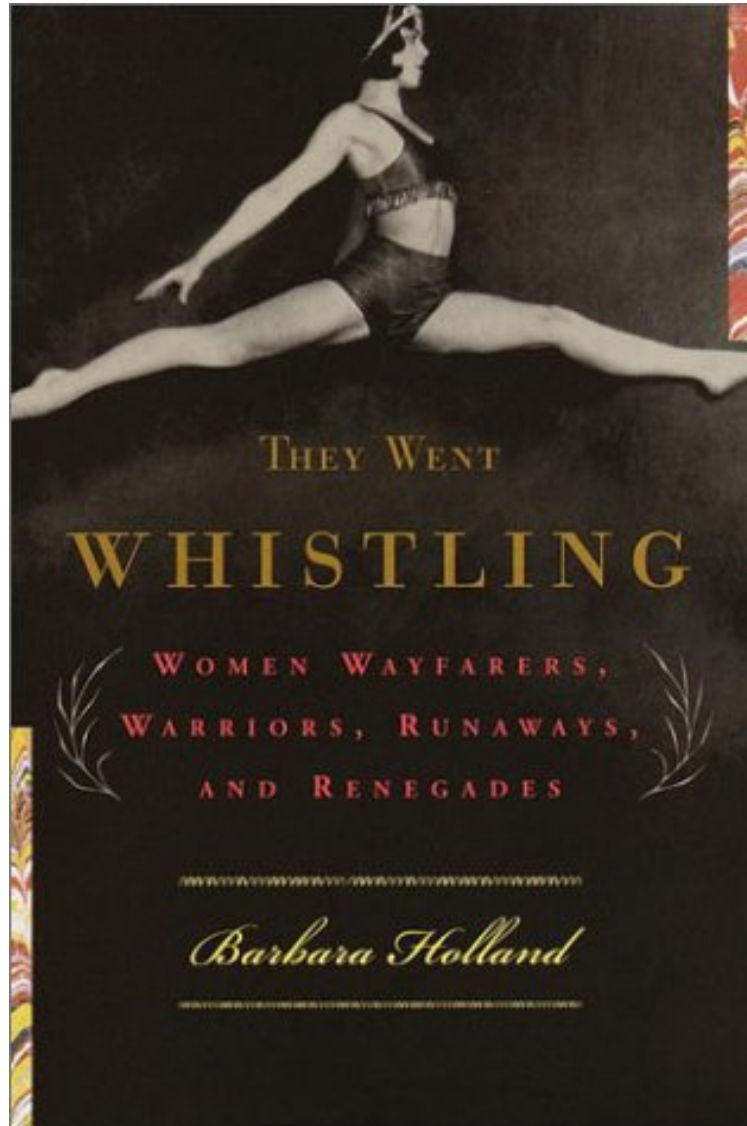


[Download] They Went Whistling : Women Wayfarers, Warriors, Runaways, and Renegades

They Went Whistling : Women Wayfarers, Warriors, Runaways, and Renegades

Barbara Holland

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Barbara Holland : They Went Whistling : Women Wayfarers, Warriors, Runaways, and Renegades before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *They Went Whistling : Women Wayfarers, Warriors, Runaways, and Renegades*:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Celebrating difficult women By Mr. Joe "A woman strolling down the street on a splendid morning might feel like whistling, but whistling in a dress would be absurd. Whistling implies and

requires pants, and the swagger that goes with them. Ideally, it calls for pockets to thrust the hands into, or at least a sturdy waistband for the thumbs." - Barbara Holland Thus it is in *THEY WENT WHISTLING* that Holland provides thumbnail biographies of a number of women in history that kicked over the traces and, while literally dressed in pants or not, did what the male of the species does routinely, i.e. pretty much what they wanted without reference to society's expectations or rules. There may have been a method to Holland's choice of subjects and her categorization of them, though, to me, the former seemed somewhat arbitrary. The categories, and examples of whistlers in each, encompassed Warriors (Cleopatra, Queen Boudicca), those donning Menswear (Joan of Arc, Calamity Jane, Amantine-Aurore-Lucile Dupin, a.k.a. George Sand), Outlaws (Grace O'Malley, Bonnie Parker), Exiles (Jane Digby, Daisy Bates), Wayfarers (Isabella Bird, Mary Kingsley, Dervla Murphy), Renegades (Mary Fields, Belle Star), Grandstanders (Belle Boyd, Lola Montez), Seekers (St. Mary of Egypt, Alexandra David-Neel), and Radicals (Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, Emma Goldman). I'd never heard of most of these, and a value of the volume was that they were introduced to me at all. I wish there was a photo section as it would have saved me several trips to the Web; there isn't, and for that I'm knocking off a star right up front. The author's wryly humorous writing style, never mean or petty, isn't as prominent a feature of *THEY WENT WHISTLING* as it is in her other commentaries on times, social mores, things and places as found in *Endangered Pleasures: In Defense of Naps, Bacon, Martinis, Profanity, and Other Indulgences*, and *Wasn't the Grass Greener?: Thirty-three Reasons Why Life Isn't as Good as It Used to Be* and *Bingo Night at the Fire Hall: Rediscovering Life in an American Village*, though it still shows through, as in the following observation about the Roman Triumvirate: "The Romans were still tinkering with the notion of the Triumvirate, or three equal rulers, which, considering the testosterone content of your basic Roman male, was an ill-starred concept. Antony ruled with Octavius and someone named Lepidus, who prudently crept offstage early." Although I personally don't regard *THEY WENT WHISTLING* as one of Holland's best endeavors mainly because it seems but a collection of cobbled-together stories, it deserves a place on the bookshelves maintained by her dedicated fans. I'm left wondering, however, why Barbara didn't include my favorite female historical figure who more than held her own vis-a-vis the powerful men in her life, Henry II's troublesome consort Eleanor of Aquitaine. I'd love to see what Holland could do with that story.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is a great book. By Kindle Customer I am not a great reviewer, I am not particularly eloquent but I must strongly recommend you try this book. The women written about within are strong, fearless, and fascinating. You will probably have heard of a few--not nearly as many as deserve to be known, you may well not have ever heard of a few of them. But like me, you will probably seek out more information on at least a few. (After reading about Mary Kingsley I had to read her book which I very much enjoyed.) The book is well-written, humorous and thoughtful and brings these incredible women to life. I highly recommend this book and if you like it, I suggest you also try her book on the Presidents. Also very worth reading.

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Marvelous book! By Emily S. What a terrific new book from Barbara Holland! It's about extraordinary women: the famous, like Queen Cleopatra, and the relatively unknown, like pirate Grace O'Malley. Holland's wise and witty style is the glue that holds these women's stories -- extremely well researched -- together. She has done the legwork so we can sit back and enjoy. No dull stuff here! We may have thought we knew the likes of Joan of Arc and Bonnie Parker (of Bonnie and Clyde) from the movies, plays and poems about them. With "They Went Whistling" we get closer to the real women, and they're a great deal more fascinating than the Hollywood versions. Holland's got the facts to back up her statements, but this book is no dry history lesson: it's a heck of a lot of fun. One of my favorite women is Mary Kingsley, born in England in 1862. At the age of 30, a spinster, she went off to West Africa to explore. Alone. Her adventures were amazing; her humor a delightful bonus. A crocodile, Kingsley wrote in her journal, "chose to get his front paws over the stern of my canoe, and endeavored to improve our acquaintance. I had to retire to the bows, to keep the balance right, and fetch him a clip on the snout with a paddle...." In her introduction, Holland writes, "In the index to Kenneth Clark's definitive 'Civilisation' ... we find the names of 395 men and eleven women...." Men may get the credit for inventing the wheel and the skyscraper, but with Holland's latest book we can celebrate women who ruled, battled, explored and exploited a few corners of the world, too. Most highly recommended.

Women weren't supposed to take their lives into their own hands, light out by themselves, have independent, off-the-beaten-path adventures. Nonetheless, throughout history there have been women who cast off the shackles of expectation, stepped out of the cave, and slashed their way into history. Elegant, witty, sometimes hilarious, sometimes moving, always perceptive, Barbara Holland tells us the stories of women, famous and infamous, celebrated and unsung, who have stepped over the edge. Here are Cleopatra, Joan of Arc, Bonnie Parker (of Bonnie and Clyde), Amelia Earhart, George Sand, Isadora Duncan, Mata Hari, Belle Starr, and their lesser-known sisters in adventure and spirit: Gertrude Bell, uncrowned queen of Iraq; Daisy Bates, Victorian anthropologist of the Australian aborigines; American pirates Anne Bonny and Mary Read; Queen Njinga of Angola. These irrepressible adventurers, who reveled in the limitlessness of possibility and desire, are brought irresistibly to life by Barbara Holland in a book that will entrance and delight readers.

.com They Went Whistling is Barbara Holland's account of history's outstanding, and largely forgotten, females. The women revealed within these pages were driven by passion--for religion, humanity, adventure, politics, and knowledge--that couldn't be curtailed by convention. They were witty, defiant, and, more often than not, beautiful. Shamefully, most of us are unfamiliar with their accomplishments. Holland brings such faces as Joan of Arc, Daisy Bates, Stagecoach Mary, and Mary "Mother" Jones into the same light as Napoleon, Lawrence of Arabia, Billy the Kid, and Frederick Engels. These women lived fascinating lives. Often it is not their virtuousness that is prized, but their gall and utter disregard for living within societal lines. In the chapter entitled "Menswear," we learn that as a young woman George Sand found that when "dressed as a man, she was treated as a man, and allowed to argue and speak her mind." She henceforth lived a life of androgyny, holding "the peculiar idea that she could be a man as well as a woman, alternately and simultaneously." Then there is the story of Grace O' Malley, an Irish pirate who commandeered her own fleet of plundering ships. And who has produced more rumors and speculation than Amelia Earhart, who "for over two weeks was the most famous person in the world"? Holland also divulges obscure facts and personality traits. For instance, few know that Bonnie (of Bonnie and Clyde) was an avid romance reader and writer who wrote poems about her adventures. "For Bonnie, crime was the epic ballad she was weaving out of her life." While the histories are straightforward and detailed, Holland spices these pages with witty and satirical interjections. This book is long overdue and goes far in leveling the historical field of recognition. --Jacque Holthusen
From Publishers Weekly
A girl-power version of women's history, Holland's entertaining book chronicles the lives of women who have defied convention by daring to live as career criminals, soldiers, artists and religious seekers. The individual descriptions of female renegades
Afrom Irish rebel Grace O'Malley to novelist George Sand and Bonnie Parker (of Bonnie and Clyde) are breezily pleasurable. Holland (Endangered Pleasures; Bingo Night at the Fire Hall) maintains a droll tone ("Few husbands would rather have their wives seek truth than cook dinner") and juggles a range of historical examples with ease. The book's energy is hampered, however, by the author's sometimes simplistic rationales for why many women have stayed closer to home: "Even if she has neither job nor children, what will become of her house and garden without her, and will her cat starve and her friends forget her?" Holland's concluding complaint
Athat "careers... keep women in line more effectively than policemen or repressive husbands"
A
may strike some readers as overstated, as will her general lament for our "lost" sense of adventure, given that a large number of her heroines are queens, s, spies and outlaws (hardly role models the average woman can emulate). Still, hers is a brisk, enjoyable volume, likely to draw fans of such women's adventure books as Linda Greenlaw's *The Hungry Ocean*. (Feb. 20) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From School Library Journal
Adult/High School--Deriving its title from the old rhyme "A whistling woman and a crowing hen/Both will come to no good end," this snappy book proves that whatever their ends, adventures of women who whistle in the face of convention can make for outstandingly entertaining reading. These true stories of some of history's "willful wildlings" include both the famous (Cleopatra) and the lesser-known (the religious pilgrim Alexandra David-Neel, who walked in disguise to Tibet) in a wide range of endeavors, from piracy to social reform. With the pace of a music video, the style of a gossip column, and the wit of a Molly Ivins, these stories should prove irresistible even to teens with short attention spans and a reluctance to read history. The breezy "Acknowledgments" page perhaps describes Holland's attitude best: "The author is greatly indebted to all those genuine biographers whose patient work she has shamelessly plundered." Despite its irreverent style, the content is well researched and the author's positions--particularly concerning the unreliability of historians throughout the ages--are solid and defensible. Holland owes much to feminist scholars, particularly in the chapter "Menswear," an excellent introduction to the political and cultural meanings of gender-defined clothing, and in her insightful comments on the malleability of history. Finally, Holland raises interesting questions about what would constitute "whistling" nowadays. It is doubtful that any teen who reads this book would again make the mistake of assuming history to be dull--or to think it is written in stone.
Christine C. Menefee, Fairfax County Public Library, VA
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