"A truly great book should be read in youth, again in maturity and once more in old age, as a fine building should be seen by morning light, at noon and by moonlight."
- Robertson Davies

Reading lets us experience things that we can never know in person, and books can reach across the years to find a new audience. For this issue of The Bookshelf, we asked OLLI members for their recommendation of books written before they were born.

**Note:** For a number of these books we were able to find free complete audio versions on YouTube, and for a few, a full movie version as well! No download or app required, just click on the links at the end of the reviews.

**Kathy Alexis**  
*Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell. I found it in an old bookcase in our basement when I was still in grade school. It was gifted to my mother by an old boyfriend. I read that book in 3 days (it was summer break). I have loved epic historical fiction ever since.  
*Audiobook*

**John Bennett**  
*The Royal Road to Romance* by Richard Halliburton. Somewhere around junior high school, I was much in the thrall of a sentiment expressed by Theodore Roosevelt: "Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory or defeat." (From a

**Important Dates for 2014**  
For more about OLLI and to register visit [olli.illinois.edu](http://olli.illinois.edu)  
July 1: Fall Course registration begins  
July 3: Study Group registration for Late Summer Session begins  
July 14: Study Group Late Summer Session begins  
September 8: Fall Courses begin  
OLLI Illinois e-News and The Bookshelf are sent automatically to members. Non-members can also receive mailings by [signing up here](http://www.illinois.edu).  
**View Archive of Past Issues**

The OLLI Bookshelf is a spin-off from the OLLI e-News that began in December of 2012. Each issue features OLLI Illinois member responses to a different question about books.

e-News Committee: Cheri Sullivan (Chair), Frank Chadwick, Connie
speech he gave, with minor variations, in Chicago as well as at the Sorbonne in Paris on April 23, 1910.) From an older cousin of mine I received a gift of Richard Halliburton's 1925 bestseller The Royal Road to Romance, about which the website Classic Travel Books says it "doesn't include a dull page. It details how the young Princeton University student cast aside any notions of a serious career, choosing instead to visit a vast array of countries from England to Japan. During the course of these travels he undertook every sort of madcap adventure that he could find, including swimming the famed Hellespont, exploring the jungles of India, and becoming the first foreigner to astonish Japan by climb[ing] snow-covered Mount Fujiyama in midwinter." This book spoke to my adolescent wanderlust and desire for adventure. Every now and then, when I find myself in danger of becoming "utterly indifferent to the divine madness of the spring moonlight," I revisit Halliburton's exploits. "The romantic - that was what I wanted. I hungered for the romance of the sea, and foreign ports, and foreign smiles. I wanted to follow the prow of a ship, any ship, and sail away . . ." This is a feeling many OLLI members know.

Chris Catanzarite
I was fascinated by Little Women by Louisa May Alcott when I was a pre-teen. (I was a diehard Americanist even as a child, gravitating toward Alcott instead of Austen!) It's no surprise that Jo was the character that drew me in: an unconventional writer with smudgy ink-stained fingers and unfashionably short hair. But I was also drawn to the book for its domestic story set in the foreign land of the 19th century - which taught me that the past can feel curiously new and familiar at the same time. Audiobook

Priscilla Christians
I loved Freckles (1904) and A Girl of the Limberlost (1909) by Gene Stratton-Porter as a teenage reader. Not classics, but romantic, with settings in Indiana and Chicago. Environmental themes as well! Freckles Audiobook | Girl of the Limberlost Audiobook

Isabel Cole
My favorite detective of all times! Sherlock Holmes by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. FULL MOVIE (1939 with Basil Rathbone) | Audiobook

Craig Cutbirth
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain. I was just a kid when I read this and I loved it immediately. This book had a lot of "firsts" for me. It's the first book I remember sneaking a flashlight into my bedroom so I
could read under the covers at night. It's the first book I remember finishing and then immediately going back to the beginning to read it again. But, most important to me, Tom Sawyer was the first book that "captured" me. By that I mean that I went beyond reading it; in my mind and imagination I was part of the story and I experienced all of Tom's adventures as I read about them. I felt awful that I didn't have warts so I could try Tom's "spunk water" cure. I was horrified to watch Injun Joe (no political correctness here) murder the doctor and I felt Tom's fear when he exposed the real killer in court. I helped whitewash the fence and got lost in the cave with Tom and Becky. That was my first lesson in why good books are better (for me anyway) than television or movies. I still get "captured" by a good book, and for that, Mr. Twain, I am forever in your debt.

FULL MOVIE (1938) | Audiobook

James Dobrovolny
I read The Yearling by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings when I was ten and it is still memorable to me these many years later. It is my recommendation for a book written before I was born.

Bill Earle
For Whom the Bell Tolls Audiobook

Love Lists?
The 20th-Century American Bestsellers Database consists of work done by students at the University of Virginia, the University of Illinois, Catholic University, and Brandeis University, from 1900 to 1999.

Books of the Century - Best Sellers, Book of the Month Club Selections, and critically acclaimed and historically important books published from 1900 to 1999.

For children's books, a list of the Newbery awards since 1922 and the Caldecott awards since 1938.

The Books that Shaped America, from the Library of Congress.

Best Books of the 4th Century by Goodreads readers, with MORE lists for each century up to the present!

"It is quite a three pipe problem, and I beg that you
Marsha Gepner

I used to ask my dad, a Marine who served in the South Pacific during WWII, the standard question, “What did you do in the war, Daddy?” Instead of talking about invasions or battles or combat he would invariably tell stories about the people, the characters, he had met or observed—the cocky young Corsair pilot, the island fellow who was supposedly a headhunter, or the guys who loved to hear the latest swing tunes broadcast by Tokyo Rose. I always wondered why he didn’t talk more about the actual war, itself. Then one day I picked up Tales of the South Pacific by James Michener. After I read the first few paragraphs, I was hooked. The book, really a series of connected stories about individuals impacted by events, put me in mind of the tales my father had told me about his service. Michener paints with words a human picture that allows the reader to “feel” both the enormity and minutiae of the war. Tales of the South Pacific helped me to more fully understand why so many of the WWII vets I met through the years, like my dad when asked about their war experiences, would echo the first lines of James Michener’s book: “I wish I could tell you about the South Pacific. How it really was…”

Mic Greenberg

My candidate would be The Citadel by A.J. Cronin (Scottish physician and writer). He later wrote The Keys of the Kingdom and The Green Years.

Marilyn Hill

I love to read and have always done so. Some of my favorites have been: A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens, Silas Marner by George Eliot, and Ben Hur by Lew Wallace. I’m sure those have been favorites of many.

Tale of Two Cities FULL MOVIE (1980) and Audiobook
Silas Marner Audiobook
Ben Hur Audiobook
Kathleen Holden

**Dubliners** by James Joyce (1914). In this wonderful collection of short stories, Joyce depicts life in Dublin, Ireland. He writes with humor, melancholy and irony; his language is breathtaking. [Audiobook]

Connie Hosier

**The Secret Garden** is a novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett. It was initially published in a serial format starting in the autumn of 1910, and was first published in its entirety in 1911. In 5th grade, while growing up in Philadelphia, I entered the local library book review contest and submitted my perspective of *The Secret Garden*. It was my favorite book as a child and has had several movie versions, one in 1987 and another in 1993, but neither made a lasting impression on me the way the enchanted mystery had captured my imagination when I was a 10-year-old. I ended up winning the library contest but the review itself has been lost (pre-computer era), but the book remains a favorite childhood memory. It certainly reinforced my love for literature. [Hallmark Hall of Fame TV Version (1985)]

Bonnie Hudson

**The Story of Philosophy** by Will Durant. First published in 1926, I read this in high school in the 1960s and found that I loved reading and thinking about ideas. I found language for actually ‘thinking about ideas’ with this book. Durant was one of those rare people who were content experts who could write for lay people. **Middletown** by Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrill Lynd. This anthropological study of small town America, set in Muncie, IN, was published in 1929. *Middletown* influenced my completion of a degree in sociology when I encountered it in college. As an undergraduate in the 1960s, much of the sociology of middle class America was still the same as when this was written, even as the world had changed dramatically. Hmmm ... I think I need to go back and look at it again! **Native Son** by Richard Wright. Published in 1940, this was another book I read in undergraduate school that influenced my early career path. **Native Son** is the story of a young black man caught in a downward spiral after he kills a young white woman in Chicago in a panic. Wright's novel is set in the 1930s and communicated a powerful reflection on the poverty and feelings of hopelessness experienced by people in inner cities across the country and of what it meant to be black in America. Another one to revisit! Two additional novels, both classics today, include Ernest Hemingway's **For Whom the Bell Tolls** (1941) and John Steinbeck's 1939 **The Grapes of Wrath** (how many of us read that

"I have always had more dread of a pen, a bottle of ink, and a sheet of paper than of a sword or pistol."

"The land belongs to the future, Carl; that's the way it seems to me. How many of the names on the county clerk's plat will be there in fifty years? I might as well try to will the sunset over there to my brother's children. We come and go, but the land is always here. And the people who love it and understand it are the people who own it - for a little while."
in high school?).

For Whom the Bell Tolls Audiobook | Grapes of Wrath Audiobook

Dolores Joseph
A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens and The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas.
Tale of Two Cities FULL MOVIE (1980) and Audiobook
The Count of Monte Cristo FULL MOVIE (1974) and Audiobook

Mary Carroll King
The Bible gave me much insight, comfort, love, and hope, especially the New Testament.

Celia Kraatz
Looking at my bookshelf, I find that it’s very hard to pick just one book that I love that was written before I was born. Among my favorites: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain, Out of Africa and Letters From Africa by Isak Dinesen, The Scarlet Letter and The Marble Faun by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the Jeeves stories by P.G. Wodehouse.
I see that I’ve named more than five, not one, but I can’t eliminate any of these!
Huckleberry Finn FULL MOVIE (1985) and Audiobook
Out of Africa Audiobook | Scarlet Letter Audiobook | My Man Jeeves Audiobook

Rosemary Laughlin
Willa Cather, The Song of the Lark (1915). I frequently re-read parts of this book. It richly explores the rise of an opera singer in her youth and the demands her career makes on social relationships. But I mainly love the novel for Cather’s re-creations of places at the turn of the last century: small town eastern Colorado, the north side of Chicago, and the abandoned pueblos and canyons of Arizona-New Mexico. Cather can always be counted on to identify sympathetic immigrant types—here Mexicans, musical Germans, Swedes, and railroad-worker Irish. A brilliant Hungarian pianist and a cultured Jewish patron, both in Chicago, are also important to Thea Kronborg and unforgettable to the reader. Audiobook

Judith Liebman
When I was in my early teens my mother gave me the biography of Marie Curie written by her daughter Eve Curie. The book, Madame Curie: A Biography, is still available today in several forms, including a Kindle edition. As I reflect back, that book influenced my decision to major in physics as an undergraduate and convinced me that it was possible to raise a family and succeed in a scientific career.

“Today the modern world is on such easy terms with the concept of culture, that the words ‘in our culture’ slip from the lips of educated men and women almost as effortlessly as do the phrases that refer to period and to place, is in very great part due to this book” - Margaret Mead

“I have no dress except the one I wear every day. If you are going to be kind enough to give me one, please let it be practical and dark so that I
Sharon Lumsden
When I was a kid and people went visiting, my folks frequently visited a particular couple of older friends. The daughter was already grown and married so there were no other kids there for me to play with. BUT... they had a book called Richard Halliburton's *The Complete Book of Marvels*. I don't remember all seven... one was the ancient Pharos (lighthouse) at Alexandria, Egypt but the one that stuck with me was Machu Picchu. I haven't been there but I still remember those gray and grainy photos and am still fascinated with all things MP. I even remember the rough yellow cover of the book. Perhaps I should look for a used copy of that book... but then, I firmly believe that some things are better just in my head!

Mike Martin
I'm a "young 71," so a quick review of my pre-1943 literature yields the following recommendations: *O Pioneers!* by Willa Cather, published in 1913; *Babbitt* by Sinclair Lewis, published in 1922; and *Toward the Flame: A Memoir of World War I* by Hervey Allen, published in 1926.  
*[O Pioneers Audiobook | Babbit Audiobook]*

Barbara Meyer
*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1870). Admittedly, it was the Disney movie with Kurt Douglas that captivated me first, but the book did not disappoint - an introduction to science fiction that lead me to pretend that a tiny basement storeroom was really Captain Nemo's quarters aboard the Nautilus. As my friends and I gathered suitable artifacts, my parents remained unaware that we were exploring underwater worlds and fighting the enormous giant squid, which DID swim past the basement window from time to time.  
*[Audiobook]*

In a beautiful graphic biography, *The Pilot and the Little Prince*, celebrated children's book author can put it on afterwards to go to the laboratory.*

"Then just shut up about what we are going to do afterwards, will you, Inglés? You go back to the Republic and you take your piece with you and leave us others alone here to decide what part of these hills we'll die in."

"The people came out of their houses and smelled the hot stinging air and covered their noses from it. And the children came out of the houses, but they did not run or shout as they would have done after a rain. Men stood by their fences..."
Traci Nally
Although appearing to be a children's book, it is not. It can be read in an hour or less, depending on whether you stop to think about it as you are reading. It is a story of a little prince arriving to Earth from another planet and meeting a pilot who had crashed in the desert. We learn, or are reminded that, what we love in others, that which is most essential, is that which we cannot see. Our flaws are what make us most unique in the work. 

Carol Ordal
*Kristin Lavransdatter* by Sigrid Undset is a novel that covers the whole sweep of a life and speaks to the Norwegian part of me. Just thinking of it makes me want to reread it.

Judy Reynolds
A book I'm glad I read that was in existence before I was is *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore: Stories, Traditions, Legends, Humor, Wisdom, and Folk Songs of the Jewish People* edited by Nathan Ausubel. I remember reading through it when I was a child. I liked it then because the stories were short and many of them were funny. Reading it got me interested in folklore and storytelling. I've reread it several times when I was looking for a short, funny story to tell or to enjoy on my own.

Barak Rosenshine
*Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert.

Tim Smith
Charles A. Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* opened my eyes to the practical role of property in liberty. Today we would characterize it as a One Percent view of the Constitution.

Cheri Sullivan
When I was in the first grade my family moved to an old farmhouse in rural Massachusetts. Since there were no other children nearby, two books from my parents' bookshelf became my constant companions: *The World's Best Loved Poems* (the cover and first few pages are lost, but the yellowing attests to its age) and *Audiobook* (listen to Emily Bazelon and Hanna Rosin, along with The New Yorker's Margaret Talbot, discuss Lydia Davis' new translation of the 19th-century classic *Madame Bovary*, whose jacket cover describes her as the "original desperate housewife.")
and *The Hymnal: Army and Navy* (1941), I reveled in the sound of the "tintinnabulation of the bells, bells, bells" and the drama of "Woodman, spare that tree!" The hymns were filled with fantastic images and amazing words that I did not understand but loved - and phrases like "ineffably sublime" or "the potentate of time" were ready examples in my head when I eventually added those words to my vocabulary. I remember sounding out the Latin liturgy and Hebrew transliterations in the back of the book so often that I memorized (complete with my terrible mispronunciations) what were only nonsense syllables to me at the time. Both books were good introductions to western culture and I have always been grateful for the time I spent with them.

**Denise Taylor**
Should I pick a fairy tale I've loved forever, a romance that set my imagination aloft, or a travelogue that opened my view of the world? If I have to pick, though, it's the work of Ruth Benedict (*Patterns of Culture, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, and treatises on cultural relativism). An "early" woman in anthropology, she represents to me a pioneer in her field; and she sparked my interest in looking at the Other and the Different. I don't agree with all that she, Mead, Boaz, Kroeber, and Lewis said. But it all challenged me at age 18 and changed me forever.

About Us
OLLI at Illinois is a member-focused community of adult learners that is supported by the Bernard Osher Foundation, the Illinois Office of the Provost, and the generous donations of OLLI members and community partners. It is part of a network of 117 OLLI programs across the United States, and there are nearly 130,000 members nationwide.

OLLI at Illinois was launched in the fall of 2007 with 11 courses and 297 members. News of this exciting program dedicated to the pursuit of lifelong learning spread quickly, and we now have more than 1,150 members and offer approximately 40 courses per semester. In addition to classes in the fall and spring semesters, OLLI offers a dynamic schedule of programs and activities that includes lectures, study groups, travel opportunities, and collaborations with the Illinois campus and the communities in and around Champaign-Urbana.

**OLLI Staff**
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![OLLI Logo](http://www.ollilife.org/images/OLLI_Logo.png)