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ClanDonnell: A Storied History of Ireland

David K. McDonnell

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Reviewed by Susan Violante for Reader Views (01/14)

“ClanDonnell: A Storied History of Ireland” by David K. McDonnell is a historical piece of art and would be an asset to any library. The book is 926 pages long and thus not your choice for an on the go book. However, all 926 pages are worth savoring, not just reading through but rather taking your time with each chapter. As a history fan I loved the detailed information presented in this book.

McDonnell does not present the reader with a fact book limited to what historians consider important dates and events. Instead, he takes the reader through time by telling the Irish story from how the names of each clan originated, specifying the details on how the use of last names and even middle names within each family came to be. The tone of the narration felt almost like watching a History Channel miniseries where each chapter is an episode of the Clan Donnell’s adventure.

McDonnell did a great job of taking the reader from the beginning with Celts, the invasions, Clan System and Culture, explaining also the geography, politics and language all to give a holistic experience of how Ireland came to be. He does this in an easy to follow storytelling tone and, by using pictures, graphics such as maps, as well as a timeline of events and family tree at the end of each chapter. The reader will move through the clans region by region. McDonnell continues the story of Ireland through time by concentrating on the Clan Donnell, taking the reader through their rise in Ireland, through the war against the English and their submission to Queen Elizabeth. Starting on the second part of the book, the reader will see the end of the Clan system and will see how Ireland, through the descendants of the Clan Donnell relates to England through the Protestant/Catholic clash as well as all other European Nations and later on in America. By no means is this a quick read as McDonnell presents to us Ireland from its Celtics times to the twentieth Century.

I really enjoyed “ClanDonnell: A Storied History of Ireland” by David K. McDonnell and am happy to keep this historical piece of art and perfect literary work in my library to share interesting stories from Ireland with friends and family as a conversation piece treasure. I definitely rate “ClanDonnell” 5 stars!