

February 2006

Book Reviews -- Monographic Musings

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Recommended Citation

Vaughn, Debbie (2006) "Book Reviews -- Monographic Musings," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 18: Iss. 1, Article 21.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4850>

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Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

by **Phillip P. Powell** (College of Charleston) <powellp@cofc.edu>

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

Column Editor's Note: February is packed with historical events pertaining to the American Revolution. The first official Patriot victory in the Revolutionary War occurred on February 27, 1776 at Moores Creek, North Carolina. On February 14, 1779, a group of 340 Patriots led by South Carolina's own Andrew Pickens defeated a guard of 700 Loyalists at Kettle Creek, Geor-

gia. Just ten years later on February 4, George Washington was unanimously elected president by the Electoral College, a feat which reoccurred in the year 1792. How timely for veteran ATG reviewer Phillip Powell to offer his insight on Norman Desmarais' new book Battlegrounds of Freedom. The author's name likely sounds familiar — not only is he a frequent contribu-

tor to ATG and other library journals, but some of you ATG readers might also have had the pleasure of attending Norman's presentation on Charleston Revolutionary War Battlefields at the 2005 Charleston Conference.

Many thanks to Phillip for his contribution to this month's column. Happy reading, everyone! — DV

Desmarais, Norman. *Battlegrounds of Freedom: A Historical Guide to the Battlefields of the War of American Independence.*

Ithaca: Busca, 2005. ISBN 0-9666196-7-6. 241 pages. \$26.95.

Reviewed by **Phillip P. Powell** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <powellp@cofc.edu>



Norman Desmarais, whose name is no stranger to readers of *Against the Grain*, has written this guide about battlefields and monuments of the American Revolution. A man of wide-ranging interests, Desmarais draws upon his avocation as an avid Revolutionary War reenactor as inspiration for this book. In fact, he appears front and center in the photo on the book's cover in full period uniform.

This is a great book for buffs who wish to visit battlefields of the American Revolution. It is one of several books written since the Bicentennial in 1976. As Desmarais states, a good number of these battlefields are no more than plaques in the midst of urban areas. Yet, there are many battlefields that have been made into historical parks administered by Federal and state governments, and even by private organizations as in the case of Fort Ticonderoga, New York.

For someone who might meander from Maine in the north to Georgia in the south with the occasional foray west as far as Illinois and Indiana, the arrangement of this guide is perfect. For the librarian (and other users) seeking the comfort of an alphabetical arrangement, the Table of Contents and the Index become essential tools. Once the state has been established, an alphabetical sequence of battlefields still eludes the user. This time, Desmarais arranges battles chronologically. And further, in New York and South Carolina, where there is a heavy concentration of Revolutionary battle sites, there are geographic subdivisions that are then chronologically arranged. Keep the T of C handy.

Desmarais truly excels with his detailed annotations of the battles and their sites. It is the reenactor's intimate knowledge of these battles showing through. What is even better, the wording of his annotations indicates he has been to a lot of these battle sites. The length varies with the importance of the event

with the longest coverage appearing to be given to Yorktown in 1781. Each entry begins with an inset box providing information of the battlefield as it exists today. Fairly explicit directions are provided. Following the URL for the Website, such information about interpretive centers, markers, and extant buildings and fortifications is included. What are especially fascinating are the detailed descriptions of the battles themselves. A typical entry includes the generals of both sides, the number of soldiers fighting, and then, the strategy they used within the battles themselves. It is really intriguing reading.

The final chapter is Desmarais' word on reenacting. He is very frank about the amount

of commitment one must make to be a reenactor. Not only is it a commitment in time, but a commitment in expense. He provides URLs for contacting Revolutionary reenactor organizations. The bibliography of books describing a soldier's life at the time of the War of Independence could be valuable to someone looking to becoming a reenactor.

Finally, detailed maps and photographs complete this volume that should become a manual for those people who have a deep interest in the American Revolution.

Langley, Anne, Edward G. Gray and K. T. L. Vaughan. *Building Bridges: Collaboration Within and Beyond the Academic Library.* Oxford: Chandos, 2006. ISBN 1-84334-151-4. 140 pages. \$59.95.

Reviewed by **Phillip P. Powell** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <powellp@cofc.edu>

This small book of 140 pages is filled with wise thoughts regarding collaborative efforts. Also, readers are given case studies where real examples of collaboration are studied. In a way, the reviewer is reminded of the old film "Babes in Arms" when reading about collaboration. Mickey Rooney's ever-optimistic voice can be heard saying things about his father's barn for a show. And he'll direct the band, and Judy Garland would be the girl singer. And all the kids would help them put on a show. It's a pop culture example of collaboration only MGM could make possible!

Even Mickey et al learned the best-laid plans can run into problems both logistically and interpersonally. Our authors expertly and deftly explain that collaboration is a well-planned and organized activity. The first five chapters go

into depth about WHY and HOW people collaborate. Two entire chapters are spent setting the foundations for collaborative work and the technological possibilities that go with it. With technology, both blogs and wikis are discussed in some detail. After all this, the authors talk about actually getting a collaboration moving forward and eventually evaluating it.

One particularly noteworthy inclusion is the use of applicable quotes throughout these first chapters. They are drawn from a wide range of people — from Goethe to T. Boone Pickens to Frank Lloyd Wright to Jimmy Dean. Not only do the quotes provide a moment of levity, they also help focus the reader to the conceptual point being made.

Following the introductory chapters, the

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From the Reference Desk
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Bernan Press has released the 3rd edition of Peggy Garvin's *United States Government Internet Manual: 2005-2006* (2006, 1598880047, \$59). A handy reference work that lists the URLs and descriptions of over 2000 government Websites, this book offers a convenient way to pinpoint relevant government information. New to this edition are a brief index to Spanish language Websites and a small section "summarizing new government Websites" called, *what to watch for in 2006*.

Of course, all of this is on the Web and there are Web gateways like the **Federal Web Locator** and **FirstGov** that provide access. But having the URLs of more than 2000 quality sites, with thorough descriptions of their content, all nicely indexed in an easy-to-use format makes this title worth considering. 🐼

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this reason) and are generally only interested in authors who demonstrate excellent potential for producing more than one book (and therefore agents want to see more than one idea you are working on). Although I can't be certain yet, it's quite possible that publishing fiction may prove to be considerably more difficult than publishing nonfiction. So once again the self-publishing option may be called upon to come to the rescue. By the time an author learns all the wrinkles of writing and publishing in various genres, he or she will no doubt have acquired a few grey hairs and a lot of rejection slips. In the end, what I think this means is that those who have found their way into publication, whether by the traditional way or the self-publishing way, show a great love for writing combined with a lot of perseverance. 🐼

Greg's work can be previewed at his Website at www.gregorydesilet.com (including a sample of his novel in progress). He can also be contacted through his Website.

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reader is drawn into the world of collaboration within the academic library. Each of the four chapters emphasizes a specific type of collaboration — peer, internal, external, and collaboration between librarian and faculty. At first, the reviewer wondered why so much was written before the academic library was brought into the scheme of things. It is ap-

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parent, though, the authors needed to establish clarity and definition about collaboration before they could speak to it specifically. The format for these chapters is straightforward. There is a brief overview defining the type of collaboration. This is followed by an example of a collaborative group and a "case narrative." In the end, questions are presented to the reader for further reflection. The reviewer's favorite case narrative concerned planning a library-wide party. Such an example may appear trite, but many readers

have experienced difficulty planning activities that genuinely bolster group morale and well being.

A few final words. Administrators would be well-served reading this book. The publisher may be British, but the authors are all from North Carolina and write from the perspective on this side of the Pond. Each chapter is followed by a significant bibliography. Despite the hefty price, this might become required reading for anyone who feels that "two (or more) heads are better than one." 🐼