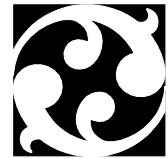




# CAMELOT BOOK CLUB



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Lake Cypress Springs, Texas

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## ***THE WORST HARD TIME:***

***The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl***

by Timothy Egan

“This is the extraordinary account of how America’s great, grassy plains turned to dust, and how the ferocious plains winds stirred up an endless series of “black blizzards” that were like a biblical plague: ‘Dust clouds boiled up, ten thousand feet or more in the sky, and rolled like moving mountains’ in what became known as the Dust Bowl. But the plague was man-made, as Egan shows: the plains weren’t suited to farming, and plowing up the grass to plant wheat, along with a confluence of economic disaster - the Depression - and natural disaster - eight years of drought - resulted in an ecological and human catastrophe.” This is how a Publishers Weekly editor describes the great Dust Bowl.

Author Egan weaves into his story portraits of the people who settled the plains. Many were immigrants; hardy Americans, one and all. They were desperate for a piece of land to call their own, and were lured by the lies of promoters who said the land was arable. They suffered through the worst of times as one after another dust storm swept through the land. They watched their babies die of “dust pneumonia”, and their animals starving. They persevered as they watched their land and the fruits of their labors being blown away by the howling winds that made the skies turn black from the dust.

A reader’s comment describes the book best: The land may have been bleak but the human spirit was rich and exciting.

(Your Scribe’s note: Some of the above is adapted from online reviews.)

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## **CAMELOT’S DISCUSSION OF THE BOOK**

We all enjoyed the book very much. Some of us even lived at the time of the book’s events in the early 1930’s. Most said the events were not discussed very much in their families. Some of our comments:

- The stories of how events impacted the families were totally bleak, even depressing.
- All of us were surprised that human error contributed so greatly to the Dust Bowl; it was not just an ecological event.
- The people couldn’t leave their chosen plots of land - there was no money, no resources of any kind.
- We hadn’t realized the huge extent of the land area involved - black dust blew through so many states from the Dakotas to Texas and beyond.

- ❑ The families were so tough - so resilient.
- ❑ How sad to watch one's baby die of the dreaded "dust pneumonia", with lungs clogged with dirt.
- ❑ The lives were impacted by the discovery of the biggest source of underground fresh water from South Dakota to Texas, the Ogallala Acuífer.
- ❑ This was the era that gave birth to some of the government programs we know today, such as farmers' subsidies, Social Security, F.D.I.C.

### NEXT MEETING

**When?** Friday, November 18, 2011, 1:30p.m.

**Where?** At Suzanne Tuite's house

**Why?** To have fun, and to discuss

*Nothing Daunted: The Unexpected Education of Two Society Girls in the West*

By Dorothy Wickenden

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### MEETING NOTES

Our meeting was at Barbara Walton's house, with all the delightful decorative Hallowe'en characters perched among us. We started out with each giving a little update on recent activities. **Barbara** and Pirk had a delightful trip to Colorado and points beyond. **Ann Seher** looked so refreshed with her nice new hair-style. She also said she's starting to paint again. **Dotty** told about her ten-day trip to Charleston and of beach-coming for seashells. **Gwen** regaled us with her funny grandchild story of the liquid flu. **Terry** described her trip to attend the wedding of her nephew to a sweet girl. **Sue** described her wonderful trip to Toronto, and all the airline delays coming back. But Canada is beautiful - Niagra Falls, nice yards, lean, tidy, people very nice. -And her grandson's admonition to his long-winded sister, "Land the plane, Anne." **Anne** had a nice visit with her daughter in Nashville - and did some interesting sightseeing. **Margaret**, your Scribe, had no excitement to tell about, just amyloidosis afflicting a friend, and a wart removal. Also, announced the reinstatement of **Camelot Newsletter**, because Anne & Sue continued to nag her about missing it the last few months. So, your Scribe herewith bestows on them the **Nag Award**, with love and affection.

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**WRITE IT ON YOUR HEART THAT EVERY DAY IS THE BEST DAY OF THE YEAR**

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**CAMELOT BOOK CLUB IS GREAT**  
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