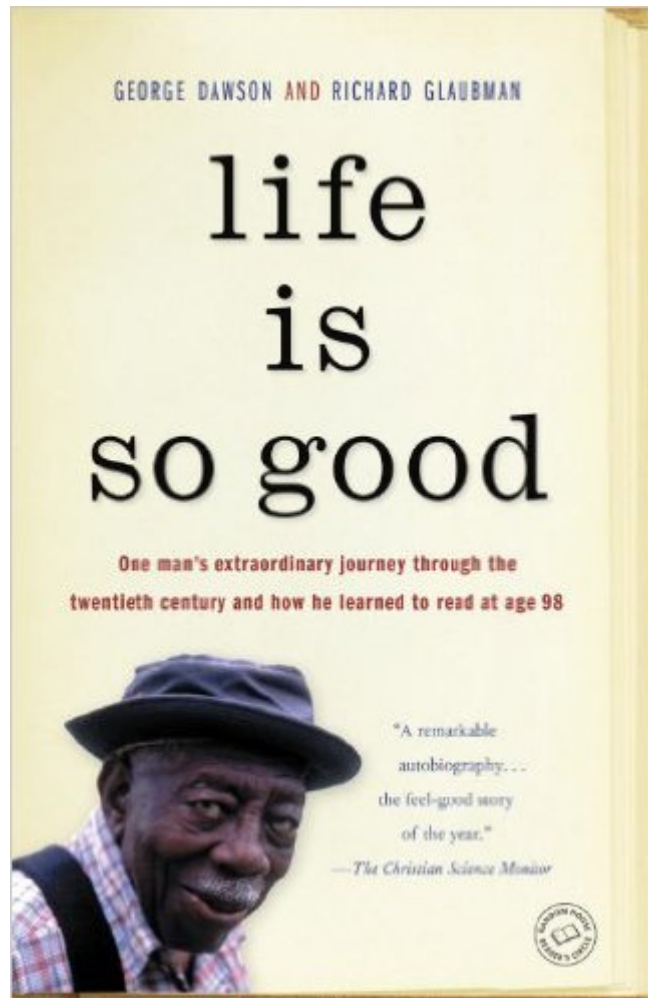


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Life Is So Good



Synopsis

One man's extraordinary journey through the twentieth century and how he learned to read at age 98. "Things will be all right. People need to hear that. Life is good, just as it is. There isn't anything I would change about my life." George Dawson. In this remarkable book, George Dawson, a slave's grandson who learned to read at age 98 and lived to the age of 103, reflects on his life and shares valuable lessons in living, as well as a fresh, firsthand view of America during the entire sweep of the twentieth century. Richard Glaubman captures Dawson's irresistible voice and view of the world, offering insights into humanity, history, hardships, and happiness. From segregation and civil rights, to the wars and the presidents, to defining moments in history, George Dawson's description and assessment of the last century inspires readers with the message that has sustained him through it all: "Life is so good. I do believe it's getting better." • WINNER OF THE CHRISTOPHER AWARD • "A remarkable autobiography . . . the feel-good story of the year." "The Christian Science Monitor" "A testament to the power of perseverance." "USA Today" "Life Is So Good is about character, soul and spirit. . . . The pride in standing his ground is matched, maybe even exceeded, by the accomplishment of [George Dawson's] hard-won education." "The Washington Post" "Eloquent . . . engrossing . . . an astonishing and unforgettable memoir." "Publishers Weekly" Look for special features inside. Join the Circle for author chats and more.

Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Random House Trade Paperbacks; Reprint edition (May 7, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0812984870

ISBN-13: 978-0812984873

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars. See all reviews (258 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #56,623 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Regional U.S. > South #174 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > African-American & Black #635 in Books > History > Americas > United States > State & Local

Customer Reviews

The reader is immediately introduced to life in east Texas through the eyes of a young black boy

named George Dawson. At the age of ten, George is an eyewitness to the lynching of an innocent black teenager, who happens to be his friend, by an angry mob of local white men. This lynching is only the beginning of a well documented story of how life really was for a black living in the south . George has no chance to attend school, since his labor is needed to help support the family, but this does not deter George from having a positive outlook on life. Through out the book, George always is able to find a bright side and give thanks for what most people take for granted. At an early age, George is instructed by his father how black are expected to "respect" whites and not to ever do business with them. It is not until George is almost 100 years old does he finally break away from everything his father taught him and decides to do business with Richard Glaubman, the author of this book. We are very fortunate that George does decide to let Mr. Glaubman write of his life as the reader, especially white readers, finally see how life was for a black growing up in America from 1898 until the present. At the age of 98, George is able to start school and finally fulfill his life long desire to read. George is an inspiration to anyone who reads this book and Mr. Glaubman does an excellent job in documenting George's work and travel. His interaction with George, both as a friend and an author, helps to break the barrier of whites and blacks that has been instilled in George since his early childhood. I feel grateful that I read an article in THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE about Mr. Dawson as I immediately ordered the book and read it at once.

The quote that titles this review is written at the end of chapter one. It is a chapter that were it to be isolated as a short story, it would make the final list for any awards in that category. There is no book I can compare this to, but if you take the wisdom of "Tuesday's With Morrie" and the struggles and triumph of the human spirit of "Angela's Ashes", you begin to approach this book, the story of the life of Mr. George Dawson. Mr. Dawson started school when he was 98 years old. He is now approaching 102 and continues to work for his High School Equivalency Degree. It is difficult to describe this man, as he has no peers who have shared his 102 year life. Four wives shared parts of his life, but Mr. Dawson continues to live after they all have passed away. Mr. Dawson does note that many women would like to marry him now, and he has not ruled the possibility out. What is Mr. Dawson like? In the book he muses as to why people say everything tastes like chicken, as an example Rattlesnake. However no one ever says anything tastes like Rattlesnake. Mr. Dawson is not "like" anybody. He is unlike anyone you know, anyone you have read about, he is an original, one of a kind. Every day that his life advances he becomes more unique, more of a treasure. The final chapters of this book are as dramatic as the first. Mr. Dawson has a decision to make, a decision that either will allow this book to become a reality, or for his life to remain kept only to those

who have known him. To make this decision he relies upon advice his Father had given him as a young man. His Father followed this advice throughout his own 99 year life, and as Mr. Dawson states, "between my Father and I it worked for over 200 years".

In 1993, sisters Sarah and Elizabeth Delany became overnight celebrities with the publication of their memoir, "Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years," written in collaboration with New York Times reporter Amy Hill Hearth. It became a national bestseller, was adapted into a highly successful stage play and TV movie, and led to two more books by the Delanys. "Sweet Sadie" and "Queen Bess," as they called one other, have since passed on. But picking up the torch is 101-year-old George Dawson, the principal author of "Life Is So Good," co-written with Richard Glaubman. The book was done as an oral history, and deals primarily with life in the South. The volume is an excellent read -- instructive, insightful, emotionally moving and inspiring. And while it covers nearly the same historical period as the Delany sisters' work, it examines the time from very different perspectives. The Delanys were light-skinned, professional women with college degrees, who spent most of their careers in New York City. Dawson, on the hand, was not only uneducated, but illiterate, and never rose above blue-collar work. In addition, he was dark of complexion, which undoubtedly raised the bar for him. "Life Is So Good" is a page-turner, rushing forward like a well-written novel, and breathing with authenticity. The editor preserves Dawson's voice whenever possible, purposely not correcting the unschooled grammar. Because Dawson was not influenced by newspapers, books, or historical events as they happened, his story is his alone, and acts as a mirror to the times in which he lived. The book has a timeless quality that will make it good reading a century from now.

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