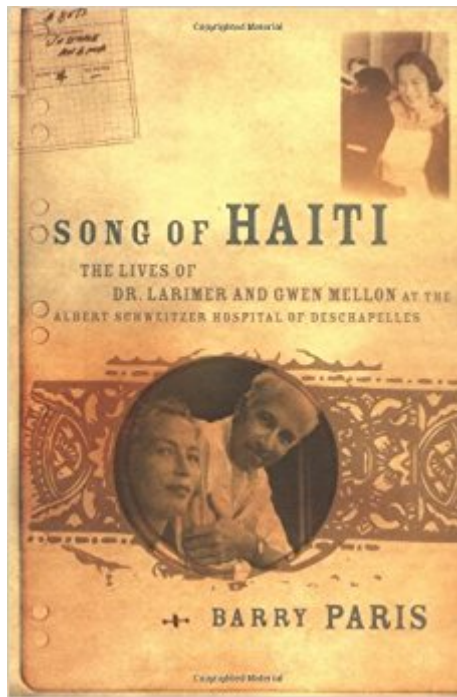


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Song Of Haiti



Synopsis

An inspiring account by an acclaimed biographer of the lives of Larimer and Gwendolyn Mellon, who used their initiative and their wealth to build the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in the Artibonite Valley of Haiti, a place where life expectancy was once the lowest in the hemisphere.. Larimer Mellon was the youngest son of Paul Mellon, renowned Pittsburgh financier, and seemed destined for a life of high finance and high society. Instead, he went to med-school and, upon graduating, moved with his wife Gwen to Haiti, the poorest country in the hemisphere. In one of the most isolated and impoverished areas of the country they built a hospital, and for the rest of his life Larry Mellon served as a physician there. To this day, Gwen Mellon remains at the hospital and in Haiti. Song of Haiti is a beautifully written look at the passion that drove this couple, and that inspired them to leave behind a world of almost unfathomable wealth and luxury and devote their lives to the poorest of the poor in a country far from home.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Song of Haiti is an absolutely awesome book! As a nurse who has done mission work in Haiti, I found this book authentic, a true inspiration, as well as a compelling, indepth view of the lives of many dedicated and compassionate people. Barry Paris' work describes the country and the people in beautiful and fulfilling language. Oftentimes, I felt as if I were in Haiti again experiencing the amazing, hard-working and loving people of the country. I've never before read a biography with such gripping prose. I looked forward to my time to read because I became more and more interested

in the life of every person described - be it Dr. Mellon and Gwen or Albert Schweitzer, or the nurses and doctors and friends with whom they shared their lives. I believe this is the way that biographical work should be written. Song of Haiti is thorough in that it covers the entirety of Dr. Mellon's life, touching on his downfalls as well as his high achievements. I found that the realism with which the story is told is excellent and believable. The many everyday encounters and adventures are interesting and mesmerizing - it makes a person want to travel and experience the third world for all of the beauty and intensity it offers. I recommend this book to everyone, regardless of your interest in medicine, mission work, or biography. It is amazing.

The life of William Larimer Mellon is an example of the life Americans should dream for themselves and those they love dearly. For one who majored in biology and gave it up for 18 years in auditing the parallels to Mellon's change of career and motivations struck me deeply. On witnessing the WTC disaster personally (a few hundred yards away) man should strive for something in life and go for it. Barry Paris well written account of a life inspired by Dr. Schweitzer is highly recommended to all readers committed to God and American morals and values. If readers have a noble vision the price of this book is totally insignificant to the highest rewards you will gather from reading it.

Truly an engaging read that reminds us that we can choose to turn our lives around at any time. Larimer Mellon did just that at age 37, first going to medical school, then founding a hospital in Deschapelles, Haiti, that is running to this very day. The author does well to follow their project and show how their lives were intertwined by others similarly interested in Albert Schweitzer's ethos. This idea of "Reverence for Life" has led to the existence, in the middle of poorest rural Haiti, of a thriving band of expatriates, native Haitians, short-term volunteers, and visitors of various sorts dedicated to humanistic ideals. Hospital Albert Schweitzer lives on, and you can be a part of it if you choose.

The book has two distinct sections. The first 100 pages is a report on the Mellon family lifestyle, and how a rich maverick Mellon got to Haiti. The rest of the book details Dr. and Mrs. Mellon's founding of a hospital and civil engineering projects in central Haiti. An important finding is that the Mellon's hospital was founded on the humanitarian premise, "Reverence for life." Taken from Dr. Schweitzer's work in Africa, life refers not only to human life, but also plant and animal. This little detail is critical to understanding the book. Many missions to Haiti are Christian, while Dr. Mellon's hospital is distinctly humanistic primarily as presented in the book. As all books on Haiti fairly present, doing

anything in Haiti is hard, and without American financial support, very little work done lasts. The hospital Dr. Mellon founded did well as long as he provided two of the four million dollars needed to run it. His civil engineering projects, in which he was much more interested than medicine (he actually only practiced medicine 3 years), all crumbled when turned over to the Haitians. Many other cottage industries met the same fate. The book thus captures the Haitian dilemma, how to serve in Haiti and lift up the Haitians to be self sufficient. If Dr. Mellon's millions couldn't do it, how can any of us with less money at our disposal. Never the less, we go to Haiti because we cannot not go, nor can we not go back after going once. An excellent book about how a real rich guy did his best to follow his heart, not his accountant's advice, and another book about how a strong wife really does the grunt work while her husband plays with big boy's toys.

Excellent book. Means a lot to me. My uncle's name is mentioned in it. Thanks, Mr Paris for a good piece about Haiti, which remains alive in our hearts and is included in all our prayers. By the way, the delivery was very fast. Thank you, .

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