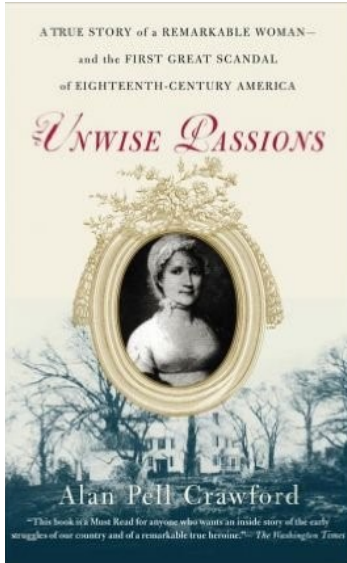


# Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club Guide

## January 2016




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### Reading Guide: *Unwise Passions*, by Alan Pell Crawford (2000)

1. What was this book really about? Does it have a central theme or argument?
2. Who comes off best in this book? Who would you most dislike if you met him or her in real life?
3. What parallels to current family dynamics do you see in the books? What differences do you detect?
4. What larger stories does Crawford tell beyond Nancy Randolph's biography?
5. What does Alan Pell Crawford do well in this book? What do you wish he had done differently or better?
6. Nancy Randolph Morris's story was told briefly in the Cokie Roberts book *Founding Mothers*. What other historical characters who have appeared in book group books would you like to learn more about?
7. If you read *Book of Ages*, about Benjamin Franklin's sister Jane, where do you see similarities or connections to Nancy Randolph's story? What differences do you find?

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### Author Biography

Alan Pell Crawford is the author of *Twilight at Monticello*, *Unwise Passions: A True Story of a Remarkable Woman—and the First Great Scandal of Eighteenth-Century America*, and *Thunder on the Right: The "New Right" and the Politics of Resentment*. His writings have appeared in *American History*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*, and he is a regular book reviewer for *The Wall Street Journal*. Crawford has had a residential fellowship at the International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello. He lives in Richmond, Virginia. (From Random House.com)

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### Other Related Texts

If you liked *Unwise Passions*, you may enjoy these other books (descriptions courtesy of Amazon.com):

- *I Am Murdered: George Wythe, Thomas Jefferson, and the Killing That Shocked a New Nation* by Bruce Chadwick (2009)  
This historical whodunit relates the tale of the 1806 murder of one of the early nation's most celebrated jurists and public figures. Virginia's George Wythe was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution. He was also teacher and friend to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Marshall and Henry Clay. Few were as beloved and admired; the advice of no other was so sought after. But one day in 1806, he and two of his servants were poisoned. Historian Chadwick (*George Washington's War*) takes readers through the circumstances of Wythe's murder and gradually reveals—no surprise to the attentive reader—the murder suspect

- *Defiant Brides: The Untold Story of Two Revolutionary-Era Women and the Radical Men They They Married* by Nancy Rubin Stuart (2013)  
General Henry Knox and General Benedict Arnold were two of the most compelling military figures of the Revolutionary era. Though their paths took radically different turns, they each married spirited, independent women who defied both convention and their families to follow their hearts. In this interesting dual biography, Stuart parallels the lives of Peggy Shippen Arnold, renowned for both her beauty and her unwavering support of her treasonous husband, and Lucy Flucker Knox, the well-heeled daughter of staunchly Loyalist parents who threw caution and politics to the wind to marry a radical patriot
- *Scandal and Civility: Journalism and the Birth of American Democracy* by Marcus Daniel (2009)  
A new breed of journalists came to the fore in post-revolutionary America--fiercely partisan, highly ideological, and possessed of a bold sense of vocation and purpose as they entered the fray of political debate. Often condemned by latter-day historians and widely seen in their own time as a threat to public and personal civility, these colorful figures emerge in this provocative new book as the era's most important agents of political democracy.
- *Duel with the Devil: The True Story of How Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr Teamed Up to Take on America's First Sensational Murder Mystery* by Paul Collins (2014)  
Set in New York City in 1800, the murder case that Collins re-creates began with the discovery of a young woman's body in a well. It was a politically connected well, owned by a company controlled by Aaron Burr. The accused in the killing had his own influential connection--to Alexander Hamilton--through a brother who built houses for the city's elite. So, strangely, those Revolutionary War heroes, intense political rivals, and future duelists became the defense lawyers for Levi Weeks.

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