

# WHAT IS PAST IS PROLOGUE

The Prologue Society Newsletter

April 27, 2016

## FROM THE CHAIR

**Coming soon**—a special session on May 13 to hear Simon Montefiore talk about his new book on the Romanov dynasty of Russia. Simon was very well-received by The Prologue Society a couple of years ago when he presented his book, *Jerusalem: A Biography*. We look forward to having him again for this special session.

I call it a special session because it is the ninth luncheon this year (The Prologue Society normally holds seven sessions a year). **NOTE:** Because this is an extra session, the cost of the book is not included in your annual dues and luncheon fees, so if you want a book you will have to buy one. Books & Books will have a stand set up at the Riviera Country Club on May 13 and will accept credit cards; the books will be sold for the 20% discount that Books & Books gives to The Prologue Society.

**Please register and pay early for May 13**—especially because Debbie Hirshson will not be with us that day. Tony Miyar of the The Education Foundation has kindly agreed to stand in for her that day.

**Just past**—Janice Nimura did a fabulous job of talking about *The Daughters of the Samurai* on April 14. She was one of the most vivacious and engaging speakers of the year, and her book about three young Japanese girls sent to America in the early 19th century offers an intriguing window into the years when Japan decided to open itself to the rest of the world.

**Board changes**—I have stepped down as Chair of The Prologue Society, effective May 1. Your Board has elected Marijean Miyar as the new Chair, and we are all looking forward to her leadership. Jim Herron was elected Vice Chair, and I got stuck with the job of Treasurer. Debbie Hirshson retains her position as Secretary. We are all looking forward to a terrific season for 2016-2017.

**Now is the time to bring prospective new members to a luncheon.** We continue to look for readers of history and culture. Please bring your friends and neighbors to The Prologue Society to have a look.

**Thanks**—It has been a consummate pleasure to serve as your Chair for the past three years. With all of you, I look forward to the years ahead under new leadership. Thanks most especially to the Debbie Hirshson, Dave Halpern, and all of you for making my work enjoyable and fun for the past few years.

Dabney (Bud) Park

## NEXT LUNCHEON: Simon Montefiore, May 13

*The Romanovs: 1613-1918*

### To register:

- **The deadline for members to register for this luncheon is Monday, May 9.**
- **Online:** Go to [www.theprologuesociety.org](http://www.theprologuesociety.org) and follow the instructions;
- **OR by telephone:** Call 305-323-1154 and talk to Debbie Hirshson or leave a voicemail message that you plan to attend;
- **OR by regular mail:** Send note with a check for \$50.00 per person to The Prologue Society, 18495 S. Dixie Highway #373, Miami, FL 33157.
- **Include** the names of your guests.
- **IMPORTANT: IF YOU REGISTER BY MAIL, you must also call Debbie** (or reply to this email) so that she knows to expect you!

### To pay:

- **Enter your credit card number** on the website;
- **OR mail a check** for \$50.00 per person to The Prologue Society, 18495 S. Dixie Highway #373, Miami, FL 33157;
- **OR bring a check** to the luncheon.

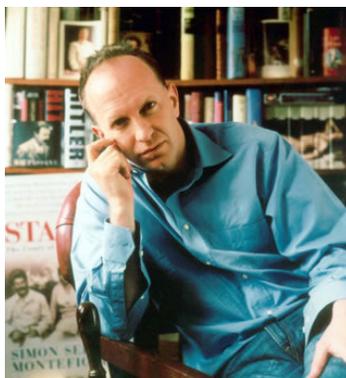
### Note:

- To speed up luncheon check-in and accounting, our preference is that you: 1) pay online, OR 2) mail a check well in advance of the luncheon.
- Mail is taking a while to reach us. (Remember to call or email Debbie right away if you're registering via the mail.)
- **If you haven't yet sent in your membership application**, please do so right away (or activate and pay for your membership online). You will need to be on the membership rolls before we can accept your reservation for this and all future luncheons of this season.

## SIMON MONTEFIORE, MAY 13

*The Romanovs: 1613-1918*

The Romanovs were the most successful dynasty of modern times, ruling a sixth of the world's surface. How did one family turn a war-ruined principality into the world's greatest empire? And how did they lose it all?



This is the intimate story of twenty tsars and tsarinas, some touched by genius, some by madness, but all inspired by holy autocracy and imperial ambition. Montefiore's gripping chronicle reveals their secret world of unlimited power and ruthless empire-building, overshadowed by palace conspiracy, family rivalries, sexual decadence and wild extravagance, and peopled by a cast of adventurers, courtesans, revolutionaries and poets, from Ivan the Terrible to Tolstoy, from Queen Victoria to Lenin.

To rule Russia was both imperial-sacred mission and poisoned chalice: six tsars were murdered and all the Romanovs lived under constant threat to their lives. Peter the Great tortured his own son to death while making Russia an empire, and dominated his court with a dining club notable for compulsory drunkenness, naked dwarfs and fancy dress. Catherine the Great overthrew her own husband - who was murdered soon afterwards - loved her young male favourites, conquered Ukraine and fascinated Europe. Paul was strangled by courtiers backed by his own son, Alexander I, who faced Napoleon's invasion and the burning of Moscow, then went on to take Paris. Alexander II liberated the serfs, survived five assassination attempts, and wrote perhaps the most explicit love letters ever written by a ruler. **THE ROMANOV**s climaxes with a fresh, unforgettable portrayal of Nicholas and Alexandra, the rise and murder of Rasputin, war and revolution - and the harrowing massacre of the entire family.

Written with dazzling literary flair, drawing on new archival research, **THE ROMANOV**s is at once an enthralling story of triumph and tragedy, love and death, a universal study of power, and an essential portrait of the empire that still defines Russia today.

~ The Orion Publishing Group

photo credit: Hugo Burnand

## RECENT LUNCHEONS

On April 14, Janice Nimura informed and entertained all in attendance.



We were joined by Miami-Dade County Public School teacher Stephanie Cosgrove and a few of her students.

## 2016-2017 SEASON

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Your board will be busy over the summer, preparing another exciting season for our members and guests. Typically, our annual mailing goes out to everyone sometime in August and our luncheons run September through April.

*Thank you*

to our generous sponsors:



MIAMITODAY

BOOKS & BOOKS

For membership and luncheon information, please visit us online at [www.theprologuesociety.org](http://www.theprologuesociety.org), email us at [theprologuesociety@gmail.com](mailto:theprologuesociety@gmail.com) or phone us at 305-323-1154.

