

BROWSE

- [Collections](#)
- [Disciplines](#)
- [Authors](#)
- [Journals](#)

SEARCH

Enter search terms:

in this series

[Advanced Search](#)

[Notify me via email or RSS](#)

AUTHOR CORNER

[Author FAQ](#)

LINKS

[Info on submitting W&M theses and dissertations](#)

ABOUT SCHOLARWORKS

[Theses & Dissertations](#)

[Benefits](#)

[Policies](#)

[Contact Us](#)

LINKS

[W&M Libraries](#)

[VIMS Hargis Library](#)

[W&M Law School Repository](#)

[Research Guides](#)



[Home](#) > [ETDS](#) > [etd](#) > 1539623934

[< Previous](#)

[Next >](#)

DISSERTATIONS, THESES, AND MASTERS PROJECTS

Let us now praise famous men: A history the American World War II personal narrative, 1942-1945

[Download](#)

[Share Feedback](#)

[Hildy Michelle Neel](#), *College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences*

Date Awarded

1998

Document Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Department

American Studies

Advisor

Robert Gross

Abstract

This dissertation charts the publishing history, marketing, packaging, authorship, and reviewing of WWII personal narratives, explores connections between wartime narratives and issues of censorship, rationing, and the use of books as propaganda, and closely examines the main themes of twenty-five of the nearly two hundred written between 1942 and 1945. The books being assayed offered an insider's view of combat from every theater of war and every branch of the service as well as the Merchant Marines. An offshoot of the documentary impulse of the Thirties, the personal narrative became an American publishing phenomenon during the next decade's war. In general, the fundamental character of the American white male hero was portrayed in the trials and triumphs of the citizen-soldier of democracy. Narratives celebrated the transformation of the Thirties "common man" into the "giant in the earth" figure, cast simultaneously in an ordinary and epic mold. In each decade, monumental challenges galvanized witnesses to provide insightful information about events which affected millions. to serve a different set of war-related needs, however, the WWII books recruited new writers, acquired new commercial sponsors, and drew upon Hemingway's concrete renditions of war. In order to sustain morale on the home front and in the armed forces, civilians obtained these war narratives (GI's received a different set of Armed Services Editions). For the publishers of personal narratives, patriotism and profits went hand in hand. The war narratives performed crucial ideological work. They engaged issues that touched deep anxieties in the public. Amidst a vast military effort that mobilized millions for a far-flung international conflict, these books personalized the soldier thereby keeping alive the American ideal of the heroic individual, full of "can-do" spirit, committed to democracy, ready to sacrifice his life for a return to an American way of an American way of life. Romanticizing the individual, they reinforced deep-seated national myths.

DOI

<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-07gb-1j68>

Rights

© The Author

Recommended Citation

Neel, Hildy Michelle, "Let us now praise famous men: A history the American World War II personal narrative, 1942-1945" (1998). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. Paper 1539623934.

<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-07gb-1j68>

INCLUDED IN

[American Studies Commons](#),

[United States History Commons](#)

SHARE



After World War II. The literary historian Malcolm Cowley described the years between the two world wars as a "second flowering" of American writing. Certainly American literature attained a new maturity and a rich diversity in the 1920s and '30s, and significant works by several major figures from those decades were published after 1945. Faulkner, Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Katherine Anne Porter wrote memorable fiction, though not up to their prewar standard; and Frost, Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, E.E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, and Gwendolyn Brooks published important works. Two years after that, because of Agee's untimely death and as a result of the critical acclaim for his novel, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* was re-published and became an instant classic, not only due to Agee's narrative, but also because of Evans' haunting black-and-white photographs that appear uncaptioned at the beginning of the book. Few very few books can knock me like *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Originally commissioned as a report back to the Northern seaboard's intellectual elites on the state of Southern affairs, 'reporter' Agee did something no one saw coming (including himself): he fell in love. World War II was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. Rising to power in an unstable Germany, Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist (Nazi Party) rearmed the nation and signed treaties with Italy and Japan to further his ambitions of world domination. Hitler's invasion of Poland drove Great Britain and France to declare war on Germany, and World War II had begun. The majority of the world's countries eventually formed two opposing alliances: the Allies and the Axis. World War II: Internment of Japanese Americans. Evacuees from Arizona's Poston War Relocation Center stand in line before the departure station where they received ration books and bus tickets home in September of 1945. (NARA). World History World War II History Pics Arkansas Camping Arkansas Vacations Arkansas Usa Old Globe Non Plus Ultra Japanese American. Dorothea Lange was famous for her Dust Bowl America images. But she also documented the 1942 removal and imprisonment of Japanese Americans. Ww2 Photos Rare Photos Usmc Marines Islands In The Pacific Ultimate Man Cave Military History Military Photos China. A Japanese truck captured by Marines is driven on a muddy road during the first Allied offensive in the Pacific, Guadalcanal, 1942.