

Gene Lees *Ad Libitum* &
Jazzletter

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Mail Bag

The May issue alone is worth a year's subscription. I knew who Jo Stafford was but didn't know any of her history. My youngest brother, a Korean War vet, is a big fan of hers.

Several months ago, I subscribed to the cable music stations. They often play Jo Stafford songs and they give snippets of information about the artists. I saw one saying she was born in Coalinga, California, in 1917. Having lived in California most of my life, I know what a nowhere place Coalinga is. So I've been dying to know how her parents happened to be there at that time. Thanks to you, I now know.

Jo Stafford and Paul Weston must have been wonderful people to know. I'm glad their children turned out well.

Thanks again for such wonderful reading material.

– Ruth Coleman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

I've been a subscriber from the beginning, and I have every issue published. What a trip it's been, following you these last twenty-five years. It seems like a fitting coda that you would write about Jo Stafford, who was the reason I met you back then, on a trip to the Ojai Jazz Festival, just before the first *Jazzletter* launched.

I came to know her through her children, Tim and Amy, then being married to Amy for nearly a decade. The musical blessings of that relationship have been deposited in our daughter Anna, who has recently moved to Nashville, where she often sings in my studio, sounding very much like Jo in both tone and delivery. Readers can click on my web site and hear Anna singing, at fourteen, her own version of *You Belong to Me*.

Your own relationship with Jo and Paul was rich with stories, which brought a delicious quality to your tribute in the *Jazzletter*. I had never heard the account of the origins of Jonathan Edwards in a bar in Key West. But one item you passed over is the origin of that imaginary pianist's name.

An obvious target of satire in the 1950's was Roger Williams, the pianist whose style was as ornate as his records were popular. Paul, being an educated Dartmouth graduate,

would have had enough knowledge of American history to recall another Roger Williams, the Seventeenth Century Puritan who founded the State of Rhode Island. The most natural thing in the world, in making a playful and oblique reference to pianist Roger Williams, would be finding a name that would invite parallels to Roger Williams. And among the major characters of Colonial American history, perhaps the biggest name approaching the status of Roger Williams would be Jonathan Edwards, the famous preacher and theologian credited with igniting the Great Awakening, which preceded the American Revolution by three decades. It's sort of an inside joke, but then so is the music. Like Paul himself, it's sophisticated and understated.

I loved Jo and Paul, and I know you did.

– Bryan Cumming, Nashville, Tennessee

Bryan's email address is cumming@truevine.net.

The almost physical reality that Jonathan and Darlene took on was and remains amazing. I told Paul that I heard Jonathan in a restaurant in Rio de Janeiro. Jonathan certainly gets around.

Jo really knew Darlene. What I neglected to mention in the article (I ran out of space) was her description of Darlene, which embodied Jo's pragmatism. She said of her, "She's a nice lady from Trenton, New Jersey, who wears print dresses and does her best." That killed me at the time, and still does.

And if, in the unlikely event that Paul didn't know those details of American history, Jo certainly did. She once told my wife, "Some women hide their clothing bills from their husbands. I hide my book bills."

She and Paul were once at a dinner party where the conversation turned to the war against the Japanese in the South Pacific. Some particular battle was under discussion — the Battle of the Coral Sea, if memory serves. She said something or other about it, and a dinner companion, who was an admiral or rear admiral, retired, told her she was wrong. She stood her ground, and he grew adamant, saying, "Madame, I was there!"

A few days later she got a letter or phone call from him,

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telling her a little sheepishly that he had consulted his log, and she was right and he was wrong.

I once was discussing with her the Allied landings at Normandy. I said something about American amphibian tanks that were used, adding that most of them were sunk. She said, first correcting me about the number (I think it was fifteen), that not some of them but all of them were sunk.

Such was her knowledge of World War II that occasionally, when writing, I would call and ask her for information, perhaps a date, such as, for example, that on which elements of the American First Army came upon the bridge at Remagen and found that the Germans had failed to blow it, leaving it the only intact span across the Rhine. I asked Jo when that happened and she said, "March 7, 1945." She always knew. Always.

I just finished reading the latest *Jazzletter*. I had to pry it out of Aileen's hands. She was interested in the Dick Sudhalter stuff.

I hadn't become friendly with Sudhalter until after you published my Goodman article, and he sent you his letter of condemnation. I was a little leery when we found ourselves together on musical projects here in New York, but he never referred to the article or his letter to you. We found that we liked each other a lot, and I eventually became his bass player of choice for the jobs he booked here in the city, and when he moved to the north fork of Long Island, at festivals and vineyard concerts out his way. Eddie Locke was usually the drummer.

At his house in Southold one day, Dick played me a record of an alto player with a sweet tone and a nice way with a phrase. I asked who it was, and he said, proudly, "My Dad."

He included me on a couple of his recording projects, and he gave me the opportunity to record a tuba solo on one of them, a first for me. The last time I saw him was at the love fest given him at St. Peter's in New York. He couldn't talk much then, but gave me a hug and a sweet smile, and I'll remember him that way.

I liked your piece on Jo Stafford a lot. Somebody told me that Ella Fitzgerald once balked when she saw Paul Weston on one of her dates. She said something like, "If I sing a note out of tune, you'll go home and tell your old lady."

I told a story in my second book about finding some tunes on a Capitol Records transcription library disc by a country singer named Shug Fisher, who stuttered while singing, and kept playing the same chord until the stuttering stopped, adding extra beats and bars to his tunes in a hilarious way. When the Jonathan Edwards stuff appeared on record, I immediately suspected Paul Weston of being Shug Fisher.

When I found out about Corinthian Records and wrote him a letter to order more Jonathan and Darlene LPs, I told him of my suspicion, and he wrote back, saying he had forgotten about the Shug Fisher bit. He didn't say if he actually was Shug, or had just participated in the put-on.

When the Cinderella Stump version of *Temptation* came out, I was still in the Army. My friends and I thought it was a great joke, but when I was driving across country to my new assignment in the Second Army Band at Fort Meade, Maryland, I dropped a nickel in a lunch-counter jukebox somewhere on Route 30 in Wyoming, pressed the button for *Timtayshun*, and began chuckling as "Cinderella" went into her song. A large, wool-jacketed westerner on the next stool looked at me with disapproval and said, "You laughin' at Cinderella, boy?" I calmed him down and got out of there quickly. I heard that so many people took that record seriously, Jo decided to do a straight folk-song album that sold very well.

Thanks for giving Brookmeyer some attention. He's probably the best jazz writer we have now, and he was a genius for getting his musicians to give him wonderful performances. When his New Arts Orchestra did a tour a while back, I was only able to get to a rehearsal for a concert up in Purchase (Westchester), but the rehearsal was gorgeous. In a saner world, Bob would be subsidized by Federal arts money to write and perform whatever he chose. This level of talent and skill doesn't appear very often. Hello, Lincoln Center?

Thank you for the generous segue from your article to mine. I wish there weren't so many miles between us these days, so I could hang out with you and just talk. Email is handy, but no substitute for being there.

Peace and hope for the New Year.

— Bill Crow, New City, New York

The story about Ella and Paul Weston is true. Paul told me. It occurred during the making of an album Paul wrote for her. She hardly had need to fret over her intonation. The other night I heard one of her records on one of those TV music channels. She sang one passing tone, and a short one at that, a hair under pitch. I was astounded.

As for Bob being honored at Lincoln Center, do not forget who controls its jazz program. Do you think one of the worst composers in jazz history — almost a Jonathan Edwards of jazz — is going to do anything for one of the best? And have you noticed lately what color Brookmeyer is?

I presume you have heard the Wynton Marsalis orchestral piece called Blood on the Fields, which composer Bill Kirchner called Blood in My Urine. It is rivaled only by Paul

McCartney's Standing Stones as an example of egregious and utter musical incompetence. Maybe following Bill Kirchner's inspiration, we should refer to it as Standing Stoned.

I was most appreciative of your own and others' tributes to my friend of many years Dick Sudhalter. Over the past decade, his younger (by five years) sister, tenor and baritone saxophonist and big band and combo leader, Carol Sudhalter, has become one of Erika's and my closest friends, always staying with us when she came to the D.C. area for gigs, before we relocated two years ago to West Virginia.

Carol contacted me in 2000 asking my help making contacts in Italy, where she had studied the flute more than three decades before. I did so, connecting her with several festival producers and some Italian musicians, and since then she has routinely spent a month at the end of the year and two months every summer performing throughout the peninsula as a featured guest with combos led by men. She is fluent in Italian and has become quite loved by audiences there.

I always enjoy, and profit from, your observations on grammar, usage, and style. Two of my own pet peeves, both ubiquitous, are:

1. The failure to use the subjunctive "were" as in "If I was a millionaire, I would retire." Paying attention to my parents' speech, I early learned to use "were" in such contrary-to-fact conditional sentences. One constantly hears, and reads, the error.

2. The use, incorrectly, of "whom, whomever, or whomsoever" as though object of a preceding verb or preposition rather than, correctly, "who" as subject of the phrase's verb, as in this gem from a *New York Times* November 16, 2008, book review on the recently published collection of poet Ted Hughes' correspondence: "And like many true believers, he was willing to offer the wisdom of that hodgepodge to whomever he figured might need it."

Say, I also studied Sanskrit, as part of my 1950s classical training. I now and then dip into my copy of *A Sanskrit Primer* by E.D. Perry. And I read some Greek (and especially Homer) and Latin every day.

— W. Royal Stokes

One of the best writers in the field, Royal has been reporting and commenting on jazz, blues, and popular music for more than six decades.

I am hardly expert in Sanskrit, although I not infrequently trace words back to their Sanskrit roots. But I wish I knew more about the subject, and Greek too. I'm currently refurbishing my Latin.

Don't Rush

Some time early in the twentieth century, the style and language of North American journalism changed. Gary Wills expressed in his book *Lincoln at Gettysburg* the hypothesis that Abraham Lincoln invented the modern English language in his laconic funeral oration, and it affected many writers, including, I think, Stephen Crane; through Crane it spread to others.

And it affected the manner of writing in journalism. There was an emphasis on simplicity; the florid use of compound sentences came to an end. I remember an essentially silly ukase sent out by the Associated Press that the perfect average length for a news story was eleven words. It said that the one North American newspaper that met this ideal was the *Hamilton Spectator*. When this story came over the teletype to the *Louisville Times*, some zealot put it on the bulletin board for the edification of us toilers in the newsroom. I took it down and typed across the bottom, "As the only one on this staff who ever actually worked for the *Spectator*, I can assure you that there is nothing distinguished in its writing," and put it back up.

When young people entered the newspaper business (nowadays called journalism), they were taught to tell its five essentials at the start of a story: Who, what, where, when, and why. There were two values in this. One was that it gave the essence of the story in a few words and left it to the reader to decide whether he wanted more, in which case he could read on. The other was practical. The importance of the details diminished as it went on, finally dwindling to the trivial. This permitted what we called cutting from the end. The copy-desk editors — and for a time I was one — could shorten a story with shears and a glue pot, working back from the end. Even when the story had been set in type, it could be cut in the composing room by a skilled man with scissors that could clip off bits of the lead type if the story proved too long to fit the page layout.

This format led to some curious and even dangerous distortions. One of my dearest friends was (and still is) Phil Querido, who had worked for UPI and who told me of the experience of a friend who covered the United Nations. This man relegated whatever might be construed to be unfavorable to the United States, such as criticism by other countries or defeat in debate, to the end of his stories where, he knew, editors could remove it with shears if they felt like it, which he thought they would. This man once ran a survey of his own stories, collecting clippings from the newspapers in which they appeared. Almost always, material not

flattering to the U.S. had been removed. In the collective effect, this editing contributed to the American proclivity for self-delusion, which gets the country into all sorts of mires and mischief, Iraq and Afghanistan being the successors to Viet Nam and Korea. They should teach Kipling at the War College. My Great Uncle Bob fought at the Khyber Pass with the Royal Army “for the Queen’s shilling,” as Kipling put it, and left me vivid impressions of the experience, including a bullet scar he bore. Kipling called the pass “a sword cut through the mountains.” Its road winds thirty miles through a chasm that at its narrowest is forty-nine feet wide. You wanna fight your way through that? Lotsa luck. Even air cover won’t do you much good in such mountains.

Even without the cautions of Kipling, I would not advise tangling with the people of Afghanistan, who chewed up and spat out the British (three times), the Russians, and even Alexander the Great, and are now masticating the Americans while freely flooding Europe with heroin, leaving it to other countries to service the junkies of North America and cause the spending of billions on the doomed effort to effect an unenforceable prohibition. This is economic warfare at its most sophisticated, and they’re winning. The British refer to (or used to) all these people as wogs, which is construed to be a term of insult, like the South African word *kafir*. It isn’t, or at least wasn’t originally. It stands for Wily Oriental Gentlemen, and it carries an implication that any effort to outcunning them is unlikely to be in your own best interests.

The who-what-where-when-why rule led to some funny stuff on newspapers on which I worked, and no doubt all over America. Another dear friend was a young man (we were all young then) named Irwin Shulman who had a dark and biting sense of humor.

We sometimes said there was a cosmic principle that all city editors had to be Irish, and at the *Montreal Star* we had one, a man in his fifties named Ted Murphy. He was a drinker who, we all knew, was banging the women’s page editor. Many editors had fixations on various subjects, and Ted’s *bête noire* was the city’s hideous traffic. We knew that if you could tie a story to that problem, no matter how tenuously, you could make the front page. Nothing took precedence over traffic stories.

Mount Royal, which gives the city its name, rises magnificently from its center and presented traffic problems, since vehicles had to go around it to get to the north part of the city. Shulman wrote, and posted on the bulletin board, what he said was the perfect *Montreal Star* lead.

“Traffic was held up for three hours yesterday when a flying saucer crashed into the side of Mount Royal.”

It was in a class with the famous, and possibly apocryphal,

lead someone wrote at a Chicago paper: “He was neat. He hanged himself in the closet.” Maybe that too was written for the bulletin board.

In 1973, Tom Wolfe edited and wrote a foreword to a book called *The New Journalism*, a compendium of essays by Hunter Thompson, Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, and others who used fictional techniques in non-fiction. He said that in the 1950s and ’60s, a lot of reporters were growing bored with who-what etc., and experimenting with fiction techniques — in my case, the big influence was John Dos Passos — in factual material. By 1956 I had my own daily column on the arts in the *Louisville Times*. I deliberately set about writing pieces that could not be cut from the end and, when I really pulled it off, couldn’t be cut at all. And my leads were meant not to satisfy but to pique curiosity, drawing you into reading the piece to the end.

Some time when I was about fifteen, addicted to reading, timidly thinking I might want to write instead of paint, I came across one or more of the books of Jack Woodford, probably *How to Write and Sell a Novel* or maybe *How to Write for Money*. Woodford, by his own description a hack, wrote, “If you wish to write great literature you are very stupid to read my books, because I do not, cannot, and would not write great literature.”

One principle I learned from him is what I now think of as the chain structure of a narrative, whether fiction or non-fiction. By the end of the first chapter, you must pose a question that the reader wants answered. In the next chapter, you satisfy that desire, but not before setting up another question he or she wants answered, and so on all the way to the end. I *think* he was the one who said that at the start, you have a page or two to capture one’s interest, and in a short story, only a paragraph. I eventually said, “The hell with that. You’ve got one line.” This led me to making a private collection of great opening lines, my favorites being Melville’s “Call me Ishmael,” and Rafael Sabatini’s “He was born with a gift of laughter and a sense that the world was mad.” You immediately want to know more about these characters.

Guided by Woodford, I wrote a short story that began, “There were those who thought he was mostly son of a bitch, but I thought he was all son of a bitch.” I sold it to a major magazine immediately, and before I was twenty.

I wasn’t the only one nourished by Woodford, who in addition to pulp novels also wrote screen plays. Ray Bradbury (*The Martian Chronicles*, *The Illustrated Man*, and the especially ominous *Fahrenheit 451*) said, “Jack Woodford’s *Trial and Error* was the first book on writing I ever read, at the age of fifteen. He said all the right things

and said them clearly. I stayed afloat and got my work done because of him.”

Science fiction writer Robert A. Heinlein (*Stranger in a Strange Land*) said, “It pleases me enormously to see dear old Jack Woodford (may his bones rest in peace) given his due. I read *Trial and Error* in 1939, started writing, and did exactly what he said to do, and it works and I’ve sold it all. Hooray for Woodford.”

I can’t tell you how many writers, both of fiction and non-fiction, whom I have talked to pay similar homage to a writer largely unknown to the lay public. He may have been one of the most influential writers in recent history, and nobody much knows it. Later I read valuable books on the *art* of writing, for which no doubt Woodford would have had only disdain, among them Somerset Maugham’s superb *The Summing Up* and John Van Druten’s *Playwright at Work*, as well as an essay by Maxwell Anderson whose title I forget that was given to me by Joshua Logan, and they were valuable, but nowhere near as much as the cynical earthbound advice of “dear old Jack Woodford.” One encounters testaments that there are only 10 plots (or five or two) for stories, but I have reduced it to this: There are only two, sex and death. The continuance of a protagonist’s life is the foundation of every suspense story ever written, and the love story so often woven into it is about the continuance of the life of the species, which is why, after they escape the danger, the boy and girl kiss in the sunset and go off to do you know what. Or, as Woodford put it: “Boy meets girl; girl gets boy into pickle; boy gets pickle into girl.”

He also said, “Characterization is an accident that flows out of action and dialogue.” And he’s right: our words and actions define us. Steinbeck magnificently demonstrates this in *Of Mice and Men*, which offers you none of those long dark corridors of rumination of Dostoevski, only what the characters do and say. *Of Mice and Men* is a perfect illustration of the principle: Don’t tell, show. Steinbeck said it was a novel that could be played, a play that could be read, and it had an inestimable influence on me.

Woodford hated editors, whom he called idiots. He said to a friend of mine, and may have written it somewhere too although, in that period, it would necessarily have been in more discreet language: “All they do is fuck up your rhythms.” If an editor changes the word “whether” in my writing to “if” he has probably missed the point that I wanted a light, slight pickup of two eighth notes rather than a stolid quarter note.

Woodford wrote: “Editors are the immemorial adversaries of writers, because most editors are editors because they wanted to be writers and failed, and they instinctively hate

those who wanted to be writers and succeeded.”

I met several of my idols among writers, including Morley Callahan (who became a good friend) and William Saroyan. I even met William Faulkner; but I wish I had also met Jack Woodford.

The late Seymour Krim, once the literary critic of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, also wrote a book on the “new journalism” in which he suggested that the age of fiction as the measure of literary merit was over, and much good work was being done in a journalistic format. He cited a number of writers in this area, and I found myself delighted to be mentioned on the same page as Tom Wolfe, whose work I (usually) admire.

I have always been nonplused by discussions of literary form; I don’t know what they’re talking about, except in matters of strict metric poetry. In prose, I think such discussion is pretentious and a little phony, feeling much as Tom Wolfe does about criticism of graphic art in *The Painted Word*, a work with which I vigorously agree. I draw form in writing on musical models. But that will get you only so far. I once tried to write a novel in sonata form but crashed on the rock of not knowing how to suggest writing in the key of the dominant. However, certain principles of music apply quite accurately to prose, including fortissimos, rallentandos, diminuendos and the like. If you want an accelerando, for example, you can slip into the use of the Germanic words in our lexicons, for they’re generally shorter and more vigorous; and for the long and lyrical, ease into the Franco-Latin. That isn’t entirely true — Cole Porter’s *In the Still of the Night*, aside from being a magnificent song, is one of the great literary works in the language; it uses a vocabulary entirely Germanic, with only two words, *number* and *content*, derived from French. But the principle is an approximate guide. I learned it from Malcolm Lowry’s *Under the Volcano*, one of the great novels of the twentieth century.

It is a natural thing to begin a composition slowly and build to a big climax. But it is difficult indeed to begin loud and fast and go down to a diminuendo lyrical ending. This is the reason for the brilliance of Richard Burton’s performance in the film version of Jean Anouilh’s *Beckett*, one of my favorite plays. The king has the louder and more flamboyant role, and Peter O’Toole did it superbly. But the Beckett character begins colorfully and gets quiet as the play (or film) progresses, becoming a true diminuendo at the end. And yet for the balance of the work, the Beckett character must retain a dominance the king cannot break. I don’t know how Burton did it, but if you think of him as a light-weight because of the career he squandered on Elizabeth Taylor,

have a look at *Beckett*.

I like to begin a piece of prose quietly. I like to present the background as a kind of watercolor landscape painting, transparent and light, and let the story grow thicker and stronger as it progresses. And this has often confounded editors, who will try to make me begin "BANG! Here are all the IMPORTANT reasons you should be reading this work!" That means that, essentially, you tell the punch line at the beginning. Too often I have acquiesced in such evisceration, which is one of the reasons I began the *Jazzletter*: I wouldn't have to submit to it any more. That sort of structure leaves you nowhere to go. As Oscar Peterson used to say, if you begin a solo 'way up there, you can't *build* it. It is a matter of holding back, which Artie Shaw said the Chicago school of jazz musicians learned how to do, among them Gene Krupa and Dave Tough and the exquisitely lazy Nat Cole. They don't *rush*.

And I like to give the reader the *setting* of the story, as visually as possible, and especially the historical context.

When I worked on my biography of Johnny Mercer, which so many of you have praised, I wanted to begin by exploring his origins as far back as possible, in part to show how events of a farther past have affected our culture. No no no! I was told by the editor. You have to begin BANG! And so, pusillanimously, I took it out. I still regret it. And I thought you might like to read it, especially those who liked the book.

And so here it is, the missing first chapter of my Johnny Mercer biography. It is a complex and involuted story, but if you can follow it, I think you will find it illuminating.

Prelude to a Revolution

We are all products and prisoners of history. Had a ghastly battle not been fought in Scotland, on April 16, 1746, would Nat Cole have had the career that he did? Would Peggy Lee and Jo Stafford have become stars? Would the groundbreaking records of the Stan Kenton band ever have been made? The answer is, No. Indeed, without the Battle of Culloden, the American Revolution might never have succeeded and we could have lost World War II, although the question arises: would World War II even have happened?

I have never been to Culloden, but composer Allyn Ferguson has and he tells me that a certain ineffable sadness hangs over the land, as it does over Gettysburg.

Culloden remains muffled, romanticized in Scottish legend and ballad, ignored as much as possible by the English. Perhaps it is because there is shame enough to go around. The events of Culloden had their origins in the reign of Henry VII,

who fathered Henry VIII, who in turn fathered Elizabeth I. Her throne was disputed by her second cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, daughter of James V, King of the Scots, and granddaughter of James IV of Scotland, who was the son of Henry VII's sister Margaret.

Mary was French on her mother's side, raised in the French court, and she married the dauphin who became King Francis II, thus making her queen of France, a title she lost when he died only eighteen months later. Mary accepted the invitation of Scottish nobles to return to the land of her birth.

Against Elizabeth's wishes, Mary married her cousin Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley, who, descended from Margaret Tudor, thus had (at least in Catholic eyes) a claim to the English throne second only to Mary's. Mary declared her intention of leading her army to London.

Mary soon discovered that her second husband was stupid and arrogant, and all the evidence indicates that she was responsible for his murder: he was strangled.

Mary's loyal adherent, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, was suspected of the murder and acquitted in a mock trial designed to bring about that verdict. Bothwell's wife divorced him for his infidelities and Mary married him within three months of Darnley's murder. But Protestant lords would not tolerate the Catholic Bothwell being set in place above them, and rebellion began. Mary was separated from Bothwell and imprisoned at Lochleven, where she was given a choice of abdicating or standing trial for murder. She chose abdication, and her one-year-old son — and Darnley's — became King James VI of Scotland. She accepted Elizabeth's offer of succor and took refuge from the rebels in England. Self-deception is endless in history.

She was brought to trial at Westminster by her enemies. Elizabeth, still her friend, curtailed the proceedings, saying Mary had not been found guilty of complicity in Darnley's murder. She was, however, held in England, in luxurious comfort at the castle of Tutbury in Staffordshire with a household of thirty of her own servants, her dowry as a former queen of France to dispense as she pleased, and all the honors and ceremony due a queen. She repaid Elizabeth with nineteen years of connivance to seize the throne. She was eventually proved complicit in three successive plots against Elizabeth and her government and the Parliament demanded her death. Only Elizabeth stood between Mary and the headsman.

Two more plots, both entailing the assassination of Elizabeth, were uncovered. Mary was brought to trial yet again. Her denials did not outweigh the evidence and she was convicted. Elizabeth could not at first be persuaded to sign the death warrant but, after three months, apparently

reluctantly, did. On February 8, 1587, Mary was brought to her place of execution in the great hall of Fotheringay. She comported herself with grace and dignity and charm — the headsman knelt to beg her forgiveness — and such was her beauty that her true deeds have faded in myth. She has come down to us as a tragic heroine.

James I of England (James VI of Scotland), fruit of Mary's union with Darnley, sired Charles I, who dissolved Parliament and ruled the country for eleven years without it. He brought about the English Civil War, and eventually was convicted of treason. Cromwell and his supporters brought his reign to an end with a headsman's axe on January 30, 1649. Nice people, all of them.

His eldest surviving son was crowned Charles II in 1661. His reign was less turbulent than his father's, and, a shifty, lazy, lascivious but kind and tolerant man all his life, he became a convert to Catholicism — in what might be perceived as a cautious bid to cover all bets — not long before entering the Great Perhaps on February 6, 1685.

Next in line to the throne was Charles II's brother, the Duke of York, the second surviving son of Charles I. He became King James II. He was an able and brave naval commander at whose initiative New Amsterdam was seized from the Dutch and renamed New York in his honor. Like his brother, he was a libertine. Though he was a Catholic, he consented to the marriage of his daughter Mary to William of Orange in 1677. Two-and-a-half years after James II's accession to the throne, it was bruited about that his wife was pregnant, and the possibility of a Catholic succession frightened a good many Protestants, some of whom were in contact with William and Mary, since she was the heiress presumptive. William landed in England on November 5, 1688, and many of James' Protestant officers deserted to join his forces. James was allowed to escape to France, and first the Parliament of England and then that of Scotland declared William and Mary their king and queen.

James died at St. Germain on September 5, 1701. His wife, Mary of Modena, had born him five children who died. His son Charles Edward Stuart, known and romanticized as Bonnie Prince Charlie, was raised in Italy and spoke with a lisping Italian accent, not the Scottish brogue so often imagined of him.

In addition to the son who became Charles I, James I had a daughter named Elizabeth, who married Frederick V, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, who in turn had a daughter, Sophia, who married Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover. She bore a son, George, who succeeded his father as Elector of Hanover in 1692. Thus James had a German son-in-law, a German grand-daughter, and a German great grandson whom

English politicians, fearing a Stuart succession, began courting. In 1727, he was installed as King of England, a country he detested, whose people he detested, and whose language he never learned. He did speak French, and it was in that language that his Prime Minister, Robert Walpole (one of my heroes), addressed him. He brought with him from Germany George Friedrich Handel, two rapacious mistresses whom he installed as the Duchess of Kendal and the Countess of Darlington, and a passion for cutting out paper dolls.

His wife presented him, in 1683, with his only son, who would become George II. It was George II's second son, the Duke of Cumberland, whose army the meager forces of Bonnie Prince Charlie faced at Culloden. His grandson, King George III, lost the American colonies. If King George I was in some ways an idiot, King George III was mad, and once walked up to a tree and spoke to it in the belief that it was the King of Prussia. Queen Victoria was his direct descendant. She and her consort Prince Albert gave birth to a boy who became King Edward VII, father of George V, who was the father of Edward VIII and George VI, who was father of Elizabeth II, mother of Prince Charles and grandmother of the heir apparent, Prince William. They all descend from defective George I and mad George III. The whole nutty Royal Family, beloved of the British tabloids, descend from that simpleton George I.

On June 23, 1745, Prince Charlie landed in Scotland with seven followers to raise a force intended to take the English throne for him. And it was George II's younger brother, the Duke of Cumberland, whose forces Prince Charlie's faced at Culloden.

Subsequent romantic legends hold that the Scots rose everywhere in support of him. This is not so. Many of the fighters were at Culloden under duress or from curiosity or on romantic whim, including one Hugh Mercer, born in 1725 and not quite twenty years old at the time. He had just graduated from medical school, and joined the Jacobite forces as a surgeon.

Prince Charlie chose to accept the advice of those who flattered him, including his quartermaster general, the Irishman John William O'Sullivan. He ignored the counsel of his lieutenant general, Lord George Murray, an able soldier, wanted to fight on mossy, uneven, and soggy ground that would suck English horses down to their bellies if they tried to cross it. O'Sullivan favored a flat, hard place that in fact favored English horsemen. Charlie's troops had gone unfed, their food remaining in Aberdeen due to logistical bungling. He had a force of about 5,000 men, many of them anxious to be elsewhere, who were exhausted and hungry.

The Duke of Cumberland had nearly 9,000 men, including artillery, cavalry, and units of Highland irregulars who comprised eight companies of kilted militia — Campbells mostly. The English soldiers had been disciplined by floggings, anywhere from twenty-five to three thousand strokes of the cat, and an occasional hanging. This English army consisted of 6,400 Foot and 2,400 Horse. The Scots who faced them had nothing in their favor except their bravery, such that for their attacks in their kilts in World War I, the Germans named them “the ladies from hell.”

In previous encounters with Scottish fighters, the English had found their bayonets deflected by the small oxhide shields called targets. The Scots then hacked them with the broadswords called claymores. Cumberland had taught his men a countermove. Each English soldier was trained to attack not the men facing him but the man to his right, or the Scottish soldier’s left, thrusting upward into the rib cage. Hugh Mercer would remember this tactic.

No one on the English side could understand why the Highlanders, barely visible in the mist and rain, made no move toward them. Noon came and went. To the English, and even to Lowland Scots, the Highlands were “a remote and unpleasant region peopled by barbarians who spoke an obscure tongue, who dressed in skins or bolts of parti-colored cloth, and who equated honor with cattle-stealing and murder,” John Prebble wrote in *Culloden*. “Although, Europe and America were within half a century of revolution and the Rights of Man, North Britain still slumbered in tribal twilight four hundred miles from London.” The Highlanders assembled on Drummoissie moor were the last feudal army of Europe. The penalty on both sides for fleeing the battle was death. (Let’s not forget that Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the death warrant for desertion of pathetic private Eddie Slovik.)

The English cannon and mortars were manned by trained and disciplined artillerymen. Soon they set up a fire-at-will roar, and three-pound iron balls passed through the Highland forces with terrible effect, dismembering men in their path. The Highlanders looked back at their officers for the order to charge; it did not come, and the cannonade continued. Most of the deaths at Culloden came from the round shot, which continued for an hour as Bonnie Prince Charlie vacillated.

At last the Highlanders charged, though some of their clan regiments had already lost a third of their men, screaming their ancient battle cries. The British artillery commander ordered his men to change from ball shot to grape, small balls and nails and bits of rusted iron. The guns roared again, and charging Highlanders fell. Others ran over their bodies. The English infantry began their musket fire, and still more of the running Scots fell. Those who reached and broke through the

English lines raised their broadswords only to be bayoneted not by the man they faced but by the one next to him, as Cumberland had trained them to do. Clans were decimated before they reached the English lines. Others were cut down by Campbells loyal to the English king, and by a regiment commanded by Brevet-Major James Wolfe who would later alter our North American geography by defeating the forces of Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham at Quebec City.

By the end of the day, the army, if such it had ever been, of Bonnie Prince Charlie was in rout, having lost 1,000 dead and 1,000 taken prisoner, many of whom would wish they had been among the dead. The English forces moved among the groaning Scottish wounded, ending their miseries with bayonet thrusts. Even the surgeons tending the wounded were not spared: they were deemed traitors, and despatched on the spot.

The Duke of Cumberland returned to a hero’s welcome in London, leaving his minions in command of forces charged with hunting down survivors of Culloden and anyone else who might be thought guilty of even passing sympathy for the Jacobites. The vengeance was fearsome. They raped the women and robbed the properties, and despoiled the valleys of cattle, sheep, fowl, dogs, and any domestic creature that moved. Babies were spitted on bayonets. We were duly horrified during World War II that the Japanese did this.

Sherman, in his march to Savannah, invented nothing. Nor did the American “pioneers” who slaughtered the bison to the purpose of starving the Indians, for the slaughter or theft of Highland cattle was intended to starve the population. It would remain for the Serbs, more than two hundred years later, to invent a term, chilling in its clinical detachment, for what went on in the Highlands after Culloden: ethnic cleansing. The prisoners at Andersonville knew nothing worse, and possibly not even as bad, as the Scottish prisoners starving and rotting on English prison ships in the months after the battle.

Author of abominations for the sake of his idiot ambitions, Prince Charles Edward hid out in caves and finally escaped Scotland to live another forty-five years, soaked in brandy, in Rome, where he died. A few of Culloden’s survivors escaped, some of them to Scandinavia. A man named Greig succeeded in reaching Norway. The name became Grieg, to conform to Norwegian orthography. His grandson, Edvard, became one of history’s great composers, dying at Bergen September 7, 1907. When Alan Jay Lerner and Fritz Lowe were contemplating their musical *Brigadoon*, and looking for models and precedents, Fritz said he had never heard music more Scottish than Grieg’s.

To be continued