



The Blows of Yesteryear: An American Saga

John Y. Le Bourgeois, Ashton H. Le Bourgeois

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Francis Villon in his grand poem of the 15th century celebrated mythic but half-remembered ladies of antiquity. In our book we recall a family of real but largely forgotten women in American history. All were descendants of Elizabeth Taylor and Peter Blow. Their lives were full, far-flung and unscripted, emblematic of the nation's course over five generations.

Our story begins on the eastern shore of Virginia in 1800 and ends on the Pacific coast of California in 1970. It radiates from St. Louis down the Mississippi River to Belmont Plantation near New Orleans. It curls back east to the Genesee Valley in upstate New York and to Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C. It takes us across the Atlantic Ocean to London, Paris, and down to Johannesburg in South Africa, and to Sofia, St. Petersburg and Moscow in eastern Europe.

Our women are mostly fortunate in love, and marry good men. They are motivated. One creates a home for indigent women, another starts the first successful public kindergarten in America, another builds a school to train nurses in the care of infants, another commands a field hospital on the eastern front during World War One, and another helps organize a preservation society.

They all experience prosperity and suffer financial adversity. They battle with disease: cholera, tuberculosis, and typhoid, yellow and scarlet fevers. They know death, even murder; and they live with slavery and its aftermath. They meet, help, and are encouraged by many people -- some remembered, some not: Dred Scott, Lizzie Keckley, Aunt Rachel, Henry Adams, Henry James, Isadora Duncan, Little Martha, Joseph Chamberlain, Paul Kruger, Baroness Uxkull, the Tsarina Alexandra of Russia, Douglas MacArthur, Mark Twain and Diego Rivera.

Our story is as broad as Walt Whitman and as intense as Emily Dickinson.

Reviews

Ben Yagoda, author of *About Town: 'The New Yorker' and the World It Made* and *Memoir: A History*:

"John Le Bourgeois and Ashton Le Bourgeois have written a fascinating saga centering on four members of an American family whose lives, as they write, "were full, far-flung and unscripted, emblematic of the nation's course over five generations." Through these four women, all descendants of Elizabeth Taylor and Peter Blow, the reader experiences great events (the Civil War, the coming of the Gilded Age) and small ones, such as the challenges of operating a business and a household in nineteenth-century St. Louis. Each of the women achieved significant accomplishments on her own, but no small part of the pleasure of the book is learning about their encounters with famous names, including Dred Scott, Henry James, Isadora Duncan, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, whom the young Adele Chapin impressed by translating an especially difficult Latin passage."

Robin Borglum Carter, author of *Gutzon Borglum: His Life and Work*:

"All my life a bronze statue of a little girl, sculpted by my grandfather Gutzon Borglum [sculptor of the Mount Rushmore Presidents], has been in our homes and now has a place of honor with me. I only had the faintest history about "Margaret" and the names connected to her story. Thanks to John and Ashton Le Bourgeois's extensive research I can now embrace the full chronicle of Margaret and all the remarkable Blow women. What a treasure of history!"

About the Authors

John Le Bourgeois is the author of a controversial life of William Morris, the 19th century English poet and designer. Harold Bloom, the Sterling Professor of the Humanities and English at Yale, said his book "has altered my understanding of this tangled web." John was born in New Orleans and lives in Chicago.

Ashton Le Bourgeois, also a native of New Orleans, lives and works in Washington, DC.

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Maria Tate:

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also become a life style. This reading behavior give you lot of advantages. Advantages you got of course the knowledge the particular information inside the book that will improve your knowledge and information. The details you get based on what kind of publication you read, if you want attract knowledge just go with education and learning books but if you want sense happy read one together with theme for entertaining for example comic or novel. Typically the The Blows of Yesteryear: An American Saga is kind of publication which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

Dustin Alvarez:

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Linda Hill:

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