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Commanding the Shelves

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Commanding the Shelves

Award-Winning Books About Our Presidents

Books about America's highest office have always commanded attention. That histories, biographies, and memoirs of our presidents frequently top bestseller lists is a testament to our fascination with their lives. But only the best of them make it beyond the charts and earn distinguished accolades from critics, scholars, writers, and the press. Below is a bibliography of books that have earned such distinction, winning awards from the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, to the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and the *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year.

George Washington

Achenbach, Joel. [The Grand Idea: George Washington's Potomac and the Race to the West](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year and one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves.

Ellis, Joseph J. [Founding Brothers: the Revolutionary Generation](#). New York: Random House, 2000. Winner of the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for history.

Fischer, David Hackett. [Washington's Crossing](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year and one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves. Winner of the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for history.

Flexner, James Thomas. [George Washington](#). Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1965-1972. 4 vols. Winner of the 1973 National Book Award for biography.

Flexner, James Thomas. [Washington: The Indispensable Man](#). Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1994 (1973). Winner of a Pulitzer Prize Special Award and Citation for letters.

Freeman, Douglas Southall. [George Washington: A Biography](#). New York: Scribner, 1981 (1948-1957). 7 vols. Winner of the 1958 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

McCullough, David. [1776](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005. Winner of the 2005 *Publishers Weekly* Quill Award for history/current events/politics. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year and one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves.

West, Thomas G. [Vindicating the Founders: Race, Sex, Class, and Justice in the Origins of America](#). New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. Rated 21st on the Modern Library's 100 Best Nonfiction Reader's List.

John Adams

Brookhiser, Richard. [America's First Dynasty: The Adamses, 1735-1918](#). New York: Free Press, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

McCullough, David. [John Adams](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001. Winner of the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for biography and named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Smith, Page. [John Adams](#). Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 1969 (1962). 2 vols. Winner of the 1963 Bancroft Prize.

West, Thomas G. [Vindicating the Founders: Race, Sex, Class, and Justice in the Origins of America](#). New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. Rated 21st on the Modern Library's 100 Best Nonfiction Reader's List.

Thomas Jefferson

Ambrose, Stephen E. [Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. Rated 32nd on the Modern Library's 100 Best Nonfiction Reader's List.

Gordon-Reed, Annette. [The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family](#). New York: W. W. Norton, 2008. Winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for History and the 2008 National Book Award for nonfiction. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books.

Ellis, Joseph J. [American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson](#). New York: Vintage, 1998 (1996). Winner of the 1997 National Book Award for nonfiction.

Malone, Dumas. [Jefferson and His Time](#). Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1948-1981. 6 vols. Winner of the 1975 Pulitzer Prize for history and rated 59th on the Modern Library's 100 Best Nonfiction.

Peterson, Merrill D. [The Jefferson Image in the American Mind](#). Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1998 (1960). Winner of the 1961 Bancroft Prize.

Simon, James F. [What Kind of Nation: Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, and the Epic Struggle to Create a United States](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

West, Thomas G. [Vindicating the Founders: Race, Sex, Class, and Justice in the Origins of America](#). New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. Rated 21st on the Modern Library's 100 Best Nonfiction Reader's List.

Wilentz, Sean. [The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln](#). New York: W. W. Norton, 2005. Nominated finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for history and named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

James Madison

West, Thomas G. [Vindicating the Founders: Race, Sex, Class, and Justice in the Origins of America](#). New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. Rated 21st on the Modern Library's 100 Best Nonfiction Reader's List.

Wills, Garry. [James Madison](#). New York: Holt, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

John Quincy Adams

Bemis, Samuel Flagg. [John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy](#). New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971 (1949). Winner of the 1950 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Brookhiser, Richard. [America's First Dynasty: The Adamses, 1735-1918](#). New York: Free Press, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Perkins, Bradford. [Castlereagh and Adams: England and the United States, 1812-1823](#). Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964.

Winner of the 1965 Bancroft Prize.

Richards, Leonard L. [*The Life and Times of Congressman John Quincy Adams*](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. Nominated finalist for the 1987 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Andrew Jackson

James, Marquis. [*Andrew Jackson: Border Captain; and Portrait of a President*](#). New York: Smith Peter, 1990 (1933-1937). 2 vols. Winner of the 1938 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Meacham, Jon. [*American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*](#). New York: Random House, 2008. Winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for biography. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Remini, Robert V. [*Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1933-1945*](#). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1998 (1984). Winner of the 1984 National Book Award for nonfiction.

Schlesinger Jr., Arthur M. [*The Age of Jackson*](#). Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1988. Winner of the 1946 Pulitzer Prize for history, and rated 36th on the Modern Library's 100 Best Nonfiction.

White, Leonard D. [*The Jacksonians*](#). New York: MacMillan Company, 1954. Winner of the 1955 Bancroft Prize.

James K. Polk

Sellers, Charles. [*James K. Polk, Continentalist, 1843-1846*](#). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966. Winner of the 1967 Bancroft Prize.

Abraham Lincoln

Current, Richard N. and J.G. Randall. [*Last Full Measure: Lincoln the President*](#). Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000 (1955). Winner of the 1956 Bancroft Prize.

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. [*Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year and one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves.

Neely, Mark E. [*The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties*](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. Winner of the 1992 Pulitzer Prize for history.

Peterson, Merrill D. [*Lincoln in American Memory*](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. Nominated finalist for the 1995 Pulitzer Prize for history.

Sandburg, Carl. [*Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years*](#). Edison, NJ: BBS Publishing, 1993 (1939). Winner of the 1940 Pulitzer Prize for history.

Shenk, Joshua Wolf. [*Lincoln's Melancholy: How Lincoln's Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness*](#). Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year and one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves.

White Jr., Ronald C. [*Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Wilentz, Sean. [*The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*](#). New York: W. W. Norton, 2005. Nominated finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for history and named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Wills, Gary. [*Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. Winner of the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction.

Ulysses S. Grant

McFeely, William. [*Grant: A Biography*](#). New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2002 (1981). Winner of the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for biography and the 1982 Francis Parkman Prize.

Simpson, Brooks D. [*Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph Over Adversity*](#). Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Smith, Jean Edward. [*Grant*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. Nominated finalist for the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for biography and named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Grover Cleveland

Nevins, Allan. [*Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage*](#). New York: American Political Biography, 2001 (1932). Winner of the 1933 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

William McKinley

Leech, Margaret. [*In the Days of McKinley*](#). New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959. Winner of the 1960 Pulitzer Prize for history and the 1960 Bancroft Prize.

Theodore Roosevelt

Chace, James. [*1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft & Debs -- The Election That Changed the Country*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

McCullough, David. [*Mornings on Horseback*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981. Winner of the 1981 *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for biography and nominated finalist for the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Millard, Candice. [*The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey*](#). New York: Doubleday, 2005. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year and one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves.

Morris, Edmund. [*The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*](#). New York: Random House, 2001 (1979). Winner of the 1980 Pulitzer Prize for biography and rated 79th on the Modern Library's 100 Best Nonfiction.

Morris, Edmund. [*Theodore Rex*](#). New York: Random House, 2001. Winner of the 2001 *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for biography and named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Pringle, Henry F. [*Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography*](#). New York: Konecky, William S. Associates, 1999 (1931). Winner of the 1932 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Zimmermann, Warren. [*First Great Triumph: How Five Americans Made Their Country a World Power*](#). New York: Straus & Giroux, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

William Howard Taft

Chace, James. [*1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft & Debs -- The Election That Changed the Country*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Woodrow Wilson

Baker, Ray Stannard. [*Woodrow Wilson: Life & Letters*](#). New York: Doubleday, 1927-1939. 8 vols. Winner of the 1940 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Chace, James. [*1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft & Debs -- The Election That Changed the Country*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Levin, Jr., N. Gordon. [*Woodrow Wilson and World Politics: America's Response to War and Revolution*](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 1980 (1968). Winner of the 1969 Bancroft Prize.

Link, Arthur S. [*Wilson: The New Freedom*](#). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956. Winner of the 1957 Bancroft Prize.

Link, Arthur S. [*Wilson: The Struggle for Neutrality, 1914-1915*](#). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960. Winner of the 1961 Bancroft Prize.

Walworth, Arthur. [*Woodrow Wilson: American Prophet*](#). New York: W.W. Norton, 1978 (1958). Winner of the 1959 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Beschloss, Michael. [*The Conquerors: Roosevelt, Truman and the Destruction of Hitler's Germany, 1941-1945*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Brands, H. W. [*Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt*](#). New York: Doubleday, 2009. Nominated finalist for the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Burns, James MacGregor. [*Roosevelt: Soldier of Freedom*](#). New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 2003 (1956-1970). Winner of the 1971 Pulitzer Prize for history, the 1971 National Book Award for history and biography, and the 1971 Francis Parkman Prize.

Davis, Kenneth S. [*FDR: The Beckoning of Destiny, 1882-1928*](#). New York: Random House, 1993 (1972). Winner of the 1973 Francis Parkman Prize.

Flynn, John T. [*The Roosevelt Myth*](#). New York: Devin-Adair, 1983. Rated 19th on the Modern Library's 100 Best Nonfiction Reader's List.

Dallek, Robert. [*Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 1995 (1979). Winner of the 1980 Bancroft Prize.

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. [*No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. Winner of the 1995 Pulitzer Prize for history.

Hamby, Alonzo L. [*For the Survival of Democracy: Franklin Roosevelt and the World Crisis of the 1930s*](#). New York: Free Press, 2004. Named one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves.

Larrabee, Eric. [*Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, his Lieutenants, and their War*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988. Winner of the 1988 Francis Parkman Prize.

Lash, Joseph P. [*Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers*](#). New York: W.W. Norton, 1971. Winner of the 1972 Pulitzer Prize for biography, the 1972 National Book Award for biography, and the 1972 Francis Parkman Prize.

Leuchtenburg, William E. [*Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940*](#). New York: Harper Collins, 1989 (1963). Winner of the 1964 Bancroft Prize and the 1964 Francis Parkman Prize.

Persico, Joseph E. [*Roosevelt's Secret War: FDR and World War II Espionage*](#). New York: Random House, 2001. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Schlesinger Jr., Arthur M. [*The Crisis of the Old Order*](#). Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003 (1957). Winner of the 1958 Bancroft Prize and the 1958 Francis Parkman Prize.

Sherwood, Robert E. [*Roosevelt and Hopkins*](#). New York: Enigma Books, 2001 (1948). Winner of the 1949 Pulitzer Prize for biography and the 1949 Bancroft Prize.

Sunstein, Cass. [*The Second Bill of Rights: FDR's Unfinished Revolution and Why We Need it More Than Ever*](#). New York: Basic Books, 2004. Named one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves.

Ward, Geoffrey C. [*First Class Temperament: The Emergence of Franklin Roosevelt*](#). New York: Harper Collins, 1990 (1988). Winner of the 1989 National Book Critic's Circle Award, the 1990 *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for biography, and the 1990 Francis Parkman Prize. Nominated finalist for the 1990 Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Wilson, Theodore A. [*The First Summit: Roosevelt and Churchill at Placentia Bay 1941*](#). Lawrence KS: University Press of Kansas, 1991 (1969). Winner of the 1970 Francis Parkman Prize.

Harry S. Truman

Beschloss, Michael. [*The Conquerors: Roosevelt, Truman and the Destruction of Hitler's Germany, 1941-1945*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Leffler, Melvyn P. [*A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War*](#). Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1991. Winner of the 1993 Bancroft Prize.

Neal, Steve, ed. [*Eleanor and Harry: The Correspondence of Eleanor Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman*](#). New York: Scribner, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

McCullough, David. [*Truman*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992. Winner of the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for biography and the 1993 Francis Parkman Prize.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Ambrose, Stephen E. [*The Victors: Eisenhower and His Boys: The Men of World War II*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

D'Este, Carlo. [*Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*](#). New York: Holt, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Eisenhower, David. [*Eisenhower: At War, 1943-1945*](#). New York: Random House, 1986. Nominated finalist for the 1987 Pulitzer Prize for history.

Wicker, Tom. [*Dwight D. Eisenhower*](#). New York: Times Books, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

John F. Kennedy

Dallek, Robert. [*An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963*](#). Boston: Little, Brown, 2003. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Frankel, Max. [*High Noon in the Cold War: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Cuban Missile Crisis*](#). New York: Balantine, 2004. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Kaiser, David. [*American Tragedy: Kennedy, Johnson and the Origins of the Vietnam War*](#). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Posner, Gerald. [*Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK*](#). New York: Doubleday, 1994. Nominated finalist for the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for history.

Schlesinger Jr., Arthur M. [*A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*](#). Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002 (1965). Winner of the 1966 Pulitzer Prize for biography and winner of the 1966 National Book Award for history and biography.

Smith, Sally Bedell. [*Grace and Power: The Private World of the Kennedy White House*](#). New York: Random House, 2004. Named one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves.

White, Theodore H. [*The Making of the President, 1960*](#). New York: Buccaneer, 1999 (1961). Winner of the 1962 Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction.

Lyndon B. Johnson

Beschloss, Michael, ed. [*Reaching For Glory: Lyndon Johnson's Secret White House Tapes, 1964-1965*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Caro, Robert A. [*Master of the Senate: The Years of Lyndon Johnson*](#). New York: Knopf, 2002. Winner of the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for biography, the 2002 National Book Award for nonfiction, and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for biography. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Caro, Robert A. [*Means of Ascent: The Years of Lyndon Johnson*](#). New York: Knopf, 1989. Winner of the 1990 National Book Critic's Circle Award.

Caro, Robert A. [*Path to Power: The Years of Lyndon Johnson*](#). New York: Knopf, 1981. Winner of the 1982 National Book Critic's Circle Award.

Dallek, Robert. [*Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973*](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Richard M. Nixon

Dallek, Robert. [*Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power*](#). New York: Harper Collins, 2007. Nominated finalist for the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for history.

Hersh, Seymour M. [*The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983. Winner of the 1983 Los Angeles Book Prize for biography.

Mitchell, Greg. [*Tricky Dick and the Pink Lady*](#). New York: Random House, 1998. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Perlstein, Rick. [*Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America*](#). New York: Scribner, 2008. Named a *New York Times* Notable Book.

Reeves, Richard. [*President Nixon: Alone in the White House*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Jimmy Carter

Brinkley, Douglas. [*The Unfinished Presidency: Jimmy Carter's Journey Beyond the White House*](#). New York: Viking, 1998. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

Ronald Reagan

Fitzgerald, Francis. [*Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. Winner of the 2000 *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for biography.

George Bush

Halberstam, David. [*War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton and the Generals*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year and a nominated finalist for the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction.

Parnet, Herbert S. [*George Bush: The Life of a Lone Star Yankee*](#). New York: Scribner, 1998. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year.

William J. Clinton

Clinton, Bill. [*My Life*](#). New York: Knopf, 2004. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year and one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves.

Halberstam, David. [*War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton and the Generals*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year and a nominated finalist for the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction.

Harris, John F. [*The Survivor: Bill Clinton in the White House*](#). New York: Random House, 2005. Named one of the *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year and one of the *Washington Post's* Book World Raves.

Klein, Joe. [*The Natural: The Misunderstood Presidency of Bill Clinton*](#). New York: Doubleday, 2002.