

COLLECTED ESSAYS ON
AMERICANISM



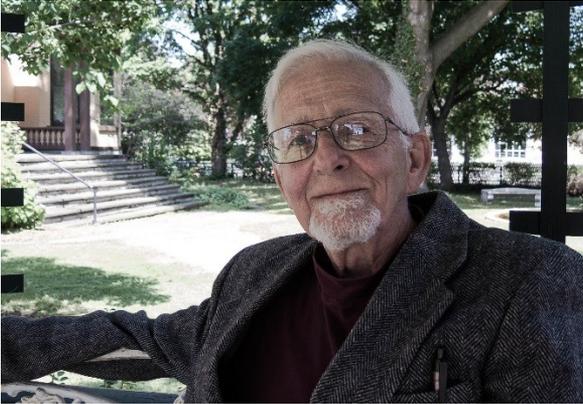
Third Edition

DAVID CLAIRE JENNINGS

Collected Essays on Americanism

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Also by David Claire Jennings:

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Hanna's Promise: A Story of Grace and Hope
The American: A Man's Life
The Goodness of Alzheimer's

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Introduction

Writing is a solitary process. Some do it anyway because they have to, hoping they can connect with another and reverse the solitude someday. They hope it will make another human feel something, learn something, believe something or make some small difference in their lives.

For so many years I wrote essays, long before I wrote novels, before I went back to school to study history and study it further on my own. Before that I wrote technical manuals and instructions. Inexplicably, few read those, while they are needed for some practical purpose. But essays – narrations of ideas – have always been at the heart of my writing, even when infused within my characters and their stories in my novels.

Whether we believe the divine account or man's scientific tentative determinations, the Earth formed from the cosmos, likely in one momentous event, many eons ago. For myself, both ideas of creation work and are compatible. I believe that God created it, that He is ageless and timeless and we cannot know His purpose.

Man began sometime thereafter in the northeastern region of the African continent and the fertile crescent there. The color of his skin was black for God's or nature's good reasons. Man's population spread quickly to what is now the Middle East nearby.

We understand man propagated and formed family units and then groups for socialization and banded together for cooperation and survival. He became tribal. He spread across the vast distances of land and some believe he crossed large bodies of water even in early times.

The tribes fought for dominance and the stronger, cleverer, or benefactors of good circumstance from any manner of things, grew to mighty early civilizations in Egypt, Greece, Rome and Arabia.

Ideas of philosophy, divine deity and mortal monarchy changed the lives of both the meek and the powerful.

Most agree that as a result of a brief climatic change – an ice age – men, women and children of Asia crossed a temporary, propitious land bridge over the Bering Strait, maybe some thirteen thousands of years ago, and came to what is now North America. They settled in warmer areas, the ice age dissipated and the bridge dissolved. We believe the earliest major settlement was near what is now Clovis, New Mexico. We call them the Clovis people. They spread down the thread and spine connecting North and South America. That thread of Central America brought mighty Inca and Mayan civilizations into the northwestern regions of South America.

Centuries later the western European highly developed civilizations - now nations - began to cross the Atlantic Ocean and around Africa and South America on frightful voyages of exploration for riches and treasures and future needs for more land. What some did to others is what we call history.

The Spaniards came to America as the first Europeans, followed by the Dutch, the French and the British. In our part of the hemisphere, the British dominated and formed the basis for our future country – our laws and our Christianity.

It is about what followed after that, our country we call the United States, or simply America, that has occupied my thoughts for all the years of my late maturity.

So here then are my essays, with some more recent in my years as an old student with passion for history and its people.

Some, the most early, are not so well written – it was before my deep reverence for the English language grew to its present love - and maybe weakly compelling, while a few show a spark of intelligence with profundity and maybe wisdom.

There is a little bit of memoir, some painful but honest and personal. Some are now outdated but reflect what I saw at the time. They are my own words.

They are topically grouped in sections – society, bureaucracy, history, law, politics, economics and art. Each section contains a number of essays. They are eclectic in topic and without particular order within each category, with a few humorous and some naïve, but most with a serious intent. The whimsical and sardonic ones are channeling P.J. O'Rourke for anyone who has read and enjoyed his books. I must thank my teachers in classes, the knowledge from many books and myself for my life's experience.

I noted that Charles Krauthammer has been a newspaper correspondent and astute political commentator for many years and has recently compiled some of his columns (essays) into a book titled *Things That Matter*. I read it and enjoyed it. At first I did not like him very much, but have come to admire him as the acquired taste that he is. When his mind is tuned in, he is brilliant. When it is not, he bullshits effectively. While I do not have his credentials or celebrity; he was a doctor who became a writer, while I was an engineer who has done the same.

While my second novel will be published imminently and my third is stewing, this was a good time to do this. This effort of compilation began in mid-April, 2016.

I have only reviewed these old essays now to compile them and correct them for typographical errors, punctuation errors and the like. Whatever it was, it was what I wrote at the time. For whatever value that has now, it has.

A comment about this third edition:

This edition has been expanded to eighty seven essays. Since the second edition, two have been added to Section 3 – History and nine have been added to Section 7 – now named Literature as Art. These last are about literature as art and the process of the career writer. Some are exegesis as appreciation for renowned American writers who have inspired my writing.

Enjoy them if you may.

David Claire Jennings

(end of sample)