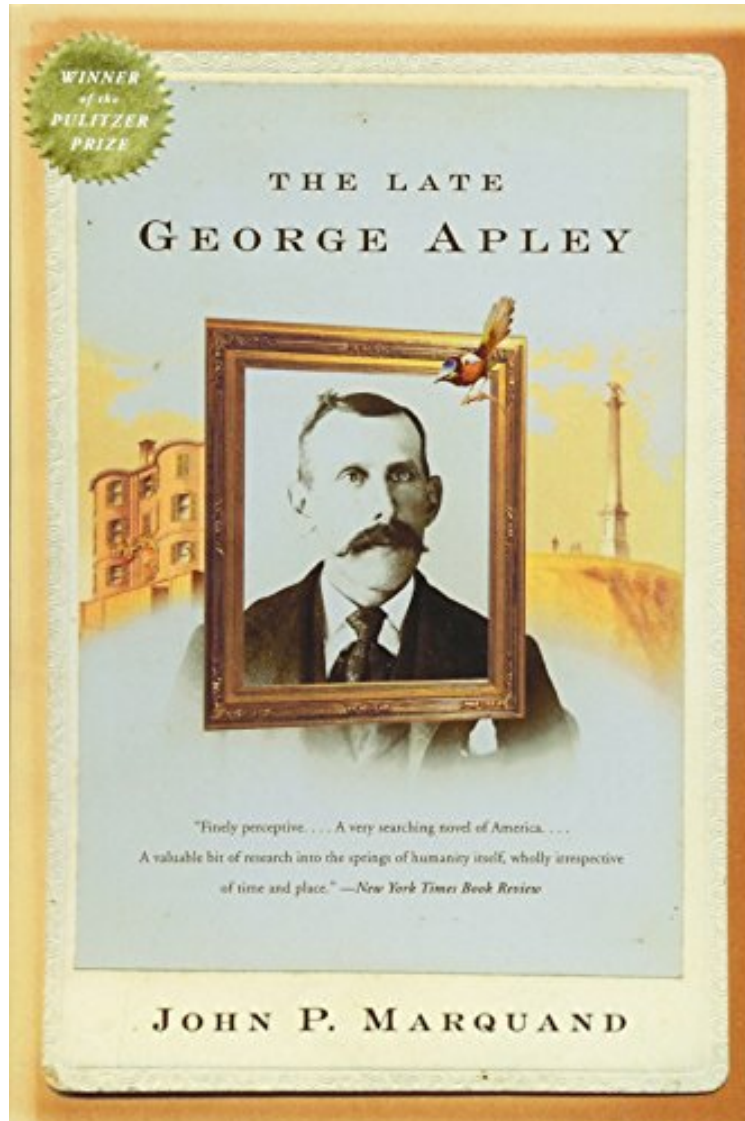


The Late George Apley

John P. Marquand

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John P. Marquand : The Late George Apley before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Late George Apley:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Man of Contradictions, Beautifully DoneBy Montana MackayThe novel, largely an epistolary one, gives a deep and thoughtful overview of the life of George Apley, a scion of Boston during the last half of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th. What made this book memorable for me was the fact that I have known people like George Apley -- people who are wealthy and yet full of conviction about doing the right thing. I found a lot of messages in this book that we today might do well to heed, such as Apley's insistence that

rich people who flaunt their wealth by building ostentatious homes or getting-and-spending are missing the point (of life) entirely. He is so full of conviction that the wealthy have deep and almost eternal obligations -- he derived this notion from his father, John, who in turn derived it from his father, Moses Apley. I was at first put off by the inherent snobbery of the Apleys and their friends/consorts. "You must join the Province Club," or, "You must join the Berkley Club," or "Son, you must not be seen with people who are not of our class," and what-have-you. All of this seemed at first like artifice to me. And in a way, it is -- but taken along with Apley's character, which is lovingly developed in this book, these strictures fit perfectly with the Apley family (and many other intellectual New Englanders) and the morals of what may have been America's only expression of nobility, the people of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Apley, despite how much he cuts himself off from the more sanguine aspects of society, is a noble man, with the purest intentions and a far-seeing mind. As he says near the end of the book, "There must be a class which sets a tone, not for its own pleasure, but because of the responsibility it owes to others." I ended the book with a bittersweet feeling -- I actually had come to feel tenderly toward this gentleman (indeed he was a gentleman) in the closing chapters, and no longer saw him as a stuffed shirt confined to an outdated morality. Marquand developed him beautifully, and brought to me, as the book ended, a very endearing old fellow who had a sense of his own shortcomings yet had done all he could to leave the world a better place.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Regrets, he's had a few

By M. Feldman For the first 25 or so pages of this wonderful novel, I didn't know what to expect. In truth, I felt a little negative. Why was I reading a book about a man who seemed to be a fusty Boston Brahmin? As much as I love Boston, I don't have much patience with those for whom Harvard (and certain clubs, and the Athenaeum, and so on) are the center of the universe. And they were certainly at the center of George Apley's universe. As I read on, I was hooked, despite myself, on the story of this upright and well-meaning man for whom a rich life, at least as he comes to understand it, seems always just out of reach. Marquand narrates the story through the use of fictional letters by Apley's family members and friends (along with his replies). This technique lends a quality of delicate formality to the "biography," as if one were reading one of those old books whose pages must be cut. Not only are the man and the world he inhabited lost to us, but also the very way in which men and women of his time expressed their thoughts and hopes. Its twin is William Dean Howells' "The Rise of Silas Lapham." This is a tale of a man from the provinces (Vermont, then) who makes a fortune in paint manufacturing and comes to take his place among the wealthy inhabitants of Gilded Age Boston. One can imagine Lapham and Apley meeting in some velvet-draped drawing room, and one can imagine as well their mutual incomprehension. The seemingly crass new world that Apley deplores is the sphere of Lapham; the snobberies and fingerbowls that so confuse Lapham is the sphere of Apley. Both of these novels give great pleasure and desire a wider readership.

M. Feldman 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent

By R. Ginocchio What a great book. Too bad we don't have more brilliant writers like Marquand now or the educational establishment to appreciate such great work. The book is told through a series of fictional letters to and by the title character throughout his life. It is similar in tone to another Marquand classic, H.M. Pulham Esquire, but here is brilliantly sketched through second hand observation of correspondence. In today's world of email and texting it will be difficult to realize the critical historical value of writing that may be lost to future generations, but a book like this in broad circulation could do much. I found myself wishing I did a better job of cataloging life in written words. The film adaptation while entertaining is not up to the standard of the book and takes many liberties with the story. Both the book and film walk a fine line of endorsing or criticizing the main character's conservatism, but really leaves the reader to his own conclusions. A brilliant work. I also recommend Pulham Esquire, but there the film actually outpaces the book as MGM managed to spin the tale into a great love story with Robert Young and Hedy Lamarr. See that film.

A modern classic restored to print -- the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel that charts the diminishing fortunes of a distinguished Boston family in the early years of the 20th century. Sweeping us into the inner sanctum of Boston society, into the Beacon Hill town houses and exclusive private clubs where only the city's wealthiest and most powerful congregate, the novel gives us -- through the story of one family and its patriarch, the recently deceased George Apley -- the portrait of an entire society in transition. Gently satirical and rich with drama, the novel moves from the Gilded Age to the Great Depression as it projects George Apley's world -- and subtly reveals a life in which success and accomplishment mask disappointment and regret, a life of extreme and enviable privilege that is nonetheless an imperfect life.

About the Author John P. Marquand (1893-1960) wrote several widely admired and bestselling novels, among them the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Late George Apley* (1937), *Wickford Point* (1939), and *H. M. Pullham, Esquire* (1941). He was the author also of the highly successful series of Mr. Moto detective novels.