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**About the Author**

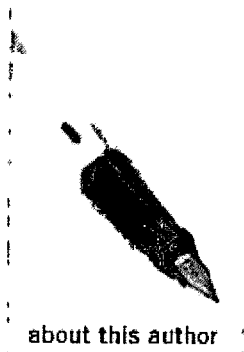

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**Full text biography:**
**Candice Millard**

**Birth Date :** 1967  
**Known As :** Millard, Candice Sue  
**Place of Birth :** United States, Ohio  
**Nationality:** American  
**Occupation :** Writer

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**Personal Information:**

Born 1967; married Mark Uhlig, May, 2001; children: three. **Education:** Baker University, B.A.; Baylor University, M.A.  
**Addresses:** Home: Leawood, KS.

**Career Information:**

Writer and journalist. Former writer and editor at *National Geographic* magazine.

**Writings:**

- *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey*, Doubleday (New York, NY), 2005.
- *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President*, Doubleday (New York, NY), 2011.

Contributor to periodicals, including *National Geographic*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Time*.

**Media Adaptions:**

*The River of Doubt* and *Destiny of the Republic* have been made into audiobooks, Random House Audio, 2006 and 2011.

**Sidelights:**

Candice Millard's first book, *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey*, recounts an expedition into the Amazon jungle taken by the U.S. president, his son Kermit Roosevelt, and various scientists. Also along was Brazilian Colonel Candido Rondon, who had discovered the source of the River of Doubt in 1909. After losing the presidential race to Woodrow Wilson in 1912, Roosevelt looked to adventure through the Roosevelt expedition in 1914 to help get over his political defeat. He and his companions encountered more problems than they anticipated, coming upon piranha and anaconda, enduring disease, near-starvation, Indian attack, and losing one man to drowning and another to murder.

In an interview with Josephine Anna Kaszuba Locke on the *BookLoons* Web site, Millard noted: "For me, what was most interesting about this expedition was the opportunity to get a very intimate picture of Roosevelt, to see him simply as a man--a leader not on the scale of nations and armies but among this small group of men who are fighting for their lives." Writing in *Library Journal*, William D. Pederson observed that the author "turns this incredible story into one that easily matches an Indiana Jones screen adventure." In a review for *Booklist*, Brad Hooper suggested that those who like "American history and travel narratives will take delight in living through these exciting pages."

In Millard's second book, *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President*, she presents a combined biography of President James A. Garfield as well as his killer, Charles Guiteau. Guiteau was a delusional and possibly even insane man who became convinced that God wanted him to kill Garfield after Garfield refused to grant him a position in his administration. Millard provides a detailed picture of the tragedy and its effects, which allows readers a glimpse of the social, political, and cultural climate of the time.

Reviewing the work in the *New York Times Book Review*, contributor Kevin Baker assessed that Millard "makes, at times, the common biographer's mistake of inflating her subject's importance and virtues. Contrary to what she implies, neither Garfield's administration nor his death brought about advances in civil rights, nor a grand reconciliation with the South, then busy creating the Jim Crow state. ... Though Garfield's death had little historical significance, Millard has written us a penetrating human tragedy." *Booklist* contributor Brad Hooper claimed that this book "stands securely at the crossroads of popular and professional history." A *Publishers Weekly* contributor said: "Millard's story doesn't add much to previous understanding, but it's hard to imagine its being better told." A *Kirkus Reviews* contributor assessed: "Millard follows up her impressive debut ... by ... demonstrating the power of expert storytelling to wonderfully animate even the simplest facts." Stephen L. Hupp, a contributor to *Library Journal*, observed that the work is "recommended for presidential history buffs and students of Gilded Age America."

#### Related Information:

#### PERIODICALS

- *Booklist*, August, 2005, Brad Hooper, review of *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey*, p. 1987; August 1, 2011, Brad Hooper, review of *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President*, p. 16.
- *Entertainment Weekly*, October 21, 2005, Gilbert Cruz, review of *The River of Doubt*, p. 80.
- *Houston Chronicle*, January 20, 2006, Chris Patsilelis, review of *The River of Doubt*.
- *Kirkus Reviews*, August 1, 2005, review of *The River of Doubt*, p. 832; December 1, 2011, review of *Destiny of the Republic*.
- *Library Journal*, September 1, 2005, William D. Pederson, review of *The River of Doubt*, p. 160; October 1, 2011, Stephen L. Hupp, review of *Destiny of the Republic*, p. 86.
- *New York Times Book Review*, October 16, 2005, Bruce Barcott, review of *The River of Doubt*, p. 14; October 2, 2011, Kevin Baker, review of *Destiny of the Republic*.
- *Publishers Weekly*, July 11, 2011, review of *Destiny of the Republic*, p. 48.
- *Time*, February 13, 2006, Lev Grossman and Richard Lacayo, review of *The River of Doubt*, p. 74.
- *USA Today*, November 3, 2005, Deirdre Donahue, review of *The River of Doubt*, p. 7D.
- *Washington Post Book World*, September 16, 2011, Candice Millard, "Candice Millard on the writing life."

#### ONLINE

- *BookLoons*, <http://www.bookloons.com/> (April 24, 2006), Josephine Anna Kaszuba Locke, interview with the author.
- *Candice Millard Home Page*, <http://www.candicemillard.com> (January 18, 2012).

Source: *Contemporary Authors Online*, 2012

Gale Database: *Contemporary Authors Online*



## Hero of the Empire Reader's Guide

BY CANDICE MILLARD

SEARCH



Category: African World History | Biography & Memoir |  
European World History



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### READERS GUIDE

#### Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. What were your first impressions of Winston Churchill as a young man? Did you admire his confidence and his "unshakable conviction that he was destined for greatness"?
2. Were you surprised to learn that Churchill enlisted the services of a "palmist" to predict what the future held for him?
3. In Chapter 7, we learn the provenance of the iconic Burberry trench coat. The average life expectancy of a horse during the Boer War was six weeks. What other facts of this nature did you find most interesting or surprising?
4. "Nothing but being shot at will ever teach men the art of using cover," writes George Warrington Stevens from Ladysmith (p. 121). Discuss how the Boer War transformed British military strategy.
5. Class plays an important role in Churchill's exploits during his early life. How does his status as a member of a wealthy, prominent family work for—and against—him?
6. What were your impressions of Jennie Churchill? Did you think she was a modern woman ahead of her time or an opportunist?
7. Did you find the circumstances of Churchill's escape from the Staats Model School foolhardy or was Churchill simply taking advantage of what may have been his only chance to escape?
8. *Kidnapped*, *Treasure Island*, *Plato's Republic*, *Aristotle's Politics*, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: Are there any books on Churchill's reading list that you would like to try?
9. Several famous names make cameo appearances in the book, from Rudyard Kipling to Mahatma Gandhi. Were you surprised by this intersection of history? Have you read other books, either nonfiction or fiction, in which the lives of historical figures overlap in unlikely ways or places?

10. What additional thoughts did you have about apartheid and the fight for human rights and social justice, later led by men like Nelson Mandela, after reading about the history between the Boers and native Africans, both before and during the Boer War?

11. After Churchill returned to England there was a controversy surrounding his escape, and he was accused of intentionally leaving his friends behind. Do you think he had a choice? Was he wrong to go on without them, or did he find himself in an untenable situation?

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## Q&A: CANDICE MILLARD ON YOUNG WINSTON CHURCHILL'S BOER WAR ADVENTURES

*In The River of Doubt, historian Candice Millard followed Theodore Roosevelt on a harrowing adventure along the Amazon River. In Destiny of the Republic, she explored the assassination of James Garfield. In her latest book, Hero of the Empire: The Boer War, A Daring Escape, and the Making of Winston Churchill, Millard delves into another illuminating moment in the life of a major historical figure — telling the story of a youthful Churchill's adventures in Africa during the Boer War. Millard answered questions about the book, and writing history, from The National's Jim Swearingen.*

**Q: Candice Millard, thank you for taking the time to talk with *The National*. You have managed to find some compelling periods of your subjects' lives that don't get a lot of attention. Is there a method you follow to select a subject?**

A: Mostly I'm just looking for a great story, but I do have a few criteria. It has to be a strong enough story that it can carry along with it fairly weighty subjects, from natural history to the evolution of warfare. It has to have great characters and tangential storylines that support the central narrative but are fascinating in their own right. Most of all, I have to have access to an enormous quantity of primary source material. Without letters, diaries, newspaper articles, I can't have dialogue or any of the little details that, I hope, will make a story come alive.

**Q: In your latest book, *Hero of the Empire*, Churchill seems always to be learning even at those moments when he is most miserable, or in danger. Was his experience in the Boer War pivotal to creating the Churchill that most of us think of as the backbone of British resistance to Hitler?**

A: Absolutely. Churchill always believed in himself—had “faith in [his] star,” as he put it—but in South Africa he put that confidence to the test, proving to himself that he was not only brave, determined and resourceful but a natural leader. When the armored train he was riding in was attacked by the Boers, he seized command of its defense, even though he was just a 24-year-old correspondent, one of the few civilians on the train. When he escaped from a POW camp in Pretoria, making his way across nearly 300 miles of enemy territory, he did it alone, without a map, a compass, food or a weapon. He was incredibly creative and agile, and he just refused to give up.

**Q: Some biographers love their subjects, some hate them, and some fall in between. It's also not uncommon for biographers to change their views in the process of writing a book. How did you start out feeling about Churchill — and how did you end up?**

A: Like many people around the world, I have long been fascinated by Churchill. He was not a perfect man by any stretch of the imagination. There's no question that he was an imperialist, and I think that, because he was raised during the Victorian age, in the highest ranks of the British aristocracy, he was also an elitist. That said, I think it would be difficult to argue that he wasn't an incredibly effective and stirring force during World War II or that he didn't have a tremendous impact on the world in which we now live. I'm deeply impressed by his

brilliance, his wit and his determination, and I admire the fact that, although no one fought harder than Churchill during war, few were as magnanimous after victory had been declared.

**Q: The “great men” approach to studying history seems out of vogue these days. Why do you prefer focusing on them rather than say, historical economics, or migrations, or political trends?**

A: What interests me most is people. In particular, I’m fascinated by how someone overcomes obstacles. Usually when we look back in time, we focus on large, public moments of triumph or infamy, but what I’m interested in are those moments of personal struggle, when someone has lost his footing, is sick or scared, grieving or desperate. James Garfield said that it was in those moments that true nature is revealed, what he called the “bed of the sea,” and I think he was right.

**Q: Turning to the subject of women historians, do you think they—or you specifically—bring a different perspective to the study of famous men than male historians do? I’m recalling your moving description of James Garfield’s railroad car being physically pushed up the hill to his home by hundreds of caring citizens when he was going home to die. Do these historical figures and events play differently in the hands of a woman historian?**

A: I don’t know if it’s because I’m a woman or just because that’s the way my mind works. I want to know more than the broad outlines of a story. I want to dig in as deeply as I can, immerse myself in the subject. The only way to do that is to do a lot of primary research—both archival and physical, working in libraries and going to where the events unfolded—and then to spend just as much time understanding the story, the characters, the event, and trying to make sense of them through a very detailed outline. I don’t write a single word until I think I truly understand the story, and that can’t be done without years of research.

**Q: You have made a wonderful career of writing about some remarkable men: Teddy Roosevelt, James Garfield, now Churchill, and you have stated that you will write about an extraordinary woman next. (I recall at least one of your fans urging you to write about Florence Nightingale). Can we cajole you into revealing who your next book might be about?**

A: I would tell you if I knew myself. I have a few contenders, and one, possibly my favorite, is a woman, but I still have a lot of work to do before I can commit to any one of them. I think they’re all great stories, but I have a lot of great story ideas that will never become books, in most cases because there’s just not enough primary source material to work with. The good news is that I love this part of the process, so I’m really looking forward to a winter full of books and archival research. What could be better?

## Winston Churchill

Contemporary Heroes and Heroines. 1992.

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Updated: Nov. 17, 2017

Born: November 30, 1874 in Woodstock, United Kingdom

Died: January 24, 1965 in London, United Kingdom

Other Names: Churchill, Winston S. (British prime minister); Spencer-Churchill, Winston Leonard; Churchill, Winston, Sir; Churchill, Winston Leonard Spencer; Churchill, W.S.

Nationality: British

Occupation: Prime minister

Updated: Nov. 17, 2017

### Full Text:

*"Never give in! Never give in! Never, never, never, never, never--in nothing great or small, large or petty--never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense."*

Universally acclaimed as one of the greatest statesmen who ever lived, Winston Churchill served Great Britain for more than sixty years in various capacities, including prime minister during World War II. He was born on November 30, 1874, at his family's ancestral home near Woodstock, England, and died on January 24, 1965, in London. Churchill remained a widely respected public figure even among twenty-first-century audiences. In 2017 acclaimed British actor Gary Oldman portrayed Churchill in the drama film *Darkest Hour*, which recounted Churchill's leadership in the face of a potential Nazi invasion of the United Kingdom during World War II.

A poor student whose father feared he was intellectually challenged, an aristocrat who was reviled by many of his peers as a traitor to his class, a career politician who shouldered the blame for one of his country's worst military disasters during World War I and then went on to engineer its victory during World War II--Winston Churchill was an extraordinary man who time and again faced disappointment and adversity with courage, strength, and determination. He was a larger-than-life presence in his native England for more than fifty years and on the international scene for half of that, displaying a genius and vision that "made greatness casual and prodigious deeds commonplace," to quote a *Newsweek* reporter. To many, Churchill's death in 1965 at the age of ninety signaled the end not only of an exceptional life but of an era that produced leaders the likes of which we may never see again.

## Early Life

Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was the eldest of two sons of Lord Randolph Churchill, a British politician, and Jennie Jerome, an American heiress whose father was a noted Wall Street speculator and part owner of the *New York Times*. Born at Blenheim Palace, the family home of his ancestors, the dukes of Marlborough, Churchill was a child of privilege. But he was a sickly boy and a poor student who preferred games and play to school; only his father's influence gained him entrance to the best prep schools in England, including Harrow, where he consistently finished at the bottom of his class every term. He detested the rules and regulations governing life at Harrow and despised most of the subjects he was forced to study, except for English grammar and literature and debate and public speaking.

Churchill's grades were so poor upon his graduation from Harrow that it was clear he would never be accepted at Oxford or Cambridge. He did like to play with toy soldiers, however, and showed some talent and imagination in lining them up for battle. So Lord Randolph encouraged his son to apply to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, the West Point of England. After failing the entrance exams twice, Churchill barely passed on the third try (thanks to some intensive tutoring) and was assigned to the cavalry. At Sandhurst, he blossomed into an excellent rider and an eager student who devoured all

the information he could about military matters. He graduated with honors in 1895 and was commissioned as an officer in the 4th Hussars, a cavalry regiment made up of gentlemen-soldiers known for their skill at war games and their love of "the good life."

## Early Military Career

Churchill soon grew restless and bored, and in late 1895 he asked for leave to go to Cuba, where a revolt against Spain was under way. He stayed for a few months, hoping to get a chance to fight but serving instead as a foreign correspondent for a London newspaper. Returning to England in 1896, he set off with the Hussars that fall for a lengthy stint in India, where he spent much of his first year or so playing polo and pursuing independent studies in history, philosophy, and economics. In search of more excitement, he joined a different regiment and this time saw action in a local rebellion both as a soldier and a war correspondent. His riveting reports from the front created a sensation back home, and in 1898 he gathered them into a best-selling book that led him to consider a career as a military writer. Later that same year, he served with yet another regiment in North Africa during the Sudan campaign, once again acting as both soldier and correspondent. Upon his return to England, Churchill resigned from the army to write another best-seller, this time on British military efforts in the Sudan. At the urging of some Conservative politicians, he also ran for a seat in the House of Commons but lost the election.

In the fall of 1899, war broke out between the Dutch Boers and the British in South Africa. Churchill headed there as a correspondent and was captured by the Boers not long after his arrival. In December, he managed a dramatic and dangerous escape from the prison camp where he was being held and eventually made his way into neutral territory. As news of his ordeal became known, Churchill was hailed as a hero, but before long he was being criticized for blasting the poor performance of the British military in a series of articles he wrote on his experience. Despite his views on the army, he soon joined up again so that he could get back into action in South Africa. After the war wound down, he returned to England and gave politics another try, this time defeating his opponent.

## Entered Politics

Twenty-six-year-old Churchill took his seat in the House of Commons in February of 1901 and immediately made a name for himself with his forceful opinions and penchant for siding with the Liberals on many issues (especially those dealing with social reform), a practice that angered his fellow Conservatives. Tensions gradually mounted to the point where Churchill left the party and declared himself a Liberal. He then served in a succession of government posts (which outraged many of his former Conservative colleagues, who accused him of selling out both his party and his class to realize his own ambitions), culminating in his appointment as first lord of the admiralty in 1911. In this position, similar to that of the U.S. secretary of the navy, Churchill was one of the few government leaders to recognize that Germany was preparing for war and that Great Britain should do the same. Although his warnings fell largely on deaf ears, he boldly went about the business of modernizing the Royal Navy and making suggestions for improving other branches of the service, even pushing for the development of a strange armored vehicle that was dubbed "Winston's Folly"--better known later as a tank.

On August 4, 1914, thanks to Churchill's foresight and perseverance, England entered World War I with the best navy in the world. The first lord of the admiralty remained intensely involved in military matters, even working out strategies with the help of various technical advisors. But in the spring of 1915 came a disastrous blow when combined British and French forces botched an assault on Turkish troops at Gallipoli, a peninsula that lies between the Aegean Sea and Istanbul, Turkey. Churchill had hoped that such an unexpected strike on the enemy's flanks would ease fighting on the European front and open the door to an invasion from the south. Casualties were heavy, and outraged Britons