History

- **A History of the World in 100 Objects** by Neil MacGregor
  - A History of the World in 100 Objects begins with one of the earliest surviving objects made by human hands, a chopping tool from the Olduvai gorge in Africa, and ends with objects which characterize the world we live in today. Seen through MacGregor's eyes, history is a kaleidoscope - shifting, interconnected, constantly surprising, and shaping our world today in ways that most of us have never imagined.

- **Black Hawk Down** by Mark Bowden
  - On October 3, 1993, about a hundred U.S. soldiers were dropped by helicopter into a teeming market in the heart of Mogadishu, Somalia, to abduct two top lieutenants of a Somali warlord. The action was supposed to take an hour. Instead, they spent a long and terrible night fighting thousands of armed Somalis. By morning, eighteen Americans were dead, and more than seventy badly injured. Mark Bowden's gripping narrative is one of the most exciting accounts of modern war ever written -- a riveting story that captures the heroism, courage and brutality of battle.

- **Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman** by Robert K. Massie
  - Pulitzer Prize winner Massie offers the tale of a princess who went to Russia at 14 and became one of the most powerful women in history. Born into minor German nobility, she transformed herself into an empress by sheer determination. Possessing a brilliant, curious mind, she devoured the works of Enlightenment philosophers, and reaching the throne, tried using their principles to rule the vast, backward empire. She knew or corresponded with notable figures of her time: Voltaire, Diderot, Frederick the Great, Maria Theresa of Austria, Marie Antoinette & John Paul Jones.

- **Empire of Liberty** by Gordon Wood
  - Gordon Wood, offers a brilliant account of the early American Republic, ranging from 1789 and the beginning of the national government to the end of the War of 1812. As Wood reveals, the period was marked by tumultuous change in all aspects of American life--in politics, society, economy, and culture. The men who founded the new government had high hopes for the future, but few of their hopes and dreams worked out quite as they expected.

- **Gateway to Freedom** by Eric Foner
  - More than any other scholar, Eric Foner has influenced our understanding of America's history. Now, making brilliant use of extraordinary evidence, the Pulitzer Prize–winning historian once again reconfigures the national saga of American slavery and freedom. It eventually took a civil war to destroy American slavery, but here at last is the story of the courageous effort to fight slavery by "practical abolition," person by person, family by family.
• *Hitler’s Furies* by Wendy Lower
  o Wendy Lower’s stunning account of the role of German women on the World War II Nazi eastern front powerfully revises history, proving that we have ignored the reality of women’s participation in the Holocaust, including as brutal killers. The long-held picture of German women holding down the home front during the war, as loyal wives and cheerleaders for the Führer, pales in comparison to Lower’s incisive case for the massive complicity, and worse, of the 500,000 young German women she places, for the first time, directly in the killing fields of the expanding Reich.

• *Joan of Arc: A History* by Helen Castor
  o We all know the story of Joan of Arc. A peasant girl who hears voices from God. A warrior leading an army to victory, in an age that believes women cannot fight. The Maid of Orleans, and the saviour of France. Burned at the stake as a heretic at the age of just nineteen. Five hundred years later, a saint. Her case was heard in court twice over. One trial, in 1431, condemned her; the other, twenty-five years after her death, cleared her name. In the transcripts, we hear first-hand testimony from Joan, her family and her friends: a rare survival from the medieval world. What could be more revealing?

• *Isabella: The Warrior Queen* by Kirstin Downey
  o An engrossing and revolutionary biography of Isabella of Castile, the controversial Queen of Spain who sponsored Christopher Columbus's journey to the New World, established the Spanish Inquisition, and became one of the most influential female rulers in history.

• *Liar, Temptress, Soldier, Spy: Four Women Undercover in the Civil War* by Karen Abbot
  o Karen Abbott illuminates one of the most fascinating yet little known aspects of the Civil War: the stories of four courageous women—a socialite, a farmgirl, an abolitionist, and a widow—who were spies. Abbott seamlessly weaves the adventures of these four heroines throughout the tumultuous years of the war with a cast of real-life characters including Walt Whitman, Nathaniel Hawthorne, General Stonewall Jackson, detective Allan Pinkerton, Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln, and Emperor Napoleon III.

• *Luther’s Fortress: Martin Luther and His Reformation Under Siege* by James Reston Jr.
  o In 1521, the Catholic Church was hunting for Martin Luther. Angered by the Christian reformer’s unapologetic criticisms of the Church, the Holy Roman Emperor had called for him “to be apprehended and punished as a notorious heretic.” Knowing that Inquisitors would murder the monk and crush his fragile movement if they caught him, Luther’s followers spirited him away to Wartburg Castle in central Germany. There Luther hid for the next eight months as his fate—and that of the Reformation—hung in the balance.
- **The Pope and Mussolini** by David Kertzer
  - *The Pope and Mussolini* tells the story of two men who came to power in 1922. In most respects, they could not have been more different. One was scholarly and devout, the other thuggish and profane. Yet Pius XI and “Il Duce” had many things in common. They shared a distrust of democracy and a visceral hatred of Communism. Each relied on the other to consolidate his power and achieve his political goals. Together changed the course of twentieth-century history.

- **Stalin and His Hangmen** by Donald Rayfield
  - Stalin did not act alone. The mass executions, the mock trials, the betrayals and purges, the jailings and secret torture that ravaged the Soviet Union during the three decades of Stalin’s dictatorship, were the result of a tight network of trusted henchmen (and women), spies, psychopaths, and thugs. At the top of this pyramid of terror sat five indispensable hangmen who presided over the various incarnations of Stalin’s secret police. Now, in his harrowing new book, Donald Rayfield probes the lives, the minds, the twisted careers, and the unpunished crimes of Stalin’s loyal assassins.

- **Team of Rivals** by Doris Kearns Goodwin
  - *Team of Rivals* doesn’t just tell the story of Abraham Lincoln. It is a multiple biography of the entire team of personal and political competitors that he put together to lead the country through its greatest crisis. Here, Doris Kearns Goodwin profiles five of the key players in her book, four of whom contended for the 1860 Republican presidential nomination and all of whom later worked together in Lincoln's cabinet.

- **Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power** by Jon Meacham
  - *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power* gives us Jefferson the politician and president, a great and complex human being forever engaged in the wars of his era. Philosophers think; politicians maneuver. Jefferson’s genius was that he was both and could do both, often simultaneously. Drawing on archives in the United States, England, and France, as well as unpublished Jefferson presidential papers, Meacham presents Jefferson as the most successful political leader of the early republic, and perhaps in all of American history.

- **Vietnam: The Real War** by the Associated Press
  - To cover the Vietnam War, the Associated Press gathered an extraordinary group of superb photojournalists in its Saigon bureau, creating one of the great photographic legacies of the 20th century. Collected here are images that tell the story of the war that left a deep and lasting impression on American life. These are pictures that both recorded and made history, taken by unbelievably courageous photojournalists.
The Wars of Reconstruction: The Brief, Violent History of America’s Most Progressive Era
by Douglas R. Egerton

Previous histories of Reconstruction have focused on Washington politics. But in this sweeping, prodigiously researched narrative, Douglas Egerton brings a much bigger, even more dramatic story into view, exploring state and local politics and tracing the struggles of some fifteen hundred African-American officeholders, in both the North and South, who fought entrenched white resistance. Tragically, their movement was met by ruthless violence—not just riotous mobs, but also targeted assassination. With stark evidence, Egerton shows that Reconstruction, often cast as a "failure" or a doomed experiment, was rolled back by murderous force. The Wars of Reconstruction is a major and provocative contribution to American history.