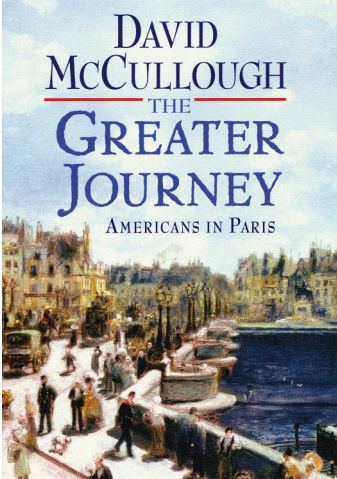


Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club Guide

September 2016



Reading Guide: *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris* by David McCullough (2011)

1. Does this book have a central theme or argument? What is it?
2. Which person or people profiled caught your interest most? What will you remember about this person?
3. Although focused on the experience of Americans abroad, this book also serves as a history of Paris in the 19th century through the eyes of American visitors. What did you learn about Paris and France from reading this book? If you had had the opportunity to visit Paris during the 1800s, when would you have wanted to be there?
4. Was there anything you wished David McCullough had discussed more or differently? Anything that could have been left out of the book?
5. What is the most important or memorable thing you will take away from having read this book? What surprised you most?
6. How would you classify *The Greater Journey*—is it the history of a community, the history of a place, or both? What is McCullough's particular style of narrating history? Which of McCullough's "narrators"—the men and women who witnessed the history of Paris—provides the clearest view of his or her environment?
7. For those who have participated in earlier book club discussions, how does this reading connect to other books we have read? How does it bridge the Bayou Bend and Rienzi collections?
8. Were you glad you read this book? Would you recommend it to a friend? Have you read other books by this author? How would you say this one compares?

Author Biography

David McCullough has twice received the Pulitzer Prize, for *Truman* and *John Adams*, and twice received the National Book Award, for *The Path Between the Seas* and *Mornings on Horseback*; other widely praised books include *1776*, *Brave Companions*, *The Johnstown Flood*, *The Great Bridge*, and *The Wright Brothers*. He has been honored with the National Book Foundation Distinguished Contribution to American Letters Award, the National Humanities Medal, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Related Texts

If you liked *The Greater Journey*, you may enjoy these other books (descriptions courtesy of amazon.com):

Paris Reborn: Napoléon III, Baron Haussmann, and the Quest to Build a Modern City
by Stephane Kirkland (2014)

In the mid-19th century, the Paris we know today was born, the vision of two extraordinary men: the endlessly ambitious Emperor Napoléon III and his unstoppable accomplice Baron Haussmann. This is the vivid and engrossing account of the greatest transformation of a major city in modern history. Stephane Kirkland's *Paris Reborn* is a must-read for anyone who ever wondered how Paris, the city universally admired as a standard of urban beauty, became what it is.

Being American in Europe, 1750–1860 by Daniel Kilbride (2013)

Being American in Europe, 1750–1860 tracks the adventures of American travelers while exploring large questions about how these experiences affected national identity. Daniel Kilbride searched the diaries, letters, published accounts, and guidebooks written between the late colonial period and the Civil War. His sources are written by people who, while prominent in their own time, are largely obscure today, making this account fresh and unusual.

Seductive Journey: American Tourists in France from Jefferson to the Jazz Age
by Harvey Levenstein (1998)

For centuries, France has cast an extraordinary spell on travelers. Harvey Levenstein's *Seductive Journey* explains why so many Americans have visited it, and tells, in colorful detail, what they did when they got there. The result is a highly entertaining examination of the transformation of American attitudes toward French food, sex, and culture, as well as an absorbing exploration of changing notions of class, gender, race, and nationality. From Fragonard to foie gras, the delicious details of this story of how American visitors to France responded to changing notions of leisure and blazed the trail for modern mass tourism makes for delightful, thought-provoking reading.

The Paris Years of Thomas Jefferson by William Howard Adams (1997)

In 1784 Thomas Jefferson moved to the city of Paris, where he spent the next five years as minister for the new United States of America. These were formative years for France, for the United States, and for Jefferson's cultural and intellectual development. This book re-creates the atmosphere and personalities of prerevolutionary Paris, and reveals the impact they had on one of America's first transatlantic citizens. The principal focus of the book is on Jefferson's role as the preeminent envoy in Europe after the departure of Franklin, his participation in the cultural and political life of the city, and his private intrigues to help his friends bring the Bourbon monarchy to heel.

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