorough enough to get a decent grasp on who they were. If anything, this book should entice the reader to delve further into the lives of their favorites. The reason for the average rating is that I was neither compelled nor bored with the content. A solid read but not necessarily a memorable one.

Rosa Cline says

This is a really neat book full of small 1-2 page 'stories' of people in American History. Some facts that you may not have known about people what they did before they would ride a horse, or superstitions they believed in etc. Some you laugh about and others you say "That's just weird!" A nice read...you can read as little or as much as you want at a time. E. Randall Floyd does a good job at just about all the books I've ever read he's written.

Allison says

This book was okay. I liked the premise... weird, crazy people in American History, but I had two major problems with it. One the stories were arranged alphabetically by person instead of chronologically or by topic, both of which would have made more sense. For example there was a bunch of stories of late 19th/early 20th century Mysticism which all referenced each other and since I didn't know a lot about that it would have been nice to read them back to back. And even though I know a lot about the Civil War it still would have been nice to have them all as a cluster.

Secondly I found it a bit repetitive and the similar chapters not detailed enough to really be worthy of separate chapters. This book is not for the casual nonfiction reader. Thinking back this maybe should have just been the Bad and the Mad since it did not really focus on the "good" that would b typical in a non fiction work.

Carly says

This book was not good.

I hate to admit it, but maybe there was a reason (as Dusty tole me) that the book was in the bargain bin at Barnes and Noble.

I was really drawn to this book because I like to learn about people in history. But Floyd was too broad and too general. In the introduction, he said he would be, but even with his own warning, I found myself feeling something was missing.

The organization of a book also contributes to how well it reads. And Floyd failed terribly on this count. It it organized alphabetically...and I found myself jumping from 1700s to the 1930s, then to the 1860s...it would have been MUCH easier for me to read if it were chronological...

Sarah says

The Good, the Bad, and the Mad is a collection of thirty-seven brief stories on notable people in American History, well, according to the author at least.

Author E. Randall Floyd writes an introduction explaining his fascination with "weirdos" in American History and how he came to compile and write this short volume.

This book is a very, very short glimpse into the lives and histories of these people and provides biographies of each one. By no means is *The Good, the Bad, and the Mad* detailed in any way, but is more suited to whetting our appetites and sparking our interest in the array of men and women mentioned. For some readers, the book may motivate you to seek out more explicit volumes on the people that actually do interest you!

The most interesting figures featured in this book are P.T. Barnum (the co-founder of Barnum and Bailey Circus), the genius Lizzie Borden (who has always managed to charm me), author Ambrose Bierce (*An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* is amazing!), and Sarah Winchester of the crazy mansion with staircases leading to nowhere (which I'm sure inspired Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* and Stephen King's *Rose Red* to some extent).

Most of the other people featured weren't interesting to me at all and I found their stories quite boring. Overall, I would consider this book an "airplane read" -- not too deep but enjoyable enough to breeze through and walk away with a little more knowledge than you previously had.

Other books by E. Randall Floyd include *100 of the World's Greatest Mysteries: Strange Secrets, More Great Southern Mysteries*, and *Deep in the Heart*.

Read more book reviews at <http://dreamworldbooks.com>.

Ingridamecg says

The subjects in this book were interesting but I wish they had been arranged in chronological order instead of alphabetically. If I could combine the structure of "Badass" with E. Randall Floyd's writing style each book would be improved.

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

A very interesting and entertaining mix of people I'd heard about and people I knew nothing about. I wish Floyd had provided a bibliography of the sources of his information. I'd like to read more about many of the people included, and check up on a few of his facts. I particularly want to read more about James Churchward, Ignatius Donnelly, Marcus Garvey, Hetty Green (she never washed her underwear so they would last longer--ew!), Robert E. Howard, Marie Laveau, H.P. Lovecraft, Cotton Mather, James McGready, and Cyrus Read Teed. A nice starting place for research on American eccentrics!
