

Amber and the Ancient World, by Faya Causey (152 pages, January 2012), surveys the artistic, ornamental, and medicinal uses of amber in antiquity. Consisting of the fossilized resin from ancient coniferous forests, amber was valued in the ancient world for its color, rarity, softness, transparency, and electrostatic properties. Causey uses as illustrations the amber carvings at the J. Paul Getty Museum and other collections. Getty Publications. 978-1-6606-082-7.

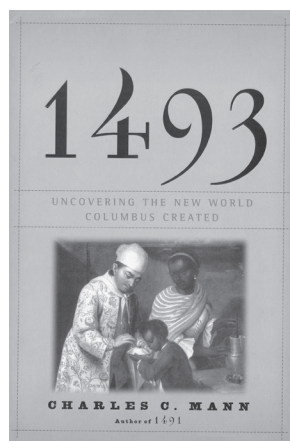
American Dreamers: How the Left Changed a Nation, by Michael Kazin (329 pages, August 2011), explores leftist tendencies in the American sociopolitical spectrum from abolitionism to the reaction against global capitalism in the 21st century. Kazin counters the predominant outlook that the American left is a failure with evidence that it has indeed effected change: Slavery was abolished, African Americans and women enjoy civil and political rights, the state offers more security to poor and physically challenged people, and corporate abuses are at least marginally regulated. In reviewing the left's successes, he examines why its idealistic dreams did not always come true in the way it had hoped. Alfred A. Knopf. \$27.95. 978-0-307-26628-6.

Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine, and the Murder of a President, by Candice Millard (319 pages, September 2011), is a lucid and accessible account of the assassination of President James A. Garfield in 1881, the mad schemes of the killer Charles Guiteau, and the ineptness of Garfield's doctors that led to his death four months later from sepsis. Millard captures the personalities of the men involved and offers a cohesive summary of post-Reconstruction politics in this excellent narrative history. \$28.95. Doubleday. 978-0-385-52626-5.

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Drive and Curiosity: What Fuels the Passion for Science, by István Hargittai (338 pages, October 2011), briefly describes in a readable manner the work of 15 scientists, all of them Nobel Prize winners or nominees, who have made significant scientific breakthroughs. Among them are Leó Szilárd, who first conceived of the nuclear chain reaction in 1933; George Gamow, who developed the Big Bang theory in 1948; Rosalyn Yalow, who invented the radioimmunoassay (RIA) technique for measuring extremely small amounts of hormones in blood; and Peter Mansfield, who (with Paul C. Lauterbur) advanced magnetic resonance image technology. Hargittai demonstrates how each of these individuals not only had drive and curiosity, but other characteristics that were equally important, such as competitiveness, risk-taking, altruism, and stubbornness. An inspirational book for those considering a career in science. Prometheus. \$26.00. 978-1-61614-468-5.

1493: Uncovering the New World That Columbus Created, by Charles C. Mann (535 pages, August 2011), argues that Christopher Columbus did not so much discover a new world as create one—a world-spanning economic system that triggered massive agricultural, industrial, and cultural changes. Mann looks at the Jamestown colony and the importation of tobacco from



South America and pigs and honeybees from Europe; the impact of malaria and yellow fever on slavery, poverty, and the outcome of the Ameri-

can Revolution; the shiploads of silver from New Spain that went to China and ultimately undermined the economy of the Ming Dynasty; the origin of the infestation that caused the Irish potato blight of the 1840s; rubber booms and busts in Brazil and Southeast Asia; and the massive population shifts created by the slave trade. This is broad-brush history at its best, written with a care for the curious detail and a flair for making history and science relevant for the contemporary reader. Alfred A. Knopf. \$30.50. 978-0-307-26572-2.

Horror Films of the 1990s, by John Kenneth Muir (702 pages, September 2011), adds another decade of filmography to the author's previous works on horror cinema of the 1970s and 1980s. Muir is particularly insightful in his commentaries on each of the more than 300 films reviewed, analyzing everything from its budget, direction, and photography to its creativity, believability, effectiveness, and context within current events. In an introduction, he notes that 1990s horror films in general were subdued and tried to distance themselves from the horror label, perhaps in reaction to the over-the-top gore-and-scream-fests of the previous 30 years. In another chapter, Muir analyzes the trends and conventions associated with this era—among them aliens, conspiracies, slashers, interlopers, serial killers, and science run amok. \$59.95. McFarland. 978-0-7864-4012-2.

Sixties Shockers: A Critical Filmography of Horror Cinema, 1960–1969, by Mark Clark and Bryan Senn (536 pages, July 2011), offers the same critical coverage of some 600 horror films (and fantasy and science fiction films with significant horror elements) of the 1960s, a culturally experimental decade in which classic horror evolved into its modern forms. \$59.95. McFarland. 978-0-7864-3381-0.

The Rise of the American Circus, 1716–1899, by S. L. Kotar and J. E. Gessler (354 pages, September 2011), offers an enormous

amount of details, anecdotes, trivia, and imagery of the circus, from its origins in 18th-century English equestrian and acrobatic extravaganzas to Barnum & Bailey's classic Greatest Show on Earth. The entertainment value of traveling circuses to rural Americans is well-known, but documentation on the shows is slim; the authors have consulted a massive number of newspaper sources to reveal the day-to-day operations of a complicated business involving showmen, advertising agents, vendors, performers, musicians, and a menagerie of trained animals. A four-page glossary provides definitions of circus terms and slang. \$45.00. McFarland. 978-0-7864-6159-2.

Wildlife of Southern Africa, by Martin B. Withers and David Hosking (272 pages, September 2011), is a photographic guide to the birds and mammals that visitors to the national parks and reserves of South Africa are likely to encounter. Most of the photos were taken by the authors, both seasoned nature photographers. In the introduction they offer abundant advice on cameras, lenses, memory cards, exposure, and lighting. \$19.95. Princeton University. 978-0-691-15063-5.

Women in the Ancient World, by Jenifer Neils (216 pages, October 2011), analyzes the artistic depiction of women from the Neolithic Era to Late Roman times in an attempt to assess their lives and societal roles. Most ancient texts were written by men with few female voices represented. Artists and artisans were also primarily male, but Neils gleans a significant amount of insight into the roles of women as mourners, mothers, workers (weavers, cooks, dancers, wet nurses, prostitutes, water carriers, and even gladiators), priestesses, and (in a handful of cases) rulers from the paintings, sculptures, and artifacts surviving from ancient times. One chapter covers the arts of female adornment and beautification, which provides some information on status and social roles in antiquity. \$25.00. Getty Publications. 978-1-60606-091-9. 