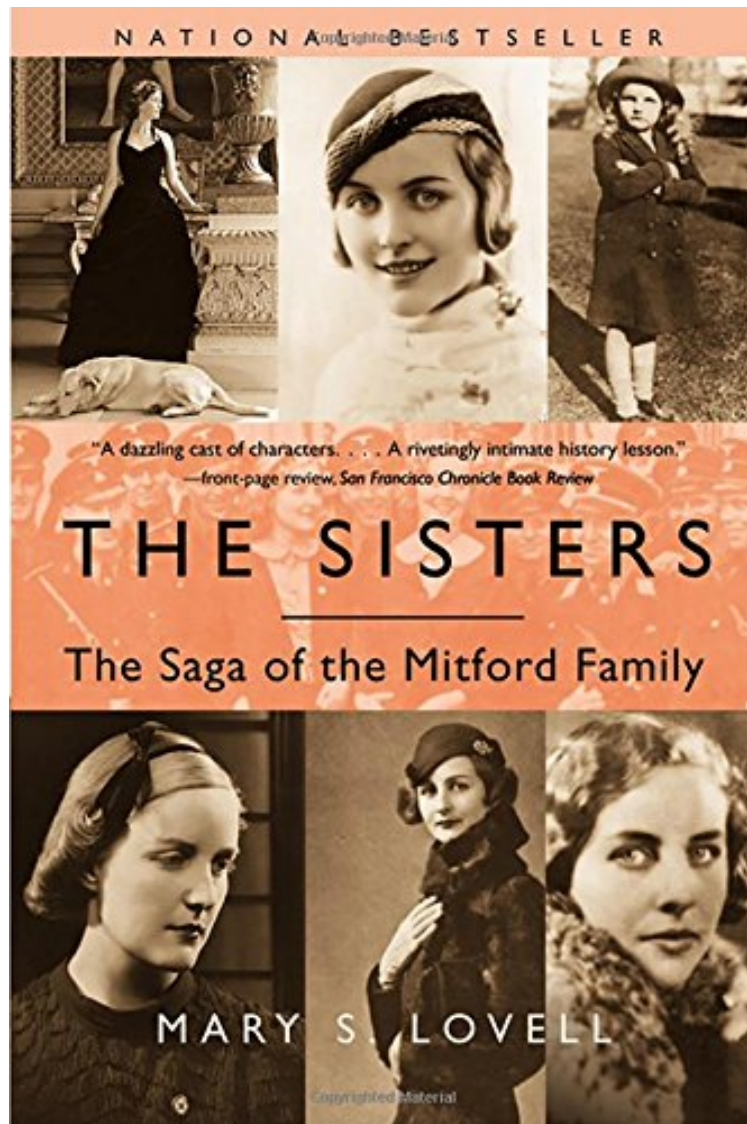


The Sisters: The Saga of the Mitford Family

Mary S. Lovell

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#141952 in Books W W Norton Company 2003-03-17Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.30 x 1.70 x 5.50l, 1.27 #File Name: 0393324141640 pagesW W Norton Company | File size: 24.Mb

Mary S. Lovell : The Sisters: The Saga of the Mitford Family before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Sisters: The Saga of the Mitford Family:

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Good general overview of the sistersBy JillThe book is well written, and is a decent companion to the Letters Between Six Sisters edited by Charlotte Mosley. It isn't a terribly detailed history, however and not equally balanced as far as information about each sister. Jessica (Decca) and Diana, whom the author interviewed and, in the case of the latter also met, are given a lot more space than the others. She

covers Unity's "Hitler Years" of course, but otherwise we learn very little that is new about Unity. Likewise, Deborah (Debo) and Pam get scanty coverage, and even Nancy is regulated almost to the background. Lovell also occasionally doesn't follow up on information that she presents - for example, she makes a point of saying the Diana's husband, Oswald Mosley, lost a huge amount of money on a radio venture, and recounts his failure to reenter politics after the war; she also describes, though, the Mosleys moving from one lovely home to another, redecorating "with Diana's usual flair..." but doesn't explain where the money came from to support this lifestyle. Overall, however, the book is a good general reference and sources are well documented. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A amazing story of an interesting and unusual family, By babs This book caught one up in the lives of the Mitford sisters and their unusual political differences. Also some of their relationships with Hitler before world war 11. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. And you thought your siblings were strange By Virginia Woof I have always been fascinated by the Mitford family and have read several books by Jessica Mitford, whose writing I very much admire. This is one way out-there family, and The Sisters is the best book yet on the subject. It contains photos and great information not included in previous biographies.

"Fascinating, the way all great family stories are fascinating." Robert Gottlieb, New York Times Book Review This is the story of a close, loving family splintered by the violent ideologies of Europe between the world wars. Jessica was a Communist; Debo became the Duchess of Devonshire; Nancy was one of the best-selling novelists of her day; beautiful Diana married the Fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley; and Unity, a close friend of Hitler, shot herself in the head when England and Germany declared war. The Mitfords had style and presence and were mercilessly gifted. Above all, they were funny hilariously and mercilessly so. In this wise, evenhanded, and generous book, Mary Lovell captures the vitality and drama of a family that took the twentieth century by storm and became, in some respects, its victims. 24 b/w photographs

From Publishers Weekly In her history of England's Mitford sisters, who were major figures in the international political, literary and social scenes for much of the 20th century, Lovell (*The Sound of Wings: The Biography of Amelia Earhart*; etc.) rises with aplomb to the challenges of a group biography, deftly weaving together the narrative threads of six at times radically disparate lives to create a fascinating account of a fascinating family. Born into the ranks of the minor aristocracy and educated at home by eccentric and perennially cash-strapped parents, Nancy, Pamela, Diana, Unity, Jessica and Deborah Mitford hardly seemed the types whose exploits would generate endless fodder for the sensationalist press. But when Diana left her wealthy young husband to take up with and eventually marry Sir Oswald Mosley, infamous leader of British fascism; when Unity became close friends with Adolf Hitler and a proponent of Nazism; when Jessica, a vocal Communist, eloped with a notorious cousin who was also a nephew of Winston Churchill; when Deborah married the Duke of Devonshire; and when both Nancy (*Love in a Cold Climate*) and Jessica (*The American Way of Death*) became acclaimed, bestselling authors, the world responded with avid, insatiable and at times alarmingly intrusive curiosity. But whether adored or reviled by their public, all the Mitford sisters were engaged with (and at times embodiments of) the major social and political issues of their time. Lovell's account of the sisters' upbringing and their often tumultuous adult lives is as lively and engrossing as Nancy's heavily autobiographical fiction; the group biography also does a commendable job of separating the myths that fiction created from the sometimes more mundane realities of the Mitfords' activities and relationships. 16 pages of photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Lovell's biography of the Mitford sisters illustrates "the complex loyalties and love, disloyalties and even hate, and above all the laughter that ran through this family's relationships." Lovell (*A Rage To Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton*) presents an engrossing narrative that captures the distinct personalities of six headstrong, determined, and witty women who had a surprisingly pervasive impact on 20th-century social, political, and literary history. At the heart of the biography is Unity Mitford, who was obsessed with Adolf Hitler and widely rumored to be his mistress. In the telling of Unity's saga, Lovell's extreme evenhandedness can be exasperating. Unity sent a letter to a German newspaper, for example, exclaiming, "I am a Jew hater," but Lovell withholds comment or condemnation. While Unity provides the most dramatic story, the lives of the other sisters Jessica, a Communist; Debo, Dutchess of Devonshire; Diana, wife of Fascist leader Oswald Mosley; novelist Nancy; and Pamela are also excellently narrated and seamlessly woven together. While this is not the first biography of the Mitford family, and full biographies have been written about three of the sisters, Lovell claims to have drawn upon "personal interviews, family papers and correspondence not previously seen outside the family." If you can overlook the biography's occasional reticence about the horrific political realities of Nazism in the 1930s and 1940s, this is a captivating read. - Amy Strong, South Portland, ME Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *The New Yorker* "This is not a political book," the author writes, and quotes Lord Longford: "You have to look at that family as fun." Well, perhaps. Of the six sisters, Diana was married to the Fascist politician Oswald Mosley; Unity, obsessed with Hitler, shot herself when England and Germany went to war; Jessica joined the Communist Party. Nancy, of course, wrote delicious, acidic novels; she was also partly responsible for sending her sister Diana to prison. While it seems that every nickname bestowed by the ever-inventive

clan is recorded in this fulsome, willfully injudicious volume (Honks, Debo, Bobo, Muv, Farve, Rudbin, Idden, Nanny Blor), the only information that might be called revelatory is that Dinky, Jessica's daughter, is now an emergency nurse specializing in pain management. Copyright 2005 The New Yorker