



ESO



Epsilon Sigma Omicron
Upsilon Chapter

September 2025

SPECIAL DAYS TO CELEBRATE IN SEPTEMBER

Library Card sign-up Month
National Literacy Month
September 6—National Read a Book Day
September 8—International Literacy Day
September 22—Banned Books Week

AUTHORS BORN IN SEPTEMBER

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, CA in September, but exact date is unknown.
September 3—Malcolm Gladwell, #1 writer of nonfiction science and culture
September 13—Roald Dahl, British author of children's books, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*
September 13—Mildred Taylor, a Newbery Award-winning author
September 15—Agatha Christie—English detective novelist
September 21—H. G. Wells—wrote classics such as *The War of the Worlds*
September 24--F. Scott Fitzgerald, short story novelist including *The Great Gatsby*
September 25—William Faulkner, 1949 Nobel Prize in Literature
September 25—Kristin Hannah, more than 20 historical fiction novels that have appeared on the New York Times bestselling list.

CALIFORNIA HISTORY

Since I have received questions on Category #5, California History, this will be the Category of the month. This is the only Category that is not on the GFWC list. It has been on our list since our California ESO chapter was organized in 1950's. I believe one of the reasons might have been that California History was a very important part of the Fourth-Grade curriculum and our group felt the parents and grandparents also needed to know about our own state's history.

The list of books comes from various sources including some titles from Upsilon Chapter's most recent publication and are still available on Amazon. Some books are from lists from universities in California that offer classes in California History, and some are from Goodreads and other internet sources. This list is attached as the last page of the newsletter.

The difference in this category and Categories #32 and #33 is they are mostly fiction; California History is non-fiction or historical fiction.

I hope even our Century readers will select some of these books to read. You too can be "Smarter Than a 4th Grader"!

GFWC
Facebook
ESO Book Club
Check it out!



Reggie Mattox
CFWC ESO
Chairman

**Thank goodness my book finally arrived,
I almost started cleaning the house.**



**ESO ZOOM
MEETING**

October 23

**Watch for more detail
later.**

STUDIES FIND DRASTIC DECLINE IN READING HABITS IN THE PAST YEARS!

There has been a gradual decline in adults reading for pleasure, over the past 20 years as studies show the numbers have dropped over 40%. One study showed only 48% of adults read at least one book in the past year compared to 5 years ago when this number was 53%. Consequently, adult literacy has also dropped. In 2012, just 13 years ago, about 64% of parents frequently read to their children, in 2025 the number has dropped to 41%!

You may be asking what can we do as a club to help these numbers improve? Below are a few projects your club or district could take on. Some of them you have heard before, but some may be new and worth trying.

1. The Monday Club, Inc. (AZ) donated 140 new books to an innovative program in their community in which the judge gives a new book to parents appearing in his court and orders them to read to their children each night.
2. Bristol County Woman's Club (RI) partnered with a local laundromat to start a lending library so children could read while parents did their laundry. The owner of the laundromat provided the shelves, and the members provided board books, color and activity books, and some adult books. Patrons are also able to borrow books and bring them back when they are finished. With the help of laundromat employees and all the members, over 600 books were placed in the laundromat.
3. Jubilee Woman's Club (AL) developed and conducted a program that emphasized and taught pregnant women and new mothers at a homeless shelter about the importance of reading to their children beginning at birth. Each mom was given four new board books for their children and the members partnered with the new moms and modeled reading aloud and interacting with their new babies. Nine mothers and thirteen children were impacted by this workshop.
4. Place a Little Free Library in your neighborhood or at your club house. Keep it supplied with good books for adults and children.
5. Start a book club in your neighborhood. Invite members and non-members, men and women, old and young to join. Let the members select the book to discuss, a different member each month. If your library doesn't have a book club work with your librarian to organize one at the library.
6. Prison Library Project (PLP). Their efforts provide books and educational materials to incarcerated individuals and prison libraries nationwide. Your club can save gently used books for the project. There are drop off places in Claremont and Berkeley. Check Prisoners Library Project's website for more information. "Everyone deserves to read a great book."

Suggested Reading List for California History Category #5

ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A FOURTH GRADER? DO YOU KNOW YOUR CALIFORNIA HISTORY?

History of the Donner Party by C. f. McGlashan. A foundational, original account based on interviews and survivors and their letters.

The Indifferent Stars Above: The Harrowing Saga of the Donner Party by Daniel James Brown
A modern retelling of the Donner Party's Journey

The Best Land Under Heaven by Michael Wallis. A comprehensive and well-regarded historic account of the Donner Party's tragic journey.

The Indifferent Stars Above by Daniel James Brown (Author of *Boy's in the Boat*). A different look at this legendary event in California History.

The Longest Minute by Mathew J. Davenport. A spellbinding story of the 1906 earthquake and fire in San Francisco.

The Barbary Coast by Herbert Asbury. Published first in 1933. Not to be read by 4th graders! A historical, nonfiction fiction, story of San Francisco's Underworld in the 1850's to about 1900.

The Golden Gate by Amy Chua. This is Chua's first novel, but don't let that fool you! It is compelling and historical mystery!

Ramona by Helen Hunt Jackson. This historical novel is based on actual events that took place in Southern California in the 1870's and 1880's. Although written more than a hundred years ago it is still published and sold in mass markets. It is a tale of true love tested in the hard times for the American Indian communities as well as the Spanish ranchers.

Rain of Gold by Victor E. Villaseñor. This is a true story the author's family that walked from Mexico crossing first into Arizona and then to California in the early 1900's. This story is particularly interesting for Southern California members as the reader will visit the De Anza trail, Corona, Hemet, and the LA area. You will live their hardships and their good times as well.

They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush by Jo Ann Levy. The story of a variety of women as they travel, work, and write during the 19th century gold rush days of California.

Some newer books recommended reading for History of San Francisco classes

Cool Gray City of Love by Gary Kamiya (2014). A love letter to San Francisco by an area resident. The author takes you on a guided tour through the city, including the history as you go. 4.6 rating out of 5.

Season of the Witch by David Talbot. (2013). Talbot takes you on a tour of San Francisco as it turns into a thriving metropolis in the years from 1960 to 1980. 4.6 rating

Historic San Francisco: A Concise History and Guide by Rand Richards (2011). The history starts in 1623 with the Spanish cannon that guarded the entrance to the bay to the last earthquake in 1989. Lots of photos and interesting stories. 4.2 rating