

social sciences

BIOGRAPHY

Hassan, Amina. *Loren Miller: Civil Rights Attorney and Journalist*. Univ. of Oklahoma. Sept. 2015. 312p. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780806149165. \$26.95. **BLOG**

In her new biography on Loren Miller (1903–67), historian Hassan covers the life of a man who was, by turns, a journalist, civil rights activist, attorney, and judge. Using archives from the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, the author traces Miller's early childhood in a mixed-race family through his career as a municipal judge in Los Angeles. A considerable portion of the book describes the subject's travels with Langston Hughes to Soviet Russia for a film on race relations in that country. Later chapters focus on Miller's work as a civil rights attorney and his appearance with co-counsel Thurgood Marshall before the U.S. Supreme Court.

and class through memories of growing up in a wealthy, elite family in Chicago. A member of *Negroland*, Jefferson's term for a small group of privileged African Americans, she explains the contradictory nature of her existence, relating tales of childhood and young adulthood that will be familiar to anyone who was once an adolescent girl trying to measure up. These reflections also reveal a painful duality that exists within *Negroland*, one that can lead to depression and, in some families, exile. Coming of age in the civil rights era, during the shift into second-wave feminism, Jefferson parallels her remembrances with current events of her lifetime; she was born in the 1960s. The author's heartfelt prose takes her audience on a journey through rejection and acceptance, exclusion and inclusion, self-doubt and perseverance in this page-turning, provocative narrative. Includes eight

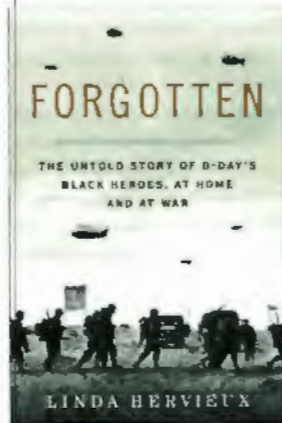
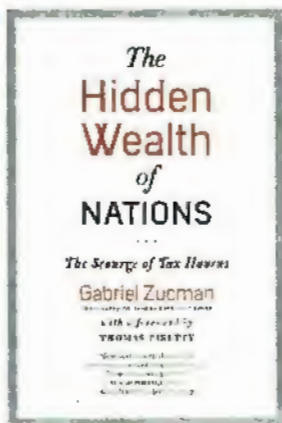
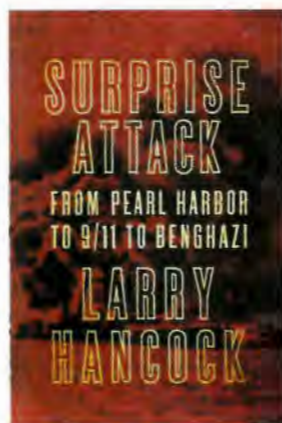
athlete. Using frank and clear prose, Nyad unflinchingly details the childhood sexual abuse she was resolved to move beyond, as well as her difficult relationship with a con-man father, her ongoing journey of personal growth, and audacious swimming feats. This inspiring tale of overcoming seemingly impossible obstacles to achieve a lifelong dream provides a gripping example of the strength of the human spirit regardless of age. **VERDICT** Particularly effective in its ability to portray the complex psychology of an extreme endurance athlete, Nyad's moving account is well suited for readers interested in open-water swimming, endurance sports, athletes' memoirs, or age-defying adventures. [See Prepub Alert, 4/6/15.]—Ingrid Levin, *Salve Regina Univ. Lib., Newport, RI*

COMMUNICATIONS

Vinciguerra, Thomas. *Cast of Characters: Wolcott Gibbs, E.B. White, James Thurber, and the Golden Age of The New Yorker*. Norton. Nov. 2015. 464p. photos. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780393240030. \$27.95; ebk. ISBN 9780393248746.

COMM

Insightful reporting, literary gems, and humorous illustrations have filled the pages of *The New Yorker* for 90 years. Vinciguerra (editor, *Backward Run Sentences*) flashes back to the magazine's golden age, when founder Harold Ross guided a remarkable cast of characters to produce a magazine whose cultural reach extended well beyond New York. He provides colorful biographical sketches of its leading luminaries, focusing mostly on theater critic Wolcott Gibbs, humorist James Thurber, and essayist E.B. White. By conducting extensive interviews and combing *The New Yorker's* archives, the author brings to life the personalities who not only helped make the magazine a success, but who shaped the modern American literary landscape. With the exception of his portrait of Gibbs—who originally was to be the sole subject of Vinciguerra's work—this overly long book adds little fresh material to the extensive bibliography of the iconic publication and its famous literati, which includes Ben Yagoda's *About Town* and Thomas Kunkel's *Genius in Disguise*. **VERDICT** Only for aficionados of the magazine and connoisseurs of early 20th-century American literature.—Donna Marie Smith, *Palm Beach Cty. Lib. Syst., FL*



At home & abroad: dangerous threats, tax havens and their impact, soldiers and their stories

Hassan's attempt to capture the social and political atmosphere occasionally leads to overly long passages on minor details, but she successfully explains how Miller was a key character in the civil rights struggle in America. **VERDICT** A recommended work that adds to the corpus of civil rights histories and offers a rich portrait of a central figure in the related struggle in California.—John Rodzvilla, *Emerson Coll., Boston*

Jefferson, Margo. *Negroland*. Pantheon. Sept. 2015. 256p. photos. ISBN 9780307378453. \$25; ebk. ISBN 9781101870648. **MEMOIR**

In this emotional memoir, Pulitzer Prize winner Jefferson (writing, Columbia Univ.; *On Michael Jackson*) examines race, gender,

pages of black-and-white photographs. **VERDICT** Highly recommended for biography and memoir lovers, historians, and readers interested in psychology and social movements. [See Prepub Alert, 3/16/15.]—Venessa Hughes, *Buffalo, NY*

Nyad, Diana. *Find a Way*. Knopf. Oct. 2015. 320p. ISBN 9780385353618. \$26.95; ebk. ISBN 9780385353625. **AUTOBIOG**

In 2013, open-water marathon swimmer Nyad (b. 1949) made history by swimming from Cuba to Key West, FL, without the assistance of a shark cage after a number of frustrating, failed attempts. In this comprehensive autobiography, Nyad (*Boss of Me*) offers a fascinating glimpse into her life as a talented and fiercely determined