ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

BIOGRAPHY

Headlines, Deadlines and Lifelines
George B. Bookman
iUniverse
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Three Stars (out of Five)

George Bookman newspaper reporter journalist and a man who once occupied the bathroom stall next to the Duke of Windsor completed his memoir in 2002 at age ninety-four. He witnessed firsthand the turmoil and change of the 1930s and ’40s. Bookman was born into fortunate circumstances cared for by governesses and educated in Boarding and Prep schools in Europe and he tells readers nothing of the deprivation of the Great Depression.

Bookman a Jew left Europe for America in 1936 just as Hitler began his campaign. He returned several years later to cover the African campaign working for the Office of War Intelligence assigned to Leopoldville Belgian Congo. He also served a stint as a reporter for the *Washington Post* assigned to cover the White House and various other federal government departments. After the war he moved on to a job in public relations for the New York Botanical Gardens and eventually opened his own public relations consulting business retiring in 2002. Bookman lays out his life in only 193 pages of the nearly 500 pages of this book. Letters news articles written by Bookman photos and favorite poems fill the remaining pages.

Sadly Bookman has written this memoir more like a travel itinerary without the scenic details and descriptions. “In Amsterdam we of course went to the Rijks Museum and other museums” he writes. “Visited the Portuguese Synagogue and the Jewish Museum where there was a portrait of a Mr. Wertheim a 19th Century Liberal leader. Then with a rented car….”

Obviously he had a limited audience in mind. Family members friends and acquaintances should find this fascinating. Strangers may wish for more facts and details about the settings personal interactions and observations. Faulty memory and missing facts lessen the value of his recollections. Bookman is narrow in his scope and reports on his health his travels family stories and devotes too many pages on how he got from point A to point B as well as addresses where he once lived:

> *We were then living on Nevada Avenue in Chevy Chase D.C. When it came time for Janet to go to the hospital (Columbia Hospital I believe) I opened the front door to go out for the car and our Persian cat ran out and climbed a tree. Janet would not leave the house until the Fire Department had come and retrieved the cat for us.*

This memoir a pet project may surprise readers by its lack of journalistic style and tight writing. Bookman tends to write at length yet conveys only superficial information. For anyone interested in personal historic documents this book sparkles with original journal entries newspaper clippings letters and an array of family correspondence but it falls short of truly telling a life story. He has given his family a priceless collection of his correspondences and writings. General readers may find the book too centered on Bookman's daily minutia.